



SB 1507 & HB 4001 It's time for a clean energy jobs bill

Testimony by Gerritt Rosenthal 2.7.2018

Tax Fairness Oregon strongly supports the basic concepts embodied in both SB 1507 and HB 4001 that will put Oregon firmly on the path to reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in this State by mid-century. Either of these bills will strengthen state efforts at “just transitions” for workers, provide job stimulus in sustainable economies, and encourage the clean energy technology sector. However, SB 1507 contains an exemption for emissions of fluorocarbon gases from the chip manufacturing industry until 2026. This is of concern due to the high potency of these gases as GHGs.

We applaud the work of both Committees in bringing together the views and concerns of affected communities and industries — talking and listening to them over the past several years—to craft this complex program which will result in a cleaner, more sustainable, more prosperous Oregon.

Will the price of energy go up? Yes. But these bills wisely soften the impact on low-income residents and communities and cost sensitive businesses by giving them a voice in its implementation. By putting a price on carbon, we recognize the true costs of these emissions and are asking the polluters (and that includes all of us) to pay. Revenues generated will be reinvested in creating clean energy jobs and mitigating the damaging effects of climate change. It is a win-win for the State—a program designed to actually pay for itself, an element that Tax Fairness feels is particularly critical.

Our major concern is that the success of this effort depends on the capacity of our State agencies to carry it out—especially the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ). Even today the DEQ is inadequately staffed to carry out its current responsibilities. To manage this complex program will require a statewide team of exceptionally qualified people. We urge both the Legislature and the Executive to be mindful of this necessity in building and staffing (and yes, funding) the administrative structure for this effort will require. Importantly, since this will take several years and considerable effort, the time to start is NOW, not a year from now. These bills provide the time to carefully design the remainder of the program.

Oregon has a painful history of promising innovative programs but not fully fulfilling those promises. Let's not let that happen here!