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## Legal action: Coalition tries to defend Oregon's climate protection program – The News Guard

👤 Carmen Bruneau • September 7, 2022



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A coalition of environmental justice, climate and business organizations has filed a legal intervention to defend Oregon's landmark Climate Change Program (CPP) against attempted oil and gas industry rollbacks.

The lawsuit is an attempt to defend Oregon's landmark climate protection program against attempted rollbacks by the oil and gas industry.

Courtesy of Wesley VanDinter

The CPP is a cornerstone of Oregon's climate change policy and is essential to meeting the state's pollution reduction goals, according to recent modeling led by the Oregon Department of Energy.

- Improve the public health and resilience of Oregon communities most vulnerable to fossil fuel and climate impacts, and save billions of dollars annually in avoided healthcare costs.
- Enable investment in clean energy projects to support job creation, economic vitality, and cleaner, cheaper, healthier energy and transportation opportunities in black, tribal, low-income, rural, coastal and other communities across the state.
- Foster technological innovation and advancements that will benefit Oregon workers and consumers by transitioning to a clean energy economy.

The Oregon Environmental Quality Commission (EQC) adopted the CPP in December 2021 after a comprehensive 18-month rulemaking process and a robust stakeholder engagement process, according to a coalition news release.

The Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) received more than 7,600 public comments on the CPP rules, the overwhelming majority of which supported the program and strong climate action.

**Also read: [Legal Action: Coalition Seeks to Defend Oregon's Climate Action Program - Cannon Beach Gazette](#)**

The CPP requires Oregon oil and fossil gas companies to reduce emissions by 50 percent by 2035 and by 90 percent by 2050; establishes for the first time requirements for large industrial plants to reduce greenhouse gas emissions; and enables millions of dollars to be invested annually in clean energy projects that benefit environmental justice and other communities throughout Oregon.

Fossil fuels and other industry groups trying to delay climate action have filed three separate lawsuits against the program. NW Natural, Cascade Natural Gas, the Western States Petroleum Association, the Oregon Farm Bureau, the Oregon Business & Industry Association and Associated Oregon Loggers are among more than a dozen industry applicants seeking the DEQ and the EQC's authority to adopt the Dispute CPP Rules.

Interveners in the case include Beyond Toxics, Oregon Business for Climate, the Oregon Environmental Council, Climate Solutions and the Environmental Defense Fund, all represented by the nonprofit Crag Law Center and the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC).

"Oregon's vulnerable communities have first-hand experience of the suffering and hardship caused by the climate crisis," said Teryn Yazdani, prosecutor and climate policy manager at Beyond Toxics. "If left untouched by opposition from the fossil fuel industry, the climate protection program has the potential to positively transform the lives of Oregonians through powerful emissions reductions. Sustaining the climate protection program is key to improving public health and resilience for Oregon's environmental justice and frontline communities."

"This is a coordinated act of desperation on behalf of the fossil fuel industry. DEQ enabled an extensive public participation process in the development of the CPP rules. These lawsuits are a slap in the face and a solid democratic process," said Nora Apter, director of the Oregon Environmental Council's climate program. "These companies know that what they sell poses a threat to the health and well-being of Oregon residents, but they are fighting the state so they can continue to prioritize polluter profits over people."

"This case is another example of NW Natural's duplicity," said Greer Ryan, Climate Solutions' Clean Buildings Policy Manager. "They spend millions of customer dollars promoting their supposed efforts to be climate friendly. What they don't want the public to know is that they are blocking progress on climate change and are suing the state that is trying to overturn the landmark climate change program and evade responsibility for their contribution to the climate crisis."

The CPP provides clear, predictable, and achievable goals to reduce climate pollution and complements Oregon's existing law, which requires electric utilities to transition Oregon's power grid to 100% clean, zero-emission energy sources by 2040, according to the coalition release. Energy companies have

helped shape the law to regulate their responsibility for reducing emissions and are seizing the opportunity to invest in the clean energy technologies of the future. In contrast, in this case, the petitioners are committed to protecting outdated, polluting business approaches.

"Forward-thinking Oregon businesses recognize the need for climate action and the opportunity for our state to lead the way in nurturing and exporting the solutions the world is seeking in the transition to a clean economy," said Tim, director of Oregon Business for Climate said Müller. "This program provides the clear, predictable path businesses need to plan, with multiple flexibility options for fuel suppliers to ultimately provide cleaner, healthier, cheaper and more stable energy options for all."

While the recently passed inflation-mitigating law will provide long-overdue federal investments and stimulus to accelerate the transition to a clean energy economy, state-level action remains critical to reducing climate pollution at the pace and scale needed to avoid climate catastrophe, the government said coalition release states. Oregon's CPP sets a crucial precedent for other states pursuing similar programs to limit climate pollution from the biggest emitters.

"Increasing droughts, wildfires, heat waves and other climate-related impacts require continued leadership from states like Oregon," said Kjellen Belcher, U.S. climate policy manager for the Environmental Defense Fund. "Oregon, now armed with new investments from the Inflation Reduction Act, must do its part to curb harmful climate pollution through a strong climate protection program. We must defend the state's progress in building a clean, healthy and resilient economy. And we must stand up for the thousands of Oregonians who have spoken out in support of the climate change program."

"Reducing climate pollution requires an all-hands-on-deck effort, one that makes full use of both federal and state action," said Angus Duncan, Oregon's Global Warming Commission NRDC Northwest Consultant and Chair Emeritus. "States are critical to regulating utilities, shaping local transportation, and enforcing the provisions of the Clean Air Act, as Oregon's underserved climate protection program intends. NRDC has good reason to join the national and local Oregon groups that are stepping in to defend Oregon's carbon ceiling from polluting industries that resist the need to cut emissions."

[Source](#)