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9/24/19

Public Comment

Lane County Board of Commissioners
Lane County Courthouse
125 East 8th Avenue
Eugene, OR 97401

9/24/2019

Dear Chair Sorenson and Commissioners Bozievich, Buch, Farr, and Berney,

A major network of international, national and local climate and environmental justice advocates has issued a call-to-action for governments around the world, known as the Declaration on Human Rights and Climate Change. The Declaration outlines a crucial shift in the way that governments should respond to climate change. (It was drafted in 2015 by the Global Network for the Study of Human Rights and the Environment (GNHRE), the largest network of human and environmental rights scholars in the world.)

Beginning with the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, there is an explicit acknowledgement that human rights are among society's most powerful ideals. They embody the values of dignity, fairness, equality, and opportunity necessary to a just society.

The Declaration is a statement that our current approach to climate change is utterly inadequate in the face of this existential threat. Climate change is arguably the greatest human rights issue of all. Every government must question the current market-based framework of priorities that has created unsustainable structural unfairness in current patterns of vulnerability to climate change. We need human rights values to form the foundation of a climate action policy that is fair and equitable to all.

The negative effects of climate change profoundly affect the achievement and protection of a wide range of rights. Social and economic rights such as the rights to water, food, sanitation, health and housing are affected by climate change. Climate change increases hunger and malnutrition, disease and economic ruin from a wide range of climate-induced impacts. The Declaration recognizes the inequitable impacts of climate change on vulnerable people, such as children, women, indigenous peoples and people of color.

The Declaration overtly acknowledges the stewardship role of human beings in the protection of the rights of nature and therefore calls for an enhanced duty of care placed upon the current generation. A few key examples of values expressed in the Declaration include:

- All human beings have the right to fairness, equity and justice in all climate resilience, adaptation and mitigation measures and efforts.
- All human beings have the right to a planetary climate suitable to meet equitably the ecologically responsible needs of present generations without impairing the rights of future generations to meet equitably their ecologically responsible needs.
- All human beings, animals and living systems have the right to the highest attainable standard of health, free from environmental pollution, degradation and harmful emissions and to be free from dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system

The timing to adopt a Declaration that forefronts Human Rights and Climate Justice principles is **now**. A Declaration should be adopted in tandem with the County's launch of a county-wide **Climate Action Plan** as well as the **County's Housing Access Plan**. While this particular Declaration was developed with global communities in mind, it can easily be adapted to the needs and peoples of the Pacific Northwest to enhance its relevancy and applicability to the work Lane County will soon undertake.

Community leaders at Beyond Toxics and the NAACP would be honored to work with the Board of Commissioners and the Director of Public Works to develop a set of Human Rights and Climate Justice Principles specific to Lane County's needs. We request that the Board craft a resolution to develop and adopt such a Declaration within the next three months. The County should then use its precepts as a foundation of environmental justice, human rights and sustainability guidelines. We earnestly hope the County will be a leader in advancing human rights and justice in climate action planning.

Sincerely,



Lisa Arkin, Executive Director, Beyond Toxics



Eric Richardson, President and Director, NAACP Eugene-Springfield



DECLARATION ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE

PREAMBLE:

GUIDED BY the United Nations Charter; The Universal Declaration of Human Rights; The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples; The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; The Vienna Declaration and Program of Action of the World Conference of Human Rights; The Universal Declaration on Rights of Children; The Draft United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Peasants; The International Labour Organization Convention No. 169; The 2030 Sustainable Development Goals; The Universal Declaration of the Rights of Mother Earth; The Earth Charter; The Nagoya Protocol; Title II of the 2008 Constitution of Ecuador; and other relevant international rights instruments,

GUIDED BY The Stockholm Declaration of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment; The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, its Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement; The World Charter for Nature; The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea; The Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, and other relevant instruments of international environmental law,

REAFFIRMING the universality, indivisibility, interdependence and interrelationality of all human rights, the interrelationality of all life on Earth and the dependency of all life on Earth on a healthy biosphere and Earth system integrity,

RECOGNIZING that climate change, caused by the human industrial and consumer activities, disproportionately affects indigenous peoples, the poor, women and children, the vulnerable, small island and low elevation coastal communities, developing countries, least developed countries, future generations and innumerable living beings and systems,

RECOGNIZING that the ultimate realization of human rights in the age of climate crisis requires the full legal protection of the living beings and systems upon which human life depends,

RECOGNIZING that human beings are part of the living Earth system,

RECOGNIZING the climate destructive and ecocidal results of assuming human separation from nature,

RECOGNIZING the need for all cultures, faiths and traditions to play a role in the fullest development of climate and environmental stewardship, the teaching of respect for all living beings and systems and the development of climate resilient communities,

