

# **Resolution of the Oregon Global Warming Commission**

Resolution Number: 2008-5-006

Origin: Transportation and Land Use Committee

## **Recommendations to the Oregon Land Conservation and Development Commission**

Resolved, that the Oregon Global Warming Commission recommends that the Oregon Land Conservation and Development Commission consider adopting and administratively implementing the strategies and program elements contained in the attached letter (sent originally to the Oregon Big Look Committee). These program elements also align in certain material respects with recommendations from the Governor's Transportation Vision Committee, and endorsed by the Global Warming Commission. They include:

1. Cooperate with the Global Warming Commission, the Oregon Department of Transportation and other agencies and jurisdictions to set GHG Targets and Benchmarks for Use by Local Governments
2. Assure that Carbon Impact is Considered in Local Government Rezoning Decisions
3. Cooperate with Sister Agencies, and Their Governing Boards and Commissions to Clarify Responsibilities for Incorporating Climate Considerations into State Policies, Programs and Regulations.
4. Incorporate Adaptation Recommendations to Help Oregon Prepare for the Impacts of Climate Change
5. Extend/Expand on Oregon's Success at Reducing GHGs in Urban and In Rapidly Growing Areas
6. Encourage Rural Development Patterns That Contribute to Meeting Oregon's Greenhouse Gas Reduction Goals While Helping Rural Oregon Adjust to Energy Price Increases
7. Define Lands of Statewide Significance to Include Areas Necessary for Renewable Energy Production and Transmission, and Employ a More Flexible Planning System to Assist Oregon in its Transition to a Low-Carbon Energy Economy
8. Provide Guidance and Incentives for Reforestation/Afforestation in Local Land Use Plans That Result in Effective Carbon Sequestration

## **Qualifications**

With respect to setting GHG targets and benchmarks for use by local governments, the Global Warming Commission acknowledges that this will be a multi-agency exercise in which the OGWC will bear significant responsibilities directly, and in reliance upon the Oregon University System and the Oregon Climate Change Research Institute.

## **Outcomes**

The responsibilities of the Global Warming Commission and the Land Conservation and Development Commission overlap in important respects. The OGWC seeks land uses and practices that permit Oregonians to pursue their full range of activities consistent with meeting the State's adopted greenhouse gas reductions goals. This means investing in the necessary carbon-efficient transportation and industrial infrastructure and providing Oregon businesses and citizens with tools for reducing their carbon footprints through options such as transit and non-auto means of mobility and access; land use patterns that support such options; and movement of goods and services with less congestion and greater energy and carbon efficiencies. This also means adapting Oregon's historical land use practices and patterns to reflect adaptation needs, whether adjusting settlement patterns to increased storm or forest fire activity, or modifying water flow, management and use practices to protect both in-stream requirements and community needs.



## OREGON GLOBAL WARMING COMMISSION

Oregon Department of Energy, 625 Marion Street NE, Salem, OR, 97301 Toll-Free in Oregon: 1-800-221-8035

Email: [Oregon.GWC@state.or.us](mailto:Oregon.GWC@state.or.us) Web: <http://www.oregon.gov/ENERGY/GBLWRM/GWC/index.shtml>

### *TRANSPORTATION AND LAND USE COMMITTEE*

June 30, 2008

Big Look Task Force Members,

On behalf of the Transportation and Land Use Committee of the Oregon Global Warming Commission (OGWC), please find attached the committee's comments on the Big Look Task Force's draft recommendations document, dated 5/30/08.

The Transportation and Land Use Committee received a presentation by Big Look Task Force members Judie Hammerstad and Steve Clark at our June 3, 2008 meeting. The presentation included a briefing on the Big Look draft recommendations. Our committee subsequently discussed the recommendations at our June 16, 2008 meeting and prepared comments.

The voting commissioners of the Transportation and Land Use Committee have unanimously endorsed these comments, which reflect the verbal discussions and written comments of the full committee. The full Oregon Global Warming Commission has also been provided the opportunity to express itself on these comments.

