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REP. KEN HELM

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State Capitol
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NEWS RELEASE

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Carbon pricing bill introduced by bicameral legislators

SB 1070 is the product of work between Senate and House joint work group

SALEM – The group of 33 legislators from the Oregon Senate and House and Representatives has introduced the Clean Energy Jobs bill today that is designed to reduce carbon emissions and create new jobs in communities across Oregon.

Sen. Michael Dembrow (D-Portland) and Rep. Ken Helm (D-Beaverton), who both chair complimentary committees in the Senate and House, joined forces earlier this session to form a bicameral work group focusing on carbon pricing and clean energy. That work has yielded Senate Bill 1070 that features a statewide cap on greenhouse gas emissions, which lowers over time. The bill also establishes a price per ton of emissions for the largest greenhouse gas emitters in the state and a plan to reinvest proceeds into projects to reduce pollution and bring job opportunities to economically distressed communities across the state – rural, urban and everywhere in between.

In all, 33 legislators from both chambers are expected to sign on as sponsors of the bill, representing more than one third of the entire Legislature. While there is not time for the bill to pass this session – which is constitutionally required to conclude by the end of the day on July 10 – it is intended to tee up the conversation for the 2018 Legislative Session by incorporating all the feedback that’s been received throughout this session’s work.

“It’s time for us to continue our pioneering ways by taking the lead in battling climate change,” said Dembrow, who chairs the Senate Environment and Natural Resources Committee. “This is

an opportunity to begin showing the people of this state and the rest of the nation that we take this issue seriously. This also is an opportunity to strengthen our state's position as a clean energy leader, creating jobs for Oregonians living in places that need them the most. For too long, there has been a perceived conflict between creating or maintaining jobs and protecting the environment. I think we can do both."

The new bill retains many of the major policy components of earlier bills that were introduced this session, but includes some streamlining and technical improvements that resulted from collaboration with a broad group of stakeholders.

"We've worked hard and learned a lot this session about how Oregon can effectively cap and price climate pollution," said Helm, who chairs the House of Representatives Energy and Environment Committee. "The Clean Energy Jobs Bill is in a good place after months of work. We'll take the summer and fall to refine the details and find the most effective ways to invest in Oregon communities and reach those in need of increased opportunities, jobs and clean energy. The policy will be ready for next year."

The Clean Energy Jobs bill is the result of a multi-year effort to engage a wide variety of stakeholders to find a comprehensive policy that addresses climate change pollution in Oregon while also strengthening the state's leadership in the clean energy economy and hastening the transition to low carbon intensity in every sector. Businesses, workers, communities of color, rural advocates, environmentalists, public health proponents and others have weighed in on the shaping of the bill and will continue in the process.

"Establishing a cap and price on climate pollution is the next big step that Oregon must take for clean energy leadership," Helm said. "We didn't get the concept over the finish line this session, but we've picked up speed and momentum. The \$700 million per year in investments that will come from this will be transformative. This is going to happen, because Oregon can't miss an opportunity this big."

The joint committee held multiple hearings over the course of this legislative session to gather information from policy experts, other jurisdictions that already have placed a price on climate pollution, affected communities and the public. With the direction signaled by the current presidential administration, it's now more important than ever for the states to take the lead on this important issue.

"The administration in Washington, D.C., has made no secret of a purposeful shift in policy to prop up fossil fuels and abdicate America's leadership in a 21st-Century economy," Dembrow said. "That's the wrong approach. In Oregon, we see the huge opportunity before us, both economically and in a leadership role. We're going to take it."

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