RECOGNIZING that science confirms the threats of climate change to the Earth's systems and its multiple life forms,

RECOGNIZING that science confirms the threat of climate change to the livelihoods and well-being of present and future generations,

RECOGNIZING that climate impacts disproportionately affect innumerable living beings and systems that are intrinsically valuable in their own right and unable to defend themselves,

RECOGNIZING that climate change displaces populations and that international, cross-border and internal migration has increased due to climate change and is likely to continue to do so,

RECOGNIZING that courts and jurists of international standing link the fulfillment of human rights to a secure, healthy and ecologically viable environment, and consequently recognize that harming the environment undermines human rights,

RECOGNIZING that it is the stewardship responsibility of human beings to respond to the climate harms and damage caused by human activities,

DEEPLY CONCERNED by the severe human rights consequences of the continuing political failure to reach adequate commitments on climate mitigation and adaptation; by the dominance of the market as the primary value coordinating international responses to the climate crisis; and by the ongoing lack of accountability for corporate actors that violate human, environmental and climate rights,

CONVINCED that the potential irreversibility of climate change effects gives rise to an urgent need for new forms of state and non-state responsibility, accountability and liability.

THE FOLLOWING PRINCIPLES ARE DECLARED:

I.

1. Human rights and a profound commitment to climate justice are interdependent and indivisible.
2. All human beings, animals and living systems have the right to a secure, healthy and ecologically sound Earth system.
3. All human beings have the right to fairness, equity and justice in all climate resilience, adaptation and mitigation measures and efforts.
4. All human beings have the right to a planetary climate suitable to meet equitably the ecologically responsible needs of present generations without impairing the rights of future generations to meet equitably their ecologically responsible needs.
5. All human beings, animals and living systems have the right to the highest attainable standard of health, free from environmental pollution, degradation and harmful emissions and to be free from dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system such that rising global temperatures are kept well below 2 degrees centigrade above preindustrial levels.
6. All human beings have the right to investments in adaptation and mitigation to prevent the deleterious consequences of anthropogenic climate change, and to international solidarity and timely assistance in the event of climate change driven catastrophes.
7. All human beings, animals and living systems have the right to fairness, equity and justice in respect of responses to the threat of climate change. This includes protection from deleterious impacts caused by adaptation and mitigation efforts to develop climate resilience, and by the potential deployment of climate geoengineering technologies.
8. All human beings have the right to a just transition towards a sustainable society characterized by meaningful inclusion and distributive justice.

II.

9. All human beings have the right to information about, and to participation in, decision-making processes related to alterations made to the physical environments they rely upon for their health and survival.
10. All human beings have the right to information concerning the climate. The information shall be timely, clear, understandable and available without undue financial burden to the applicant.
11. All human beings have the right to hold and express opinions and to disseminate ideas and information regarding the climate.
12. All human beings have the right to climate and human rights education. This education includes the right to learn from multiple perspectives and to understand non-human natural modes of behavior and the requirements of flourishing planetary ecosystems.
13. All human beings have the right to active, free, and meaningful participation in planning and decision-making activities and processes that may have an impact on the climate. This particularly includes the rights of indigenous peoples, women and other under-represented groups to equality of meaningful participation. This includes the right to a prior assessment of the climate and human rights consequences of proposed actions. This includes the right to equality of hearing and the right for processes to be free of domination by powerful economic actors. This includes the rights of indigenous peoples to participate in the protection of their rights to their lands, territories, natural resources, tenure rights and cultural heritage.
14. All human beings have the right to associate freely and peacefully with others, and to gather peacefully in public spaces, for purposes of protecting the climate or the rights of those affected by climate harm.

III.

