

## TOWN HALL: Republicans talked on cap and trade

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climate change, and HB 2020. They said they were there to listen and take notes.

Despite varying opinions on the House bill and whether or not it should be re-introduced, changed or unchanged, at the next session in Salem, the overwhelming message that came through loud and clear was “do something about carbon emissions and their impact on our climate.” (See related story on page 18.)

Emotions ran high in several participants and there was a plethora of information, study results, and opinions expressed during the two-and-a-half hour meeting. Bonham and Bentz said at the beginning of the evening they would stay until every person who had something to say was heard — and they did.

The issues of carbon emissions, cap and trade, and climate change are complex and complicated and not easily summarized in a few hours or a newspaper article.

Cap and trade is a market-based approach to controlling pollution (like carbon emissions) by providing economic incentives for achieving reductions in the emissions of pollutants. A central authority allocates or sells a limited number of permits to discharge specific quantities of a specific pollutant per time period.

In theory, emitters will find ways to reduce their emissions below the established limits, and thus reduce the need for costly permits. If one emitter is able to lower their emissions so they don't need all their permits, they can trade (sell) them to another emitter who is unable to find lower-cost methods to reduce pollution.

Proponents hope that the overall impact on the environment would be that all emitters would attempt to take action to reduce emissions and avoid the cost of permits.

Right up front, both Republicans stated they do not favor a cap and trade bill as the way to reduce carbon emissions. They have both been involved on carbon committees and have studied the issue extensively. Bentz attended a conference in Toronto to hear what Canada's experience has been with cap and trade.

In 2018, he attended 16 meetings in Salem, met with scientists from Oregon State

University and the University of Oregon to gain an understanding of the issues, and conferred with other scientists from Harvard and Standard universities. Bentz supports an idea put forward by Dr. William Jaeger of OSU, which includes a tax on income of one-fourth of one percent with the money going toward efforts to reduce climate change.

With the support of slides indicating that Oregon's carbon emissions in 2017 were 65 million tons, while global emissions reached 36.8 billion tons, Bentz proposed the best way for Oregon to truly make an impact on climate change globally is to come up with a really creative solution that would encourage duplication by other states and countries.

“Cap and trade would create a multi-billion dollar liability for Oregonians,” he said.

According to Bentz, there are two million operating coal-powered plants in the world, half of them in China. From a world population of 2.6 billion people in 1952, the number in 2018 reached 7.6 billion, adding 80 million more people each year. More people means more pollution.

Polls have indicated that 65 percent of Oregonians want something done about climate change, with 85 percent of Democrats and over 50 percent of Republicans in favor of action.

The current climate of partisan politics in Salem and nationally appears to be a major barrier to reaching consensus on a workable program. From the comments heard at the town hall, citizens are frustrated with the inability of legislators to work together and “do something.”

Bentz stated he was shut out by Democrats from offering alternative solutions in the last legislative session and that is why he walked out of the legislature. The overarching problem, in his mind, is an existential one — “a lack of civility in how we govern and reach solutions.”

According to Bentz, Oregon has abundant natural resources available for carbon sequestration. The seaweed in the three-mile territorial sea off the Oregon coast captures a lot of carbon. There are 27 million acres of forests, 16 million acres of farmland, and 15 million acres of sagebrush, all able to absorb CO<sub>2</sub>. If managed properly, this acreage could help capture significant amounts of carbon emissions. There are tens of thousands of acres available

for utilization as solar farms.

The Oregon Conservation Partnership concurs. The forest and farm lands “could be included in strategies to sequester carbon and benefit climate resiliency. Data show that restoration, conservation, and improved land-management approaches can address a significant percentage of global emissions... Conserving working lands and water resources also supports Oregon's rural economies.

The Oregon constitution is written in such a way that the \$350 million in taxes collected at the gas pump each year can't be used to fund any projects other than roadwork. If that were changed, some of that money could be used for programs and incentives to reduce pollution. Bentz would like to see a change to the constitution to free up those funds.

After hearing from everyone who wished to speak, Bentz closed out the evening by saying, “The burden is on you guys... What are you going to do to bring the Democrats along?” He believes that an appropriately designed bill to reduce carbon will have political durability.

Bonham said both he and Bentz want carbon reduction programs in place.

“It will take an investment of time and energy with all the stakeholders,” according to Bonham.

## Sisters Country birds

By Douglas Beall  
Correspondent

In many areas of western North America, the melodious song of the black-headed grosbeak (*Pheucticus melanocephalus*) is a familiar harbinger of spring. They appear here in May with both male and female singing from tops of trees. Their song is often confused with the robins' morning symphony.

They are feeding heavily now in preparation for their long migration to Central America and Baja.

Their nests are so thinly constructed that eggs can be seen through the bottom. Thin nests may provide ventilation and help keep them cool. Two to five pale-bluish to reddish-brown eggs will hatch in 12 to 14 days and the chicks will leave the nest

in 10 to 14 days. They consume varied insects and some seeds including black sunflower seeds from feeders.

They hybridize with their eastern counterpart, the rose-breasted grosbeak, along their mutual boundary. This situation arose when the treeless prairies, which once formed a barrier between the two, became dotted with towns and homesteads, providing suitable habitats for both species.

The black-headed grosbeak is one of the few birds that can safely eat the poisonous monarch butterfly.

A group of grosbeaks are collectively known as a “gross” of grosbeaks.

To view more images of the black-headed grosbeak, visit <http://abirdsings-becauseithasasong.com/recent-journeys/>.



PHOTO BY DOUGLAS BEALL

Black-headed grosbeak.

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