



OREGON HOUSE REPUBLICAN OFFICE

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House Republicans Submit Alternative, Cost-Effective Proposal To Reduce Carbon Output In Oregon

Minority Report Legislation Will Utilize Clean Fuels And Repurpose Existing Funds To Research & Development

Salem, OR – In anticipation of this week’s scheduled vote on SB 324 in the Oregon House of Representatives, House Republicans submitted a centrist, alternative plan to reduce carbon output in Oregon without increasing costs for Oregonians or removing any chance for a comprehensive, bipartisan transportation package. The alternative plan, sponsored by Rep. Mark Johnson (R-Hood River) and Rep. Cliff Bentz (R-Ontario) and titled SB 324-MRB (Minority Report B-Engrossed), would address the important issue of carbon output reduction in Oregon by continuing to utilize clean fuels in the state and investing in carbon reduction Research & Development (R&D) initiatives at the state’s flagship universities.

“Senate Bill 324 is a partisan boondoggle that increases fuel prices for Oregon families and businesses while achieving no perceptible outcome in carbon reduction in the state,” said Rep. Johnson, who serves as Co Vice-Chair on the House Committee on Energy and Environment. “This Minority Report submitted by House Republicans offers a common-sense alternative plan that encourages clean fuels in Oregon, repurposes an existing fee for research at our state’s universities, and allows for continuing discussions for a much-needed transportation package that would improve infrastructure and public safety throughout the state.”

Under SB 324-MRB, the state would continue to require the blending of ethanol and gasoline, as well as the blending of biodiesel and other renewable diesel fuel, to meet the standards adopted by the Department of Agriculture, thus maintaining Oregon’s high clean fuels standards without increasing costs for Oregonians through the use of a “hidden gas tax” at the pump. Additionally, SB 324-MRB would repurpose funds collected through utility fee charges for higher education investments at Oregon’s flagship universities – the University of Oregon, Oregon State University and Portland State University – to conduct carbon reduction research.

“Unlike Senate Bill 324, this alternative plan doesn’t funnel billions of dollars to out-of-state companies. It keeps Oregon dollars in Oregon,” said Rep. Bentz, who also serves on the House Committee on Energy and Environment. “If we’re going to make Oregon a leader in carbon reduction research and technology, then we have to start here at home, where our state’s scientists, students and private-sector partners can work together to develop real solutions that reduce CO2 emissions globally.”

Currently, 3 percent of public utility fees paid by Oregon customers are collected into the Energy Trust of Oregon (ETO) for energy conservation projects. SB 324-MRB would repurpose half of the ETO’s annual

collections from this fee into funding for the new Carbon Reduction Technology Research and Development Fund, to be administered by the Higher Education Coordinating Commission. Through this new Fund, Oregon universities would receive critical grants and moneys dedicated for the purpose of promoting and advancing research and development of carbon reduction technologies related to transportation fuels. The repurposing of already existing funds also allows for no additional hidden taxes or fees on Oregonians.

“Investing in carbon reduction R&D at our universities and colleges will open up opportunities for private-sector partnerships,” said Rep. Johnson. “These kinds of targeted investments will lead to real solutions and make Oregon both a national and global leader in climate-related technology and development.”

House Republicans submitted SB 324-MRB Monday afternoon. They will move to discuss and vote on the amended bill during Wednesday’s House Floor session. A copy of SB 324-MRB is attached to the release.

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