

Over 100 local organizations urge Oregon congressional delegation to support climate solutions in Build Back Better Plan

PORTLAND, Ore. (Oct. 22, 2021) – This week, over 100 community organizations representing thousands of Oregonians came together in a written [statement](#) urging members of the Oregon congressional delegation to preserve and protect climate solutions in President Biden’s Build Back Better Act. The co-signers include multiple organizations of faith, [the entire Consolidated Oregon Indivisible Network](#), and scores of climate advocacy and political groups.

The statement, created by the Earth Bill Network’s Northwest Chapter, urges that “\$700 billion in the final Build Back Better budget remain dedicated to implementing President Biden’s promise to transition the United States to a clean, healthy, zero-emission economy.”

“As people of faith, we know it is imperative to care for the gift of creation and to pass on a livable planet to future generations,” said Peter Sergienko, chair of Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon’s (EMO) Creation Justice Committee. “We need a climate package that can put us on track to half emissions by 2030—this is a historic opportunity to rebuild a stronger, more equitable, and more resilient Oregon for all.”

The statement’s traction within the faith communities and environmental groups reflects the immediate experience of climate change in Oregon. This summer, extreme heat killed more than 100 Oregonians, including frontline workers. Last year, wildfires in Oregon burned across 1.2 million acres—ten times the average 20 years ago—causing tens of thousands to evacuate ahead of the flames, destroying 4,000 homes, displacing over 10,000 and killing 11.

The statement was authored by Robert Yunke—former Pennsylvania assistant attorney general representing the Department of Environmental Resources and former senior attorney at the Environmental Defense Fund—and Jeff Hammarlund, retired professor of energy and climate policy and chair emeritus of the Northwest Energy Coalition Oregon Caucus.

Yunke writes, “The \$700 billion climate budget [\$70 billion annually] is a modest down payment toward the larger investments needed to protect lives and livelihoods in Oregon and across the country from climate-induced devastation.”

Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon is a statewide association of faith partners working together to improve the lives of Oregonians through direct service programs, ecumenical and interreligious dialogue, creation justice and public policy advocacy.