

# OPINION

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# the Astorian

Founded in 1873

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## OUR VIEW

# Cap-and-trade bill would be disastrous

**W**e've taken a wait-and-see attitude towards Oregon's carbon cap-and-trade proposal, which has been winding its way through the state Legislature this session.

The so-called Clean Energy Jobs Bill (House Bill 2020) would set a 52 million metric ton cap on greenhouse gas emissions. Companies that produce at least 25,000 metric tons of emissions per year would have to pay for every ton they emit by buying allowances through an auction. The proceeds from those sales would go to high-way projects, climate mitigation projects, rural and minority communities, and other programs.

We've listened to detailed arguments on both sides — those who say the bill would create more clean energy jobs and fight climate change, and those who say it will cost good-paying local jobs and do nothing to prevent climate change.

After careful consideration, we believe this legislation would be disastrous — both for Oregon as a whole and Clatsop County in particular.

Working-class Oregonians would be particularly hard hit. That message seems to be falling on deaf ears in Salem.

State Sen. Betsy Johnson, D-Scappoose, agrees.

"Any bill with upwards of 90 amendments sends a clear signal that the complicated concepts are not fully developed," Johnson said. "This bill will not, in and of itself, deliver a clean climate. It could, however, create a real disruption to our economy and the displacement of many established jobs."

### Imperceptible impact

We aren't a bunch of climate deniers here at The Astorian. We believe climate change is real and America — indeed, the world — needs to take action to combat it.

This legislation, however, is not the answer. Even its proponents acknowledge it will have an imperceptible impact on global warming.

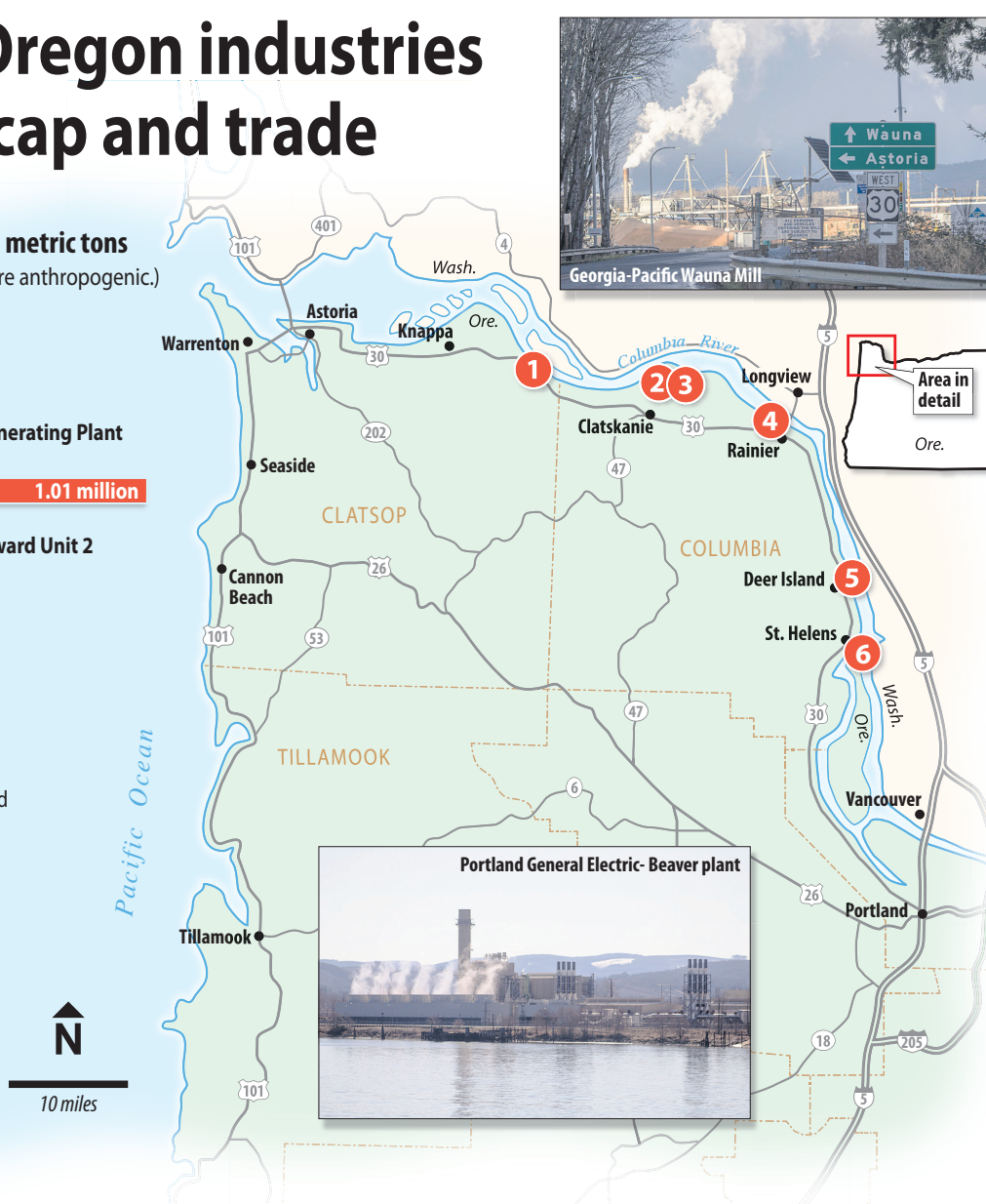
To have a perceptible impact on global warming, the entire nation must take action. A unified national approach would prevent industrial employers from simply moving their operations and jobs

