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Final version of cap-and-invest bill for 2020 takes shape Senate Committee holds first hearing on SB 1530 of the session

SALEM, Ore.-- Today, Oregonians received their first look at what should be the final version of a bill to establish a cap-and-invest program in the state to hold the largest climate polluters accountable with a cap and price on pollution, and create investments for projects to transition to clean energy and protect our communities from the climate crisis.

The Oregon Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources introduced a multifaceted amendment to Senate Bill 1530 to get it in final shape for passage this session. The amendment is a result of months of bipartisan meetings and compromise.

"With this amendment, legislators have created a framework that can be built upon. The important thing now is to stop the endless delays, because the climate crisis is too urgent to turn our backs," said Tera Hurst, Executive Director of Renew Oregon. "Despite years spent on this bill, hundreds of hours of process, thousands of pages of documents, polluting industry and their allies will try to erase that history and delay in every way possible. Climate delay is the new climate denial. This is an emergency and Oregon must step up right now."

"No comprehensive climate action is complete without guaranteed investments for communities most impacted by climate change, including farmworkers, Tribes, and low-income communities. This proposed amendment guarantees those communities will receive a majority of investments," said Reyna Lopez, Executive Director of Pineros y Campesinos Unidos del Noroeste (PCUN), a farmworkers union. "A good climate plan must reduce pollution and invest locally to create family wage jobs and training opportunities, fix up housing to use energy more efficiently, replace polluting equipment to protect the air in our communities. These investments will help achieve both goals."

IMPORTANT NOTES ON THE BILL/AMENDMENT:

The bill retains the comprehensive cap-and-invest model for reducing climate pollution from Oregon's largest sources and investing in both a transition to clean energy-- such as renewable power, clean transportation-- and protections from climate impacts -- such as wildfire prevention, water protection projects.

The bill maintains targets for reducing pollution from previous iterations: 45% below 1990 levels by 2035, at least 80% below 1990 levels by 2050.

A more gradual treatment for oil companies has been introduced, so that those oil companies selling in the Portland-metro region will be held accountable in 2022, and the rest of the populous areas of the state in 2025. There is no date by which oil companies selling fossil fuels in large parts of rural Oregon will be held accountable for pollution.

A more lenient treatment for industrial polluters has been devised, excusing a number of facilities from accountability compared to previous versions of the bill and shrinking the potential investment fund for Oregon community improvements and clean energy transition. Suppliers and industrial users of fossil fuel natural gas will be treated more leniently, including a rebate program, though the amendment requires some new obligations on those burning fossil fuel natural gas to receive rebates.

Of the investment funds raised, the bill has been changed back to the original guarantee for communities most impacted by the climate crisis to receive a majority of investments from the program. Rural, low-income, Tribes, and communities of color most severely feel impacts like wildfire, drought, heatwaves, and flooding. A previous version of SB 1530 did not go far enough to guarantee investments for those communities. The amendment addresses those concerns.

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Renew Oregon is a clean energy advocacy coalition of businesses and workers, healthcare professionals and parents, farmers and ranchers, faith and community organizations, and individuals coming together to move our state away from polluting energy to a clean energy economy. We are working to create good-paying jobs for all Oregonians, protect air and water from pollution, and help families stay healthy.