



Oregon Department of Environmental Quality

Recommendations for Action

Opportunities to Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions Caused by Oregon's Consumption

Oregon DEQ, after consultation with the State's Climate Action Commission, offers the following three recommendations to address the challenges of consumption-based emissions and to reap the potential community, social, economic and environmental benefits of proactive solutions.

Recommendation One: Create a State Consumption-Based Goal

The Oregon Legislature, in consultation with the Climate Action Commission, should broaden the State's existing GHG emissions reduction goals to include consumption-based emissions.

Goals signal priorities and expectations, and adopting a goal to reduce consumption-based emissions would validate the importance of such efforts. Oregon can achieve more emissions reductions per dollar spent by expanding its policy response to consider consumption-based emissions alongside sector-based emissions.

The State's existing policy framework – with goals to reduce sector-based emissions and no comparable goals to reduce consumption-based emissions – has limited the State's response to global warming. Adopting a parallel consumption-based goal would enable a more robust and cost-effective approach to reducing GHG emissions.

A consumption-based goal would also:

- Acknowledge a comprehensive view of Oregon's "carbon footprint" and our shared responsibility for reducing it.
- More formally allow Oregon to consider the broader impacts of climate actions.
- Emphasize principles of fairness and equity at both local and global scales. Locally, Oregon's consumption-based emissions inventory demonstrates the inequitable way in which higher-income Oregon residents contribute more to climate change than lower-income ones. Globally, the inventory illustrates how Oregon's consumption leads to impacts in communities across the globe.

To the extent that goals enable action, efforts to reduce Oregon's consumption-based emissions will support in-state decarbonization efforts, and in parallel, progress to achieve sector-based goals.

Additional perspective on goals, including examples of consumption-based emissions goals proposed or adopted in other communities, is provided in a chapter of SEI's technical report.

Recommendation Two: Take Targeted Actions to Reduce Consumption-Based Emissions

The Oregon Legislature, Oregon Climate Action Commission, and state agencies should increase actions to reduce consumption-based greenhouse gas emissions.

Particular attention should be given to policies which:

- Address **high-impact categories** of emissions, including food and embodied carbon in the built environment, and activities with high emissions reduction potential.
- **Enable consumer awareness and choices** that reduce greenhouse gas impacts through structural and policy changes that make low-carbon choices easier and more affordable, equitable and accessible. This

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is important because there are limitations to what individual consumer action can achieve in the face of current infrastructure, policies, and price signals that make low-carbon consumption difficult and/or expensive.

- **Align with other statewide priorities**, such as increasing affordable housing, reducing negative health outcomes, and reducing food insecurity.
- **Consider “product stewardship” approaches**, which engage producers of products and materials *sold* into Oregon. This approach creates potential for reducing emissions, generating co-benefits, and maintaining a level playing field between in-state and other producers.
- **Center human well-being** in design, paying particular attention to equity considerations, including needs and opportunities for low-income, BIPOC, and residents in rural areas.
- **Engage cross-cutting/cross-sector approaches** that can reduce multiple sets of emissions while also generating co-benefits to society. For example, enhanced smart growth policies have potential to reduce emissions not only from transportation, but also embodied carbon in infrastructure and buildings, operational energy use (heating, cooling, lighting), and general household consumption (fewer lawn mowers, televisions, etc.). More walkable neighborhoods also offer health and community benefits.
- **Minimize rebound effects** by focusing on reducing consumption of commodities with high emissions intensities.

Recommendation Three: Update the Consumption-Based Inventory Regularly

Oregon DEQ should update the State’s consumption-based greenhouse gas emissions inventory on a timely and more frequent basis. As data sources and analytical methods improve, DEQ should consider adopting best available methods.

Oregon pioneered consumption-based emissions accounting, producing the first such inventory at the subnational scale in North America, representing state emissions in 2005. It updated the inventory for calendar years 2010, 2015 and 2021. Regular updates to CBEI would be greatly facilitated by securing dedicated staff time and budget.

In addition, new data sets and methodological approaches are emerging that may improve overall outcomes. Additional details regarding both current and potential future methodologies can be viewed in DEQ’s inventory report.

More information

To read more about the Consumption-based Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory for Oregon, [please visit our website](#) at: tinyurl.com/OR-DEQ-CBE.

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