

# Climate: Program will initially regulate 16 fuel suppliers, three natural gas utilities

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Last year, Gov. Kate Brown ordered the state Department of Environmental Quality to develop a new set of administrative rules that would cap greenhouse gas emissions from fossil fuels and reduce them over time.

The resulting Climate Protection Program caps emissions from gasoline, diesel, propane, kerosene and natural gas and makes the cap more restrictive over time. The program, set to launch in January, will distribute a declining number of emission credits to fuel suppliers and allow them to buy and sell those credits as the cap comes down. It also creates a Community Climate Investment Fund that will allow companies to pay for emission reductions in communities that are most impacted by climate change.

The program will initially regulate 16 fuel suppliers and three natural gas utilities, as well as 13 industrial facilities that would be regulated under a different system that creates individualized plans for each facility to reduce emissions using the best available technology. The rules include financial penalties for companies that can't meet the emission reduction targets.

Companies that will be regulated under the program have protested the higher targets, arguing that they will result in even higher prices for gasoline, diesel and natural gas that will have ripple effects throughout the economy. They've also raised concerns that there may not be enough alternatives to fossil fuels, such as biofuels and electric vehicles, to meet the program goals.

Fuel suppliers will likely face higher costs over time that would be passed along to consumers. That will leave Oregonians and businesses in the state with two choices: reduce their use of fossil fuels or pay increasingly higher prices for them.

Industry groups did their



Hailey Hoffman/The Astorian  
Renée Rowe, of Indivisible North Coast Oregon, flashes her sign to passing cars during the Global Climate Strike in Astoria in 2019.

own analysis of the program and found it would be more costly for consumers than what the Department of Environmental Quality is projecting, based on its economic analysis. The industry analysis found the new regulations could double the price of natural gas by 2050. It also would increase the price of gasoline by 36 cents per gallon and increase the price of diesel by 39 cents per gallon by 2035, according to the industry analysis.

"There's a massive difference in the conclusions drawn by the economic analysis DEQ did and the one from the business community," Commissioner Greg Addington said. He cast the commission's only "no" vote.

While the state's economic analysis found the program would result in about 20,000 added jobs, the industry analysis found it would result in the loss of 120,000 jobs. The industry analysis found agriculture, wood products, manufacturing and food processing would be most affected by the higher fuel prices.

"Those are alarming things for me," Addington said. "I'm trying to find a way to work

through this. At the end of the day I don't know that I'm going to get there on this. I do think there are things we can do to lessen the blow to rural Oregonians."

Addington made the case for adding carbon sequestration to the options for companies looking to offset their emissions, so they might pay to sequester carbon in forests, for example. But other commissioners didn't support his motion to add that option to the program.

"The reason we have so much carbon in the atmosphere is because we burn so much fossil fuel," Commissioner Amy Schlusser said. "I don't think under this program in particular it's appropriate to enable us to continue emitting fossil fuels into the atmosphere. ... We would be delaying reductions in fossil fuels."

### 'Affordable fuels'

Mike Freese, with the Oregon Fuels Association said the small, locally owned businesses he represents are worried that alternative transportation fuels won't be available to meet people's needs as the emissions cap becomes more restrictive for fossil fuel users.

"In the end, the rule fails to provide any assurances that all Oregonians — regardless of their income level and where they live — will continue to have access to affordable fuels," he said.

Nicole Singh, the Department of Environmental Quality's climate policy adviser, responded to public comments about higher fuel prices. She said the agency will be tracking prices in Oregon and the neighboring states of Washington, Idaho and Nevada and looking for signs that prices are going up more than expected.

If prices in Oregon increase by more than 20% of the fuel prices in other states, she said, state staff will do a review to determine whether the program needs to be changed.

"That's on us at the agency at DEQ to take a look at that and find out why we're seeing those changes," Singh said. "Regardless of what's causing those changes, is that something that means we should make changes to the program?"

Singh said the commission also has the power to make changes to the program as needed.

