OREGON-- Marking one year since Governor Kate Brown signed the Oregon Climate Action Plan (executive order 20-04), a broad coalition of advocates issued a progress report on how well the state is carrying out the sweeping climate protection order.

“With both fire and ice disasters hitting Oregon since the signing of the Oregon Climate Action Plan a year ago, the climate crisis isn’t letting us forget what happens if we fail to act quickly,” said Don Sampson, Climate Change Project Director for Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians. “The Labor Day wildfires across Oregon and the crippling Valentine’s Day ice storm are climate-related disasters, which will become more frequent and severe unless climate pollution is brought under control. OCAP can represent a large part of how Oregon takes responsibility for its share of the work, if carried out to its full potential.”

The Oregon Climate Action Plan (OCAP) is a sector-by-sector approach to lowering climate pollution and transitioning to clean energy, while centering communities most harmed by climate change.

“As signed, the Oregon Climate Action Plan is potentially the most significant action in state history to transition Oregon to a clean energy economy, protect clean air, and begin to address unfair burdens of pollution and the climate crisis on frontline communities,” said Brad Reed, Campaign Manager for Renew Oregon. “Now we’re a year in, pushing agencies to turn the words on the page into real action that can help people. Results are mixed. Our coalition will continue to advocate for every policy and program to be as strong as intended to lower pollution, improve health, and increase equity.”

One year into OCAP’s implementation, there is progress worth celebrating on some fronts, yet not all agencies, boards, and commissions are living up to the ambition of OCAP. Many final outcomes for rulemakings and other actions are still to be determined in the coming year.

“Our state needs to make up for a lot of lost time by being ambitious in reducing pollution and addressing inequity in our communities. This OCAP progress report highlights what’s going well so far and the opportunities ahead in the next year or so to improve some areas that are lagging,” said Aimee Okotie-Oyekan, Environmental and Climate Justice Coordinator for NAACP Eugene-Springfield. “In particular, working on transportation, the sector with the largest GHG contributions in Oregon, presents a world of opportunity to both curb emissions and make our transportation system more safe and accessible for those who need it the most.”
Sixteen state agencies, boards, and commissions are tasked with using all existing authority to focus on new priorities of equitable climate protection— from clean transportation projects to energy efficient homes.

“We hear consistently from the state agencies tasked with protecting our clean air, water, health, and natural and working lands that they don’t have the necessary funding to fully carry out their missions. It’s critical the Legislature fully funds the agencies carrying out OCAP’s directives,” said Morgan Gratz-Weiser, Legislative Director for Oregon Environmental Council. “While there is minimal need for policy-making from the legislature to implement OCAP, funding should be of the highest priority, as well as passing complimentary laws to advance environmental justice, health, and climate protection.”

The OCAP 2021 Progress Report assesses six main areas: transportation, cap & reduce, clean energy, clean buildings, public health, and natural & working lands. Each area includes sections on what's going well, areas for improvement, and opportunities for progress.

In the year ahead, significant and necessary opportunities for progress on OCAP include, but are not limited to:

- **Dept. of Environmental Quality** kicks off rulemaking to strengthen and extend the already successful Clean Fuels Program, with a targeted reduction of at least 25% of climate pollution by 2035. This will expand fuel choices to cut down climate and air pollution.

- **Environmental Quality Commission** adopts new standards to increase electrification and reduce pollution from medium and heavy-duty trucks by the end of 2021 if not sooner.

- **Public Utility Commission** opens a proceeding to specifically assess the future role of fossil gas in Oregon. Additionally, PUC continues to monitor and act on preventing utility shutoffs to protect low-income customers as COVID continues.

- **Building Codes Division** should ensure the residential code, commercial code, and Reach Code that are scheduled to be adopted this year, lay a strong foundation for achieving the 2030 building energy efficiency goal.
Dept. of Environmental Quality completes rulemaking for the “Climate Protection Program” (aka cap & reduce) and it reduces emissions consistent with the best available science, does not give free passes to polluters, and centers equity. Furthermore, it is up to the Environmental Quality Commission to approve it before 2022.

Oregon Occupational Safety and Health Administration adopts rules to protect Oregon workers from excessive heat and wildfire smoke, both made more frequent and severe by climate change.

Dept. of Forestry and Board of Forestry seeks near-term opportunities to implement climate-smart forestry practices, which reduce emissions from logging and increase carbon sequestration in state and private forests.

“COVID-19, fires, and ice storms - have highlighted climate’s peril, and vulnerable communities, such as low-income households and people of color, hold the least responsibility and suffer the worst consequences. Energy efficiency upgrades save on energy, but are also about resilience in the face of a changing climate with affordable utility bills and sealed homes that keep homes warm in power outages, keep smoke out in forest fires, and keep bills low in a seemingly unending pandemic.” said Sherrie Villmark, Program Director at Community Energy Project. “There’s great potential with this Executive Order. The progress report holds power to account because we’ve seen what is at stake this past year.”

Even through a year wrought with disasters and social reckoning, OCAP accomplishments include, but are not limited to:

- A successful rulemaking to update the Clean Fuels Standard by Dept. of Environmental Quality to bring more kinds of electric vehicles into the program and to give utilities more responsibility for electrifying cars, buses and trucks, with specific focus on underserved communities.
- Oregon Dept. of Transportation established a Climate Office.
- Oregon Dept. of Energy completed rulemaking to increase energy efficiency in household appliances, saving Oregonians money and decreasing pollution.
- Public Utility Commission hired a Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, a new position.
- An eye-opening report from the Oregon Health Authority detailed the current harms from climate change to Oregonians’ health, which underscored the unfair burden on Black, Indigenous, Tribal, and communities of color in Oregon.

“The complete body of work to track the Oregon Climate Action Plan is astounding, and so are the benefits to Oregon if it’s carried faithfully into reality. While Beyond Toxics works directly on the natural and working lands and water portions, other members of our staff pitch in on transportation or cap & reduce for a whole team effort,” said Grace Brahler, Oregon Climate Action Policy Manager for Beyond Toxics. “The entire OCAP coalition of advocates has poured hours, energy, and heart into pushing for the best outcomes for our health, economy, and communities.”

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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.