16. All persons, individually and in association with others, have a moral responsibility to avoid and/or to minimize practices known to contribute to climate damage.
17. All States and business enterprises have a duty to protect the climate and to respect the rights set out in this Declaration.
18. All Parties shall, in all climate change related actions, respect, protect, promote, and fulfil the rights of indigenous peoples. Such rights include support to facilitate mitigation measures; rights to collective self-determination and to free, prior and informed consent; to full and equal participation in environmental and political processes; and to respect and protection for indigenous traditional knowledge. This shall include respect and protection for indigenous customary laws, and proper recognition of the role of indigenous peoples in ensuring the integrity and resilience of natural ecosystems.
19. All Parties shall, in all climate change related actions, ensure gender equality and the full and equal participation of women; intergenerational equity; a just transition of the workforce that creates decent work; food sovereignty; and the integrity and resilience of natural ecosystems.
20. All States have a duty to provide assistance and solidarity to climate refugees. States shall respect the rights to assistance and solidarity and create the necessary legal frameworks to assist and support climate refugees in order to ensure their life and dignity.
21. All States shall respect and ensure the right to a secure, healthy and ecologically sound environment and to a stable climate, and ensure the rights outlined in Parts I–III of this Declaration. Accordingly, they shall adopt the administrative, legislative and other measures necessary to effectively implement the rights in this Declaration.
22. All States shall ensure international cooperation with other States and international organizations and agencies for the purpose of respecting the rights outlined in Parts I–III of this Declaration. All States shall observe the rights and duties in this Declaration, including extraterritorially.
23. All international organizations and agencies shall observe the rights and duties in this Declaration, including the human and procedural rights of indigenous peoples, women and other traditionally under-represented and marginalized groups and individuals.
24. All States, international organizations, business enterprises and individuals acting to reduce climate harms shall respect and recognize the rights of any affected human beings and other living beings and systems to be free from climate change-related harm.

For more information and to endorse this Declaration please go to our website:

www.gnhre.org



**Global Network for
the Study of Human
Rights and the
Environment**

9/24/19

Forest Growth Provides an Important Carbon Sink

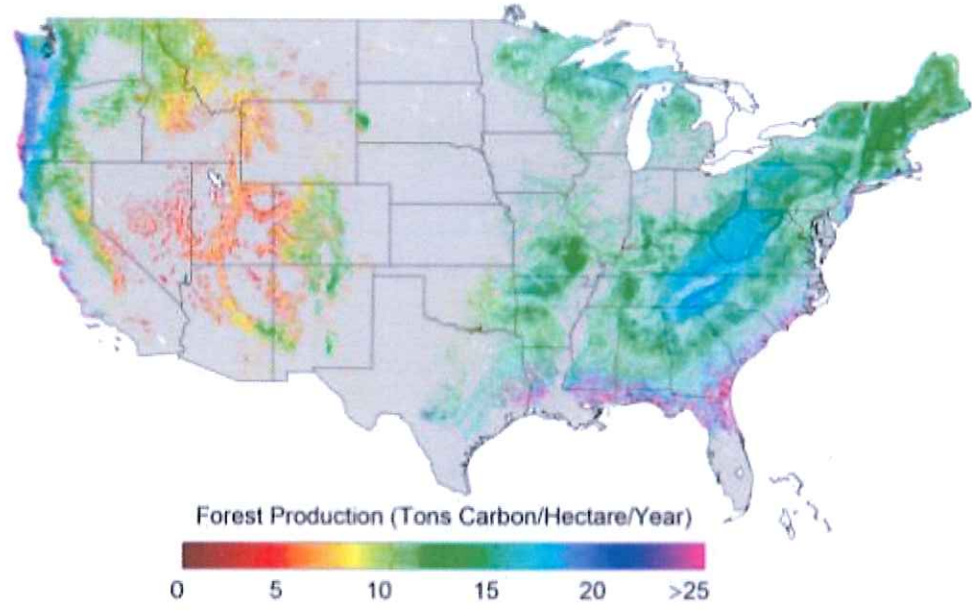


Figure 7.5 from the 2014 National Climate Assessment

If Oregon wishes to realize increased carbon uptake and sequestration in its forests as a key part of global forest carbon sequestration strategies, it will have to develop goals, and ways and means for achieving those goals. It will further have to weigh optimizing for carbon acquisition against other articulated forest sector goals including ecological restoration and fuels reduction in fire-prone forests, harvest for economic value, forest and watershed health, public health, and recreation. In some cases the tools and strategies to achieve these may align; in others they will conflict. Articulating the principles and policies to evaluate these tradeoffs is beyond the charge of this Commission. However, we can underscore the significance of forest carbon to Oregon’s larger carbon objectives, and urge the State to consider how forest management practices should interact with Oregon’s carbon reduction goals to achieve the fullest possible contribution to global climate outcomes.

The data we have developed to date are a place to start, but they urgently suggest additional lines of enquiry and of needed policy development. The balance of this Report provides context for, and recommends, a next round of research and analysis.

Oregon Forests Ecoregions and Ownership

The Forest Service FIA dataset allows for analysis by forest ecoregion and land ownership. The map below shows a disaggregated view of Oregon forest ecoregions, which were then combined into six larger ecoregions listed in the table to the left of the map. The table also lists the seven ownership categories and the five forest carbon pools used in the analysis presented in this report. Methods to bin data into carbon pools can vary somewhat from study to study, but they generally distinguish between the general categories of standing live trees, standing dead trees, down wood (fallen dead trees or wood pieces), forest floor vegetation, and soils and roots.