

Draft climate plan excludes carbon sequestration

By **GEORGE PLAVERN**
Capital Press

SALEM — A new program aimed at significantly curbing Oregon's greenhouse gas emissions is coming under criticism for omitting investments that could help farms and forests sequester more carbon from the atmosphere.

The Oregon Department of Environmental Quality released draft rules for the Climate Protection Program on Aug. 5 — similar to cap-and-trade legislation thwarted twice in the state Legislature by Senate Republicans who fled the Capitol to deny a vote.

After the second walk-out in 2020, Gov. Kate Brown signed an executive order requiring the Oregon DEQ and other state agencies to take action on harmful emissions, targeting a 45% reduction below 1990 levels by 2035 and 80% below 1990 levels by 2050.

Like cap and trade, the Climate Protection Program sets a limit on emissions that gradually lowers each year.

Part of the program also allows regulated utilities and fuel suppliers to buy or trade offset credits to meet their reduction goals, referred to as "community climate investments," or CCIs.

CCIs would pay for a variety of projects to transition Oregonians from fossil fuels to cleaner, more sustainable sources of energy, said Colin McConaha, who manages Oregon DEQ's

Office of Greenhouse Gas Programs.

However, McConaha said it will not subsidize carbon sequestration on natural and working lands, such as through no-till farming and the planting of cover crops. While the DEQ is not opposed to carbon sequestration, McConaha said the primary focus of the program is reducing fossil fuels in homes, vehicles and businesses.

"The primary drawback in the context of this program is simply that it would take funding away from investments in hastening Oregon's clean-energy transition," McConaha said. That decision is not sitting well with some members of the rules advisory committee tasked with helping the DEQ to develop the draft rules.

Jan Lee, executive director of the Oregon Association of Conservation Districts, said carbon sequestration is not only a critical tool for addressing climate change, but can benefit rural communities that are disproportionately impacted by creating healthier, more resilient landscapes.

Lee said from the beginning the committee discussed carbon sequestration within the CCI program. Then, at the final meeting in July, it was suddenly removed without explanation.

"It was very difficult at the end to drop it out," said Lee, whose association represents 45 soil and water

conservation districts across Oregon. "Sequestration was one of the few things that could be done in rural areas to deal with the impact of climate change."

Under Brown's executive order, the Oregon Global Warming Commission has also drafted a natural and working lands proposal that calls for a net sequestration of 9.5 million metric tons of carbon dioxide per year by 2050.

Not connecting sequestration with the Climate Protection Program's source of funding "is a big missed opportunity," Lee said.

The Climate Protection Program sets the initial price of CCIs at \$81 per metric ton of carbon. At 9.5 million metric tons, that adds up to \$769.5 million worth of investment that could be coming in to rural Oregon, Wallowa County Commissioner John Hillock said.

"If you leave out sequestration, the rural communities aren't going to be able to share in this money," Hillock said.

Jeff Stone, executive director of the Oregon Association of Nurseries, said he was likewise disappointed to see carbon sequestration excluded from the draft rules.

If the Climate Protection Plan has winners and losers, the question then becomes what Oregon wants its economy to look like in 25-30 years, Stone said.

"We should be doing things that enhance agriculture, and that enhances car-



Oregon Department of Forestry/Contributed Photo
A new Oregon state program aimed at curbing greenhouse gas emissions is under criticism for omitting investments that could help farms and forests sequester carbon from the atmosphere.

bon sequestration," Stone said. "I think there's a missed opportunity here in trying to build more bridges rather than walls between

urban and rural." McConaha, with Oregon DEQ, insists the program will prioritize rural communities while main-

taining the focus on transitioning to cleaner fuels.

For example, he said many rural households and businesses — including agriculture and forestry — have a tougher challenge switching to cleaner modes of transportation since they often have to travel longer distances and traverse rough terrain.

"This makes helping enable that switch to cleaner transportation especially important for these communities," he said.

A 60-day public comment period is currently underway for the Climate Protection Program, ending Oct. 4. DEQ will also hold two virtual public hearings to discuss the proposal on Sept. 22 and Sept. 30.

Final rules need to be approved by the Environmental Quality Commission before going into effect as early as next year.

Youths to learn to make 'haunted' masks

'Haunt Camp' workshops planned in Joseph, Wallowa

Chieftain staff

JOSEPH — A six-week workshop in Joseph and Wallowa will take place just in time to get ready for Halloween as high schoolers can take part in Haunt Camp: Creature Creation Workshop, the Joseph Center for Arts and Culture announced.

The classes are free and will take place in two locations:

- The Place in Joseph after school each Monday and Wednesday beginning Sept. 20.

- The Wallowa Elementary School Multipurpose Room each Tuesday and Thursday.

Start times will be determined to accommodate student travel time, and the course will run until Halloween.

Students will learn how to safely create a plaster copy of their face, sculpt a character mask and transform it into realistic silicone pieces while learning the same techniques used in Hollywood today.

"For years I've been working on bringing this class to high school students in Wallowa County," artist J.R. Rymut said of the



Joseph Center/Contributed Photo

During the Haunt Camp Creature Creation Workshop, students will learn how to create a plaster cast of their faces, sculpt a character mask and transform it into realistic silicone pieces while learning the same techniques used in Hollywood.

class. "I'm so grateful it's finally happening. Molding and casting is rarely taught in art classes, and we're creating high-quality prosthetic makeup the same way special effects shops in the film industry do. And that's the point of the class: not only are we making really unusual, exciting projects, as a professional creative fabricator I want to introduce teens to career paths in the arts they may not know exist."

In the class, students will design their own character to bring to life.

"Monsters are fun, but I hope some students want to experiment with old-age transformations or other realistic disguises," Rymut said. "I want to see a lot of fake noses in Safeway."

"J.R. and I have been

working together for a while trying to make this happen and just by serendipity, we had the perfect grant that fit perfectly with this project, so we are able to execute the program for free and for 15 students in both locations," said Cheryl Coughlan, executive director of the center. "I can't wait to see the end result."

Coughlan said the workshop isn't limited to what's going on there.

"The workshop also lets students exercise their dramatic and video production skills at the end, by creating TikTok videos to show off their creations," she said.

Students can register online at hauntcamp.com. Registration and face masks are required. For questions, contact Rymut at haunted-camp@gmail.com.

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