Should you have any questions or require additional clarification, please feel free to contact either one of us. More information about the Transportation and Land Use Committee can be found at <http://www.oregon.gov/ENERGY/GBLWRM/GWC/GWC-TLU.shtml>.

Sincerely,

Eric Lemelson, Co-Chair, Transportation and Land Use Committee

Bill Wyatt, Co-Chair, Transportation and Land Use Committee

**Oregon Global Warming Commission**  
**Transportation and Land Use Committee**  
**Comments on 5/30/08 Draft Big Look Task Force Report**

**General Comments:**

The Transportation and Land Use (T&LU) Committee, on behalf of the Oregon Global Warming Commission (OGWC)<sup>1</sup>, commends the Big Look Task Force for its initial work incorporating climate considerations into its draft report (“report”).

We appreciate that the Task Force accords greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reductions equal weight with its other recommendations. To effectively address the climate challenge, however, the OGWC recommends that the report needs to more explicitly integrate climate change mitigation and adaptation measures into each of its recommendations, where they are a factor of significance.

Adaptation measures were notably absent from the report. These measures, which could be included under recommendations #3 and #5, will be increasingly important in helping protect Oregon’s economy, our lives and livelihoods, and especially critical public infrastructure from the effects of climate change. Predicted effects of global warming that may require adaptation measures associated with land use, and which state and local laws, regulations, and practices will need to accommodate, are discussed in more detail below.

It is critical that state and local community planning not assume that the future will resemble the past, but instead use the best guidance science offers to anticipate a very different future – a future in which meeting Oregon’s GHG reduction goals and protecting what we all value about Oregon will require aggressively different responses and tools that reflect firm, shared values along with highly flexible ways and means. The state must also ensure that land use and transportation planning practices support statewide economic vitality.

The report should make explicit the need for additional funding from the Oregon Legislature to provide the necessary resources for the Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD) to fulfill its new responsibilities in implementing the state’s GHG reduction goals. However, if the state’s budgetary processes do not provide adequate additional funding, the report should recognize that implementing initiatives to meet the state’s GHG reduction goals is not optional for DLCD or other state agencies. The primary responsibility for reallocating State resources lies with the Legislature, but if additional funding is not forthcoming, existing budgets and staffing levels will have to be reprioritized.

---

<sup>1</sup> NOTE: The voting commissioners of the Transportation and Land Use (T&LU) Committee of the Oregon Global Warming Commission (OGWC) have unanimously endorsed these comments. The comments reflect verbal discussions and written comments of the full T&LU Committee. The full OGWC was also provided the opportunity to express itself on these comments prior to submittal to the Big Look Task Force.

### **Specific Comments:**

**1. *Set GHG Targets and Benchmarks for Use by Local Governments:*** As a general rule, the Task Force should consider that when decision-making authority in regard to land use planning is delegated from the state to local or regional governments, there is an explicit responsibility that goes along with that authority to make choices consistent with the state's GHG mitigation goals. Decisions made at the local level cannot compromise the state's ability to meet its legislatively-approved GHG reduction goals. The OGWC has recognized a need for these goals to be translated into more specific targets for different economic sectors, geographic areas, or areas of technological improvement, using GHG modeling tools to be developed or now under development. Specifically, the OGWC is considering ways that Oregon's statewide greenhouse gas reduction goals could be disaggregated to local communities as benchmarks that can be adopted by local governments across the state and incorporated into local planning codes and ordinances. In addition, the OGWC recognizes that many local governments will benefit from technical assistance, analytical tools, and best practices resources developed at a statewide level. The OGWC would consider cooperating with the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) and DLCD to develop a "best practices" GHG toolkit that could serve as a guide for local government decision-making. We would encourage the Big Look report to anticipate and call for these targets and tools.

