

Remote working and sustainability

The significant shift many state employees made to remote working in 2020 has also had some significant sustainability benefits. Transportation is Oregon's largest source of greenhouse gas (GHG) pollution contributing to climate change. And – depending on fuel efficiency – a round trip commuter driving a conventional gasoline-powered car from Portland to Salem generates an estimated 80-100 pounds of carbon dioxide (CO₂) equivalent per trip. With approximately 30 percent of the state workforce working remotely at least half time per week, that's a significant impact on these emissions.

What's more, benefits extend to other areas. For example, paper consumption in the U.S. dropped 20-30 percent in May-June 2020 compared to the prior year, and demand for other office supplies has likely seen similar drops. Over the longer-term, energy used for lighting and heating government buildings is also likely to drop as offices are re-configured to accommodate more remote workers.

In short, we've learned to commute less and consume less, while still maintaining positive and productive work environments.

While remote working has positive impacts, many of us are using more resources at home. You can lighten your home office footprint by:

- Swapping out light bulbs for the most efficient LED versions
- Making sure your IT department has deployed sleep settings on your computer and monitor
- Adjusting your home thermostat
- Shutting off lights and other devices when not in use
- Using advanced plug strips to control devices

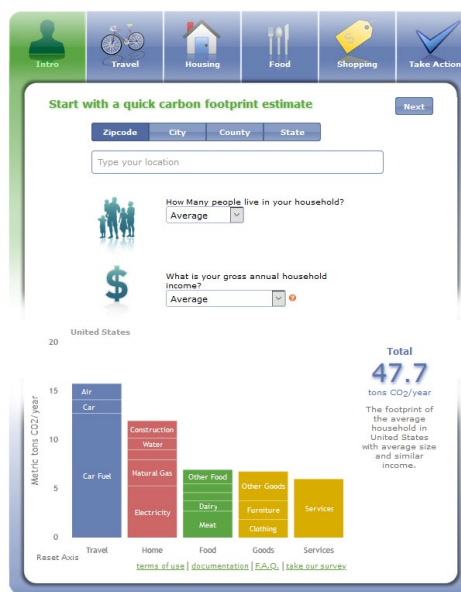
Sidebar- Agency reactions

"As we're serving Oregonians over the phone, holding meetings with customers and partners over Zoom, and finding ways to connect wherever we are, we're also reducing drive time and the need for printed materials. DSL quickly created an online option for removal-fill permit applications. Applicants no longer have to print and mail materials, which reduces both paper and travel related to that process. In FY 2019, DSL received 458 removal-fill permit applications – so the new online option has the potential for significant environmental benefits.

I think having to come up with solutions has also opened our eyes to other ways of providing service and connecting, so we will likely see sustainability benefits continue going forward as ideas from this time are integrated into our day-to-day." – Ali Hansen, Department of State Lands

Manage your home carbon footprint

A great way to take stock your own environmental impact at home is to measure your "carbon footprint" – or the amount of GHGs generated by your activities. Our own DEQ has created a handy GHG, or "carbon" footprint calculator where you can find out how your



household contributes to GHG emissions and discover some ways you can reduce your footprint in your travel, home energy use, and even shopping and eating habits. [You can find the tool here.](#)

Track your commute

Want to know how your commute contributes to GHG emissions and how your choices can reduce emissions? The web site [Map My Emissions](#) lets you do just that. Enter your home and office addresses and mode of commuting and you can calculate one-way the carbon dioxide-equivalent of emissions. Use the calculator to evaluate the climate-related benefits of remote working, riding transit, choosing a more efficient car and more.

