



Background

A Climate Action Ordinance for Bend

Growing Impacts from Climate Change

Bend is caught in the crossfire of climate change resulting from excessive greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Drought, diminished snowpack, decreased stream flows and the increased threat of catastrophic wildfires are putting strains on our economy and the natural beauty and resources that make our community so unique. They are putting health at risk and creating unseen costs in terms of infrastructure damage and maintenance.

What can be done?

With the impacts of climate change already upon us, and given projections of future growth in our region, now is the time for a comprehensive, community-based approach to address climate change. The Climate Action Ordinance being considered by the Bend City Council is a practical, inclusive framework for developing science-based carbon-reduction strategies that will result in a significant drop of our GHG emissions. While specific strategies have not yet been developed, they might include things like energy efficiency retrofits in homes and businesses, improving and increasing transportation options, and programs to reduce consumption and waste.

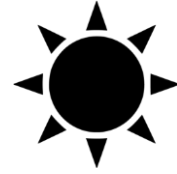
Why an ordinance?

There is a growing sense of urgency among scientists that strategies to reduce GHG emissions need to come on line very quickly in order to avoid the truly catastrophic changes that have been forecast. To meet this challenge, action has to be taken at the local level. It is important that community strategies have broad public support and are workable and fair. An ordinance clearly establishes City policy goals for GHG emission reductions, and uses an existing and accepted mechanism for developing consensus on how to achieve those goals.

Our city government is responsible for maintaining public safety and well-being for all citizens. It has the administrative structure to carry out the legislative policies of the elected city council in ongoing conversations with citizens through public notice, advisory committees, and hearings. Therefore, developing climate change strategies in a comprehensive, science-based ordinance is the best, fairest, most cost-effective way to realize proportional and timely GHG reductions in Bend. Local action is also necessary to help sustain the global progress towards addressing climate change that was achieved at the December 2015 UN Conference in Paris.

What does the ordinance do?

The ordinance creates a fair and flexible framework for developing both city and citizen-based actions. More specifically, the ordinance:



- Creates a citizens Climate Action Commission with broad public representation to consider science-based strategies and to develop climate action plans to submit to the City Council for its approval;
- Provides for the creation of two climate action plans:
 - A climate action plan for all City of Bend operations, building on accomplishments already made by city staff and departments;
 - A comprehensive and cost-effective GHG emission reduction plan for Bend businesses and households;
- Puts the City of Bend on track to be carbon neutral by the year 2030;
- Sets achievable, meaningful, science-based targets for actual reductions in the use of fossil fuels for both the City of Bend and the community: 40 percent by 2030 and 70 percent by 2050, based on carbon emission levels from 2010 or more recent years;
- Provides for adequate and dedicated City of Bend staffing to support the objectives of the ordinance and their implementation.

Why now?

It's time for clear thinking and smart action, at all levels of government

Though GHG reduction goals outlined in the 2015 UN Climate Conference in Paris begin to set measureable objectives and collaborative strategies, in general state, national and international action to cut GHG emissions up to this point has neither been fast enough nor robust enough to adequately deal with the threat. Local action is appropriate and necessary.

The ordinance provides a way to equitably distribute costs associated with reducing greenhouse gas emissions in order to reduce potential negative economic effects. Furthermore, a comprehensive climate change strategy embodied in a city ordinance is a practical way to promote local businesses and Bend's economy.