The program was initially set for a target of 80% emissions reductions by 2050. But the Department of Environmental Quality increased that target to 90% after receiving thousands of public comments urging higher targets and seeing new recommendations from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. The approved program also set a higher interim target of cutting emissions 50% by 2035.

"We have a more aggressive trajectory on this that does go beyond what Gov. Brown asked us to do in her executive order," Richard Whitman, the director of the Department of Environmental Quality, told the commission. "The fundamental reason for that is the science that's coming out about moving faster. In order for us to achieve the goal of avoiding the worst effects of climate change, which requires us keeping the average temperature increase to 1.5 degrees Celsius, we need to be hitting net zero by 2050."

Whitman said the Climate Protection Program is "a key glue" that binds together other existing carbon reduction programs such as clean fuel requirements, energy efficiency programs and electric vehicle incentives, all of which will help the state reach its emission reduction goals.

"All of these things work together," he said. "They work on the supply side and on the demand side to create a less expensive energy future for Oregon."

### 'Significant investments'

George, the commission chairwoman, said six of the state's eight major clean fuel producers are in rural areas.

"This will mean significant investments in new jobs and new opportunities for agricultural and rural areas of the state," she said.

Commissioner Sam Baraso said the Community Climate Investment Fund could help electrify household systems and reduce

expenses for people who are most impacted by higher energy prices.

"Investing directly in households, investing in energy systems that reduce our reliance on fossil fuels in a way that's targeted does benefit us all and helps us absorb higher energy costs," Baraso said.

Whitman said the Department of Environmental Quality carefully designed the program to limit the percentage of emissions that companies can offset by paying into the investment fund and to prioritize communities of color and low-income neighborhoods as the funds are spent.

Initially, companies will only be able to reduce 10% of their emission reductions by paying into the investment fund, and that percentage will increase to just 20% over time.

"It is important that we can assure the public and everybody that this program is going to achieve the fundamental effect that we are reducing greenhouse gas emissions," Whitman said. "That for every credit we give out we are going to achieve those emissions reductions."



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# Remembering our Brother

In this Christmas season of joy we, the Laughman family, mourn the loss and celebrate the life of Jon Vincent Laughman. Born in Astoria Oregon on February 5, 1957, to Martha and Paul



Laughman, he was the 10th of 12 children. He graduated from O'Dea high school in Seattle, WA and later earned an associates of applied science degree in building construction from Edmonds College.

He had a natural talent for taking things apart and putting them together. After high school graduation he entered the building trades where he spent his adult life



developing and honing his skills in that area. He was a true craftsman, at the highest level. His latest project



## Jon Vincent Laughman

was the restoration of the residence at 1893 Irving Ave in Astoria.

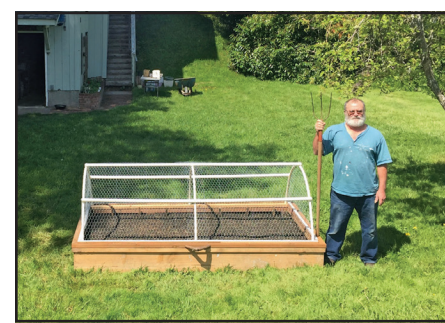
As a native Astorian, he loved fishing and clam digging. No clam



was safe when he was digging on Sunset Beach. And when summer came to the Northwest, he would meet up with his brothers. They would ride their Harley's into the

night, seeing the countryside, camping along the way, and probably doing things they would not want their mother to know.

More recently he developed an interest in container gardening. The flowers growing on his front porch



provided a blaze of color for the corner of 18th and Exchange. He

would sit on his porch swing in the summer evening with his dog, Nellie just enjoying...



As a man, he was kind and generous and always a good neighbor. He appreciated good company and loved good storytelling and music. And he adored his dog, Nellie, who shadowed him wherever he went.

His sudden death on November 24 has left his two surviving brothers, six sisters and his many nieces and nephews in a sea of sadness. He was an active participant in all of our lives and we are richer for having known him. We love you Jon. We love you forever.



We also extend our condolences to our brother's former spouse, Keli Kimbriel and her two children. We understand their sorrow and wish them good fortune, peace, and harmony.