**2. *Assure that Carbon Impact is Considered in Local Government Rezoning Decisions:*** The report recommends that local governments have the power to rezone land not classified as being of statewide importance under a new classification system to be developed. The appropriate use of these lands would be determined consistent with their "carrying capacity." The report needs to specify that any increases in carbon emissions that result from rural development must occur within the context of the emissions reduction targets referenced in comment #1 above. Put another way, the report should clarify that local governments must explicitly consider the carbon impact of rezoning decisions. Equally, they should be directed to explicitly consider adaptation needs (see below) in establishing zoning criteria and rules.

**3. *Cooperate with Sister Agencies, and Their Governing Boards and Commissions to Clarify Responsibilities for Incorporating Climate Considerations into State Policies, Programs and Regulations:*** The report recommends shifting the focus of the Land Conservation and Development Commission (LCDC) and DLCD to long range land-use planning. As a central element of this new focus, the report should clarify that LCDC and DLCD will need to coordinate and cooperate with the Oregon Transportation Commission (OTC), ODOT, the Environmental Quality Commission (EQC), the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), the OGWC, and other relevant state and local agencies to better define each organization's specific areas of responsibility related to GHG emissions reductions, including making the connection between land use planning and transportation at every appropriate opportunity. Effective interagency cooperation will play a critical role in shaping the success of the state's efforts to address climate change – both in terms of reducing GHG emissions, and in terms of adaptation

planning (protecting Oregonians, their economy, and their environment from the most harmful impacts of a changing climate).

The OGWC acknowledges the primary authority of its sister policy and regulatory boards and commissions in their areas of responsibility. The role of the OGWC is to work with those boards and commissions to ensure that their activities are consistent with Oregon's mitigation and adaptation goals. Where this is the case, the OGWC will offer its voice in support of these activities. Where the OGWC may conclude that state policies and programs are inconsistent with these goals, it will offer findings to that effect.

The OGWC acknowledges its responsibility to coordinate with LCDC, as well as with other policy bodies and state agencies, to develop ways of integrating climate concerns focused on both mitigation and adaptation into state policies, programs, and processes. The OGWC notes that it must share in the responsibility to develop the metrics necessary to help communities and local governments translate state GHG goals into policymaking “on the ground.”

**4. *Incorporate Adaptation Recommendations to Help Oregon Prepare for the Impacts of Climate Change:*** A changing climate will impose constraints on the use of land in floodplains, high fire-risk areas, coastal zones, and other at-risk lands. The report should recommend modifying the land use planning system to reflect the sensitivity of at-risk lands, and where necessary, to redirect development away from these areas or propose other kinds of flexible adaptation measures as necessary. Examples of such risk parameters include, but are not limited to the following:

- Coastal zone sea level rise, accompanied by more frequent and intense storm events, should be considered in new and existing community land uses (including potential relocation of settlement, facilities and infrastructure);
- Higher levels of precipitation during the wet season may require a re-evaluation of existing flood plain delineations and settlement practices;
- Higher levels of precipitation and more intense storm events during the wet season may require slide zone designations where settlement or infrastructure are at risk;
- More frequent and intense forest fires, especially in east side forests, may indicate the need for adjusting settlement patterns to avoid identifiable fire risk zones, especially in wild/urban interface areas;
- Predicted low water availability in many streams during dry season months should be considered in existing and proposed settlement and other land uses in areas most at risk (e.g. where competition between community and instream uses for limited water resources is already severe, or can be expected to become more severe);

- Fish and wildlife, natural vegetation, and agricultural uses may shift in response to altered climate effects (e.g. temperature, precipitation, snowpack, and snowmelt timing) which may require more substantial and better connected natural reserves (refugia) of land and water, greater investments in maintaining ecosystem resiliency, and highly adaptive agricultural and crop selection practices. Anticipation of impacts and flexibility of response are the keys to appropriate adaptation.

The OGWC acknowledges that considerable work must be undertaken by Oregon state agencies and academic institutions to develop the information on which to base adaptation decisions. Until that information is developed, it would be wise for policy bodies such as the Task Force and LCDC to err on the side of caution, thereby avoiding the costs and disruptions of ill-informed land uses as the localized impacts of global warming become obvious.

