

State of Oregon
Department of Environmental Quality

Memorandum

Date: November 22, 2010

To: Environmental Quality Commission

From: Dick Pedersen, Director

Subject: Agenda item O, Informational item: Adapting to climate change in Oregon
December 9-10, 2010, EQC meeting

Purpose of item This item will provide the commission with perspective on climate change in Oregon, including an assessment update, adaptation options and example actions moving forward.

Background This session culminates the 2010 series of climate change informational items and extends the focus on Oregon from the October presentation. The series has considered the science of climate change, the politics, the role of The Climate Trust, the impacts of climate change and the roadmap to meeting Oregon's carbon goals.

The December presentation will provide insight and updates on adaptation planning and will include a panel of experts:

- A representative from the Oregon Climate Change Research Institute will provide a summary of important findings from the newly released Oregon Climate Assessment Report, which will be published December 2010.
- Richard Whitman, director of the Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development, will provide an overview of the Climate Change Adaptation Framework report, released in November 2010.
- A representative from the Climate Leadership Initiative will provide a summary of the Climate Leadership Initiative's work with the Climate Futures Forums in several basins in western and central Oregon.

The Oregon State Legislature established the Oregon Climate Change Research Institute within the Department of Higher Education to encourage the flow of climate change knowledge and information between universities and government and private sector. Administered by Oregon State University and its institutional partners within the Oregon University System, the institute is tasked with facilitating research by Oregon University System faculty on climate change and its effects on natural and human systems in Oregon, serving as a clearinghouse for climate change information, providing climate

change information to the public in integrated and accessible formats, supporting the Oregon Global Warming Commission in developing strategies to prepare for and to mitigate the effects of climate change on natural and human systems, and providing technical assistance to local governments to assist them in developing climate change policies, practices and programs. To assist in meeting these goals, the institute plans to update an assessment of climate change science as it relates to Oregon and the likely effects of climate change on the state every two years. The current version of the Oregon Climate Assessment Report will be published Dec. 1, 2010.

In October 2009, Governor Kulongoski directed state agencies and partners in Oregon's University System to develop a plan for adapting to the likely effects of future climate conditions in Oregon. Building on previous work by the Governor's Climate Change Integration Group, the Climate Change Adaptation Framework report was released Nov. 10, 2010. Representatives from twenty state agencies and institutions, including DEQ, collaborated to produce the framework. The framework initiates a long-term process to identify measures to reduce Oregon's vulnerability to the effects of climate variability and change. The framework presents a broad-scale qualitative assessment of risks to people, infrastructure, communities and natural resources that are expected to result from the effects of variable and changing climate conditions. More importantly, this framework identifies specific actions the state can take to prepare for and adapt to the effects of climate variability and change. It is clear that considerable work will be needed, especially in collaboration with Oregonians, local governments and federal agencies, to fully address climate risks to Oregon.

The Climate Leadership Initiative is a social science-based global climate change research and technical assistance collaborative between The Resource Innovation Group and the University of Oregon's Institute for a Sustainable Environment. The Climate Leadership Initiative's mission is to foster the development and application of innovative thinking and approaches to complex causes of and solutions to global climate change. The Climate Leadership Initiative's programs include climate preparedness, climate education and communication, community energy, climate economics, and climate equity and social justice. In the climate preparedness program, a series of workshops, known as climate futures forums, are being held in several Oregon basins and are intended to provide a basis for a model to be nationally replicable. The forums, produced in collaboration with local partners, are designed to dramatically increase climate change preparation and adaptation literacy and to build and deliver tools and resources to assist all levels of governments, institutions and nonprofits in proactively preparing for climate change.

Next steps Presentations from the climate change information series offered to the commission throughout 2010 are posted on the DEQ website as a public information resource. If commissioners would like further related topics scheduled as information items, options can range from bringing occasional updates on Oregon-based strategies to combat and adapt to the effects of climate change to pursuing a second series on, for example, more detailed looks at current projects.

Attachments A. Presenter biographies

Approved:

Division: _____

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