

Environmental Watchdogs Have Eyes on City Policy



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group 350 Eugene and is formally known as “Community Coalition for Eugene’s Climate Action Plan Success,” will include progressive political organizations and environmental groups.

The formation of the coalition comes as Eugene is attempting to work out the details of a 10-year plan to reduce greenhouse gas production; however, the mechanics of the plan are not yet clear and currently being debated.

Linda Heyl, a 350 supporter, says the purpose of the coalition is to oversee the city's proposed policies and evaluate them.

"We will support anything that will help to meet those goals," Heyl says. "And we will call out and resist anything that wouldn't work."

The goal of the coalition is to see that the city meets the goals of the Climate Recovery Ordinance, which was passed by the city in 2014 and then updated two years later. The ordinance stemmed from Eugene's 2010 Community Climate and Energy Action Plan.

The language of the ordinance is somewhat technical, but the objective is to lower greenhouse gas and carbon emissions. One goal, for example, is to lower the city's use of fossil fuels by 50 percent compared to 2010 usage.

Lisa Arkin, executive director of environmental group Beyond Toxics and a member of the coalition, writes in an email to *Eugene Weekly* that "resistance" takes the form of community involvement and sharing information.

"Resistance starts with sharing knowledge, offering a productive analysis, involving the community to put forward effective solutions, and raising our voices to demand that we do what is necessary to tackle climate and carbon in Eugene," she writes.

Climate action plans are not unheard of in the United States. In California, for example, cities must develop local climate action plans.

The coalition doesn't necessarily disagree with the city's goals, but rather the methods that are taken to achieve them.

One example of a policy Heyl and her group don't support is agreements with "large level shareholders," or entities that produce large quantities of greenhouse gases. Heyl says entities responsible for large amounts of greenhouse emissions may not make the changes for themselves.

Heyl says the coalition will take a different approach than that taken by the city. For example, instead of working with large level shareholders, the coalition will engage other entities Heyl says the city did not consult in its planning process.

So far, the coalition includes Beyond Toxics, progressive political group Our Revolution, the Green Party, conservation group Cascadia Wildlands and Many Rivers, the Sierra Club's Eugene chapter.

Arkin expressed similar sentiments to Heyl, and says that the coalition must be broad in its membership so that the Climate Action Plan can meet its goals.

"Our particular reason to join the coalition is to help ensure that Eugene's Climate Action Plan is informed by and responsive to environmental and racial justice values," Arkin writes in an email to *Eugene Weekly*. "We believe the coalition represents a

dedicated group of folks who know quite a bit about climate solutions and will hold the city accountable for taking meaningful and effective action.”

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