



Oregon Public Health Association

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The Oregon Public Health Association (OPHA) recognizes that global warming is now an existential problem. The resultant climate change and extreme weather events have moved from challenge to crisis to catastrophe. There is no level of government immune from the responsibility to implement policies in their jurisdiction that will move the carbon footprint of their jurisdiction to zero emissions by 2050

There is no doubt the world is warming.

July 2019 was the hottest month on record for the planet. <https://www.noaa.gov/news/july-2019-was-hottest-month-on-record-for-planet>

We have not done enough. Carbon dioxide emissions in the Portland metro are up 24% since 1990. <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/10/10/climate/driving-emissions-map.html>

We remember when the goal was to stop CO₂ at 400ppm and reduce back to 350ppm. 2018 was measured at 407.4ppm. <https://www.climate.gov/news-features/understanding-climate/climate-change-atmospheric-carbon-dioxide>

The OPHA encourages and will support government jurisdictions (state, county, city, special district) that enact policies that will mitigate global warming, climate change, and extreme weather events. The policies must be meaningful and cover the full jurisdiction. The policies must clearly demonstrate a plan to achieve zero emissions by 2050. The policies should also include other activities that reduce the carbon footprint of the jurisdiction.

- The 2018 National Climate Assessment found that the Pacific Northwest has warmed about two degrees Fahrenheit since 1900, resulting in warmer winters, declining snow pack, and more instances of high heat, drought, and wildfires. The same report found health impacts related to heat illness, infectious diseases, and drinking water quality issues.
- Addressing the cause of these environmental conditions and slowing future warming rates will depend on finding ways to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Addressing the health impacts caused by climate change will require a collaborative and comprehensive approach involving health care, public health, community-based organizations, civic groups, private industry, and local and state elected officials.

Policies that the OPHA will support include:

1. Policies that increase the cost of fossil fuel use. This can include charges on fossil fuel use anywhere along the continuum from producer to end user.
2. Policies that reduce the use of energy from non-renewable sources. This can include policies that assure electricity entering a jurisdiction is from renewable sources and incentives for energy users to convert to renewable sources.
3. Food and agricultural policies that are sustainable and carbon neutral. This can include policies that move people to a plant-based diet, reduce food waste, incentivize farmers to support plant-based diets, and assure food transportation that is carbon neutral.
4. Other policies that reduce the amount of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. This can include reducing the production of cement and reducing deforestation.
5. Policies that expend funds in three areas:
 - a. Support vulnerable populations that are harmed by climate change
 - b. Support vulnerable populations that will have increased risk of harm because of needed attention to climate change.
 - c. Support research and development efforts that might help assure a carbon neutral future.