***5. Extend/Expand on Oregon's Success at Reducing GHGs in Urban and Rapidly Growing Areas:*** As noted by the report, Oregon's planning system has, with some considerable success, encouraged urban development patterns that are more supportive of lower-carbon lifestyles and business activities than urban areas in other parts of the country that are often more sprawling and less well-served by transit and other travel modes. More compact, mixed-use development that facilitates transportation choices, like the Portland metropolitan area has achieved, can play a central role in efforts to reduce vehicle miles traveled and thus GHG emissions throughout the state. Equally, more compact urban forms, with local services readily accessible to most residents, should also result in more efficient use of energy in both transportation and buildings, with commensurate carbon emissions reductions. It is reasonable to expect that in order to meet future statewide GHG reduction goals, urban areas in Oregon will need to achieve larger per-capita reductions than rural areas (and will be given more demanding targets).

There are GHG benefits to capturing all available efficiencies in freight connections that involve designated industrial lands. Public investments in transportation and other infrastructure that support industrial uses should result in goods being moved in the most energy- and carbon-efficient ways.

In addition, the report should recommend that Oregon's planning system incorporate a special focus on areas that are growing rapidly to ensure that such growth occurs in the most carbon-efficient manner possible, especially with regard to planning considerations such as development density, urban design that supports mixed use development, and transportation that promotes use of alternatives to single-occupancy vehicles.

***6. Encourage Rural Development Patterns That Contribute to Meeting Oregon's Greenhouse Gas Reduction Goals While Helping Rural Oregon Adjust to Energy Price Increases:*** High fuel prices are already having a significant impact on rural Oregon, both in terms of households and businesses. This trend is likely to continue in an energy- and carbon-constrained world. The report should reference the need for rural development patterns that avoid energy and carbon inefficiencies (e.g. by supporting efficient

transportation services and local providers of goods and services), because these considerations will become increasingly important over time. In particular, the report should stress the need to remain disciplined about sprawl or excessively dispersed development in the Willamette Valley, as well as a limited number of other areas (e.g. Bend/Redmond and Medford/Ashland) where population pressures will be most intense. It could call for public facilities and transportation planning in areas of dispersed settlement to ensure that access to essential services (e.g., public health facilities) is not compromised.

***7. Define Lands of Statewide Significance to Include Areas Necessary for Renewable Energy Production and Employ a More Flexible Planning System to Assist Oregon in the Transition to a New Economy:*** The report correctly calls for the state to plan for and anticipate economic growth trends, including encouraging the growth of so-called “green” industries. It supports facilitating that growth with a more flexible, nimble land use system that enables local governments to respond rapidly to new economic opportunities. However, Oregon’s land use planning system does not currently classify and protect lands suitable for renewable energy (wind, solar, hydrothermal, wave, biomass, etc.) production, as well as transmission corridors necessary for the distribution of renewable energy. The report should define lands of statewide significance to include those areas necessary for the production and distribution of renewable energy, and should explicitly include renewable energy production in any proposal for a streamlined permitting system that allows local government to respond rapidly to new economic opportunities.

***8. Provide Guidance and Incentives for Reforestation/Afforestation in Local Land Use Plans That Result in Effective Carbon Sequestration:*** The report correctly notes that land use can play a central role in carbon sequestration efforts that reduce the state’s aggregate carbon emissions and contribute to meeting Oregon’s legislatively adopted GHG reduction goals and represent real net reductions from existing requirements (or Business-As-Usual). The current planning system uses zoning primarily to encourage landowners to maintain land in forest for resource production. The report should go beyond simply maintaining existing forestland resources. It should reference and recommend a system of incentives that can (1) identify deforested former forest lands, and encourage reforestation of these areas, while (2) identifying currently understocked lands that could support afforestation with significant potential for carbon sequestration, using the best available scientific data to determine suitability of specific parcels, as well as management techniques that promote long-term carbon sequestration. **It is essential that these actions are accomplished consistent with other high public values, such as protection and enhancement of critical ecosystems, the services they provide, and the biota they support.**