



from the
**OREGON LEGISLATIVE
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Oregon Legislature's Environmental Caucus Announces 2024 Priorities

The February session will focus on bills that move Oregon towards cleaner energy and transportation options, reduce waste, and protect our land, air, and marine environment.

Salem, Ore. – Today, the Environmental Caucus of the Oregon Legislature announced their top priorities for the upcoming legislative session. In 2024, Caucus members are looking to bold environmental policies that promote a healthy and sustainable environment for Oregonians and the natural world. A full list of the Caucus' priorities can be found [here](#).

The Caucus' top priorities touch on a wide range of environmental and climate issues, including reducing waste that goes to landfills by giving consumers a right to repair common household and tech items, more aggressive goals to reduce Oregon's carbon emissions, and appropriating over half a billion dollars for environmental remediation from the state's settlement with Monsanto.

"We researched all the bills that have been submitted for the short session and chose to focus on those policy bills that will have major environmental impacts in all parts of the state and are needed right now. Nearly all of them have sponsors from both parties. We encourage our colleagues to support them," stated Sen. Michael Dembrow (D-NE and SE Portland, Maywood Park), Co-Chair of the Environmental Caucus.

In addition to tackling statewide carbon emission, the Environmental Caucus is addressing emissions on a larger scale by supporting a bill to stop investing public funds in coal ([HB 4083](#)). Oregon began to phase out coal as a source of electricity in 2016 and the last coal plant operating in the state was retired in 2020. No longer using public funds to support the industry will be another milestone in the state's commitment to transitioning to cleaner fuels.

“The COAL Act will begin to align our public investments with our existing climate commitments by moving nearly one billion dollars of Oregon State Treasury funds out of coal company stocks,” said Rep. Khanh Pham (D-Outer SE Portland), chief sponsor of the bill and Co-Vice Chair of the Environmental Caucus. “We owe it to every Oregonian to steward your public funds and pensions wisely, and with an eye towards long-term returns. With hundreds of billions of dollars of public and private investment pumping into clean energy under the Inflation Reduction Act, and the grave risks that coal pollution poses for our climate, there is simply no future upside in coal energy. The COAL Act will ensure that Oregonians’ financial futures are protected from short-sighted investments in the dirtiest fossil fuel.”

The Caucus is also prioritizing opportunities on Oregon’s Coast that further our understanding of climate change’s ocean impacts and create a pathway for a new source of clean energy ([HB 4132](#), [HB 4080](#)). By investing in Oregon’s Marine Reserves Program, the state will continue to gain understanding of the challenges facing our marine ecosystems and improve our opportunities for climate change adaptation and resilience. The Caucus is also backing the creation of strong labor standards for potential offshore wind projects. Caucus members are highly supportive of ongoing engagement with all coastal communities and tribes as both these projects move forward.

Understanding the need for improved transportation options, the Caucus is championing a bill that will study extending the Westside Express Service (WES) commuter rail from Wilsonville to Salem ([HB 1572](#)). The study will look at using an existing rail line to provide increased transportation options for travelers in the region, with stops in Donald, Woodburn, and Keizer.

“I am advocating for the extension of the WES train because I support solutions that connect people who live, work, and raise a family in my district to other parts of Oregon in environmentally friendly ways,” said Rep. Courtney Neron (D-Wilsonville, Sherwood, King City, Tigard/Bull Mountain & Parrett Mountain), Co-Vice Chair of the Environmental Caucus. “Multimodal transportation solutions will help us achieve Oregon’s climate goals. This is an opportunity to strategically invest in the future of commuter rail and meet the needs of our growing population while fueling local economies.”

“The environmental caucus is committed to bringing a new level of intentionality to our work in this realm and short sessions are about finishing up previous work or setting up future work and I think this list portrays that,” said Rep. Mark Gamba (D-Milwaukie and Sellwood), Co-Chair of the Environmental Caucus. “We are committed to amping up our efforts to safeguard future generations from the many looming issues we face and our ongoing work will take Oregon to the next level.”

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About the Caucus

The Environmental Caucus is made up of sixteen legislators from both the Senate and the House of Representatives. Members are committed to legislative action that mitigates and prevents the impacts of climate change while also benefiting Oregon’s economy and natural resources.