## Northwest Oregon industries affected by cap and trade

**Facilities and 2017 emissions, in metric tons**  
(Carbon dioxide equivalent emissions are anthropogenic.)

- Georgia-Pacific Wauna Mill**  
92326 Taylorville Road, Clatskanie  
Emissions **257,824**
- Portland General Electric-Beaver Generating Plant**  
80997 Kallunki Road, Clatskanie  
Emissions **1.01 million**
- Portland General Electric-Port Westward Unit 2**  
80997 Kallunki Road, Clatskanie  
Emissions **104,700**
- United States Gypsum Co.**  
29073 Dike Road, Rainier  
Emissions **42,882**
- Dyno Nobel Inc.**  
63149 Columbia River Hwy., Deer Island  
Emissions **198,275**
- Cascades Tissue Group**  
1300 Kaster Road, St. Helens  
Emissions **52,141**

Edward Stratton and Alan Kenaga/EO Media Group  
Source: Oregon Dept. of Environmental Quality



across state borders to less-restrictive areas.

That would require wholesale changes in the White House and Congress, of course, but the fight against climate change requires thinking big, not small.

If this passes, Oregon would join California as the only U.S. states to implement cap-and-trade systems. Unilateral, symbolic actions are not the answer to the climate threat.

### Jobs in jeopardy

The proposed carbon fees will cost jobs in this state, because they will put our industries at major competitive disadvantages with other states.

It's not hyperbole to say that this bill directly threatens 750 well-paying jobs at the Wauna Mill.

The mill's operator, Georgia-Pacific (owned by Koch Industries), has shown no compunction in the past about closing down operations to improve its bottom line. It shut down most of its plant in Camas, Washington, last

year, resulting in hundreds of layoffs. And it recently announced it will close its Coos Bay lumber mill entirely, laying off all 111 workers.

Closure of the Wauna Mill would create an asteroid-sized hole in the county's economy. It pays an average hourly wage of \$26, or \$54,000 per year. It spends more than \$375 million on labor, goods and services, as well as more than \$2.6 million annually in Clatsop County property taxes.

Bill Kerr, president of United Steelworkers Local Union 1097 and a mill employee, said no pulping mills operate in California since enactment of that state's cap-and-trade legislation.

"We applauded the leadership of state Sen. Betsy Johnson and state Rep. Brad Witt to protect our jobs and oppose the cap-and-trade proposal," Kerr wrote in a recent guest column in The Astorian. "We urge Gov. Kate Brown and Rep. Tiffany Mitchell, as well as the 87 others representing communities across Oregon, to follow

their lead. As you finalize cap-and-trade legislation, do what's right and protect our environment and protect local jobs."

### Consumers will pay

The bill's proponents expect working-class Oregonians to eat the costs of the legislation for the greater good.

Carbon emitters will pass on the proposed fees to consumers, driving up gas and utility bills. There has been heated debate over exactly how much, but anyone who thinks they won't go up is delusional.

The bill's proponents chose not to go the cap-and-dividend route, which would have mitigated the economic impact by returning the fees to taxpayers, perhaps via the "kicker" tax rebate. They have the typical Oregon government mindset — they think they have better ideas about what to do with our money than we do.

Given those costs, and the lack of a perceptible climate benefit, this bill just doesn't make sense. No on HB 2020.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Participate in democracy

**W**e have a lot of amazing rights in this country — freedom of speech, the right to bear arms, the right to petition and so on. With these rights comes a responsibility of our own, and that responsibility is to participate in our communities and democracy.

Volunteering is one of the things that is sorely needed, and there are always things that need to be done. It's also proven that volunteering makes you happier and more confident, so it's great for you and those around you.

Another thing is to vote. Many people complain about politics, but a lot of the people who complain the loudest don't actually participate in voting. Voting is something that should be held sacred, because it gives us the opportunity to participate in what happens in our amazing country.

So I urge everyone reading this to both vote in local, state and national elections, and to volunteer your time to help others.

JOSH FULTON  
Astoria

### Thanks for your votes

**C**huck and I appreciate your voting for us to serve on the boards of Clatsop Community College and Clatsop Care

Health District.

Both organizations are important to residents and visitors, and the positive qualities of life they provide. Thank you.  
SARA MEYER  
CHUCK MEYER  
Astoria

### Need art education

**I**'m a senior at Knappa High School, and my senior project was a magazine to share student artwork. During this time, I learned some interesting things about our schools.

Art education is frequently the first on the chopping block when there are budget cuts in our schools. Part of this is because between 2008-2009, during our economic collapse, school systems had to make changes. Over 80 percent of schools had their budgets cut, and in 2010, Common Core was introduced as the new standard for American education.

Elective courses such as music, art and drama were read, while college readiness courses began to take root and flourish. Classes that prepare us for college are important, but are they so important that our students have no art education?

Electives are just as important as these state-required courses — they allow students to grow and expand, as well as



instilling respect. We live in a society that tends to only value art if it's made by somebody with extensive amounts of talent, when in reality, it shouldn't be.

I feel that our students should still be able to take art classes with the proper supplies. Art classes can help encourage students to stay in school, give them a

sense of accomplishment, and teach them creative problem solving.

I would like to thank Knappa High School for offering the courses that they do, and I can only hope that these classes will be provided in years to come.

EMERALD CARRIER-MASON  
Astoria