

Bend's Climate Action Resolution

Frequently Asked Questions

(Answered by the Bend Climate Resolution Working Group, June 2017)

The scientific evidence is robust: our climate is changing. The Earth is on a path to a mean temperature rise of 1.5°C to 4.5°C (2.7°F to 8°F) by 2100. Governments have agreed that the global average temperature rise must be no more than 2°C above pre-industrial levels to avoid unprecedented consequences for humankind—consequences that would be enormously destructive and felt acutely at the local level. In the absence of national political leadership for climate action, local action has never been more urgent.

Bend is highly exposed to climate risk. As one of the world's great outdoor recreation destinations, Bend depends on mountain snow. Reduced snow pack and faster melting, as well as more frequent and severe droughts and fires, threaten Bend's economy and quality of life. The next 10 years are critical for making the investments in well-designed, sustainable infrastructure to support Bend's growth and to create a more resilient economy driven by clean energy.

Q. What is the Bend Climate Action Resolution?

A. On September 7, 2016 the Bend City Council adopted a [resolution](#) that lays out a clear and detailed pathway for Bend to move forward towards reducing its greenhouse gas emissions. **The goals of the resolution put the City of Bend on track to be carbon neutral by the year 2030 and to reduce fossil fuel use for both City operations and the community-as-a-whole by 40% by 2030 and 70% by 2050** (using 2010 or a more recent year as the baseline). The resolution calls for two climate action plans: one for City operations and one for the community. These action plans will be developed with substantial public input by a Climate Action Steering Committee (CASC) representing a wide range of community interests and perspectives. The resolution also provides for dedicated staffing at the City to oversee the creation and implementation of the climate action plans.

Q. Why should Bend address climate change?

A. **It's time for clear thinking and smart action at all levels of government.** With the President's withdrawal of the United States from the Paris Climate Agreement, cities and states must now take the lead on climate action. As Bend's Climate Action Resolution is implemented, it can help build upon the growing momentum of local action across the country and improve the sustainability and efficiency of our community. *Climate change is a local issue—emissions are generated by all of us every day and the impacts are local, from droughts to fires to lower snow pack.* Our neighbors in Eugene, Portland and Corvallis are already taking action on climate and Bend needs to step up and do its part. A comprehensive Bend climate change strategy will **reduce locally-generated GHG emissions, contribute to global climate protection efforts**, and make our community economically stronger, more sustainable and more livable. Taking local action is the right and moral thing to do to ensure a healthy climate for future generations.

Q. What are some examples of actions that a city like Bend might take to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions?

A. There are many actions a city like Bend could take to reduce its emissions. Examples from other communities with adopted climate action plans include:

- Convert all street lights to LEDs;
- Improve walking, biking and transit infrastructure and services;
- Increase the number of charging stations for electric cars throughout the community;

- Create residential and business incentives or requirements for super-efficient and solar-ready buildings;
- Develop an aggressive tree preservation and replacement program;
- Increase the recovery of food waste from the local landfill; and
- Encourage local food production through incentives and code changes.

Such strategies are consistent with “**smart growth**” strategies used by cities throughout the country to **achieve a wide variety of social, economic and “good government” goals**. Over time, some of these strategies will pay for themselves through reduced utility costs. A final list of recommended actions for Bend will be developed by the Climate Action Steering Committee (to be appointed by the City Council), based on the input it receives from individuals, businesses and organizations across the community. Ultimately, the City Council will approve a final set of actions when it adopts Bend’s Climate Action Plan in September 2019.

Q. The City of Bend currently has constrained resources as it addresses issues like potholes and affordable housing. Why does Bend need to take climate action now?

A. Our City and community will be making large, expensive investments of all sorts over the next few years. Implementing the climate resolution will ensure that those investments are cost efficient and climate smart while helping us avoid the higher costs incurred by doing nothing. It is a false choice to pit climate action against the other goals of the city. Moves towards **energy efficiency and sustainability are not only economically beneficial; they can also help the city achieve its other goals**. Energy efficient homes, for example, support the goal of affordable housing because they have lower month-to-month costs of living. **Sustainability efforts are smart management, can save money, and can help the City use its resources more efficiently in an era of tight budgets. That’s good government!**

Q. Does the City of Bend have the authority and means to implement this resolution?

A. Yes. The resolution calls for developing climate action plans to achieve the fossil fuel use reduction goals of 40% by 2030 and 70% by 2050. **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 through community planning and ongoing conversations with citizens. The resolution itself does not call for any regulatory changes at this time, although such changes may be recommended by the citizen Steering Committee to the City Council in the final climate action plans. Education, innovation, and incentives to encourage energy efficiency, sustainability, and the transition to alternative energy sources across the community are likely to be important strategies called for in those action plans.

Q. Will climate action be good for our local economy and businesses?

A. Yes. Taking the initiative to address climate change is good for business and our economy. **Businesses that save on heating, lighting, phantom energy loads, and hot water expenses see bottom-line savings**. Local job creation in industries such as solar, energy efficient construction, building retrofitting, insulation, and heating/cooling systems help our community thrive and provide good paying jobs. Encouraging a more walkable, bikeable, livable and desirable community is good for our quality of life and the health of our families. Not only will we have community pride in doing our part, investments in climate strategies will be spent primarily in Bend and we could receive statewide and nationwide recognition as a community of leaders. **Now that’s good for business!**

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