

# ENVIRONMENTAL WATCHDOGS HAVE EYES ON CITY POLICY

Coalition plans local work on climate change

Citizens are acting as watchdogs over environmental policy as they form a coalition to follow the city of Eugene's developments for meeting the goals laid out in its climate action plan.

The coalition, which was founded by environmental activist 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.

'We believe the coalition represents a dedicated group of folks who know quite a bit about climate solutions and will hold the city accountable...'

— LISA ARKIN,  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
BEYOND TOXICS

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.

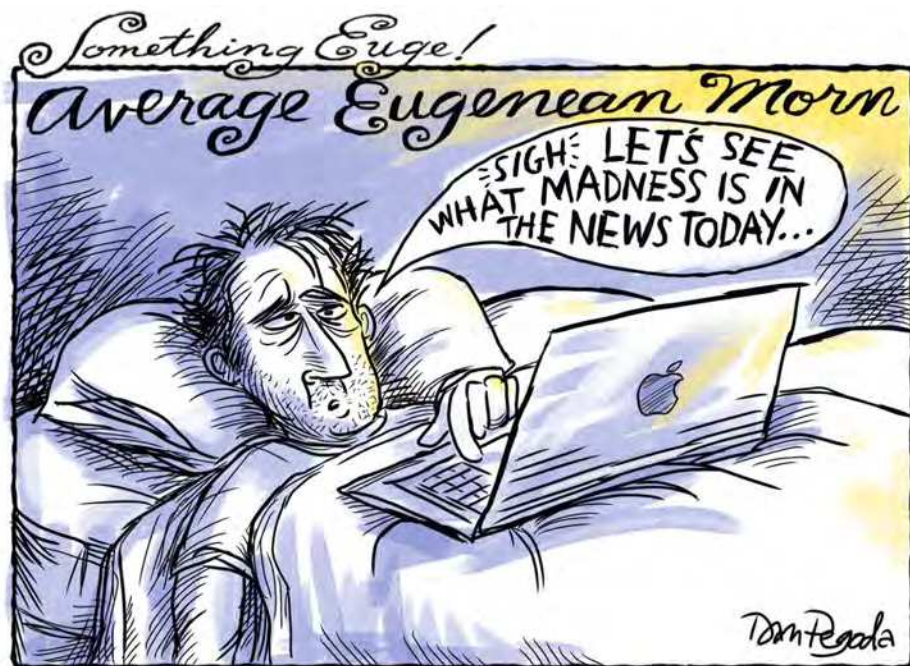
Arkin expressed similar sentiments to Heyl, and says that the coalition must be broad in its membership so that the Climate Action Plan can meet its goals.

"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." ■

## SLANT

• In 2014 Joshua Hunt wrote in *The New York Times* about rape allegations against three University of Oregon basketball players. Now he has an entire book about the corrosive influence of sports money on higher education — and particularly on the UO. Due out in August from Brooklyn publisher Melville House, "*University of Nike explores the University of Oregon's complex relationship with its corporate partner, Nike, and how the arrangement has undermined the school's academic integrity, transparency, and campus culture,*" the publisher's website says. Rumor has it at least a few sacred cows have been gored by Hunt; we've asked for an advance copy to find out whose.

• Together with our fellow news junkies, we've been keeping an eye on *The Register-Guard* since it was purchased by GateHouse Media. **Functioning democracies need good journalism and transparency.** We also need a healthy dialogue, so we were a little freaked out to see there were no letters to the editor in the Monday, July 23, issue. A mistake



thanks to outsourcing to Austin for copy editing? Not a sign of future plans, we hope. Readers and community members need the forums the *RG* and *EW* provide in our letters sections.

• **What we're reading:** Chris Offutt's novel *Country Dark*. Our *EW* senior staff writer Rick Levin says, "Trust me, you won't be able to put it down."

• **Oregon has the highest number of reported hate crimes in the country,** according to *ProPublica* and the FBI. That's what Eric Ward, executive director of the Western States Center, told the City Club of Eugene on July 20. The topic was "Free Speech vs. Hate Speech," and Ward shared the stage with Doyle Srader, speech and communication professor at Northwest Christian University. Maybe the hate crime statistic means that

Oregon reports better than other states, but the national numbers do show a dramatic increase in hate speech and hate crimes during the Trump presidency. No surprise when Trump talks about "Mexican rapists," chants "lock her up," and constantly makes anti-Muslim comments. As Ward said, "It is time to speak our values."

• As the crowded courtrooms in the federal courthouse in Eugene showed July 18, **climate lawsuits are attracting the attention they deserve.** Oregon is especially interested in the case brought by Our Children's Trust, which likely will be argued before Judge Ann Aiken in Eugene in October. Another series of climate cases, with a different legal theory, is playing out in courtrooms across the country. These cases are suing big energy companies for continuing practices they knew were changing the climate and damaging cities, counties and states. So far, those cases are losing but — like the famous tobacco cases — they will keep coming.

• We want to wipe a phrase out of the world's dictionary. Stop saying "**mother of all wars,**" please. Maybe try "father of all wars." That makes more sense. Even better, let's stop birthing war at all.