



Joint Statement From the Office of
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Representatives Hayden and Breese Iverson Urge Governor to Delay Carbon Green House Gas Emission Efforts

Salem, ORE. – Today, Representatives Cedric Hayden (R-Fall Creek) and Vikki Breese Iverson (R-Prineville) call on Governor Brown to delay expanding Carbon Green House Gas Emission efforts. In a March meeting of the Emergency Board, the legislature allocated \$5 million for an expansion of the Low Carbon Fuel Standard (LCFS) program. Parallel to that funding allocation, the Coronavirus crisis exploded in Oregon, resulting in roughly \$3 billion in dramatic budget shortfalls, impacting programs across the board.

“It’s time to reprioritize budget ‘needs’ versus budget ‘wants’ to ensure that the core functions of our government are still functioning, and that we’re meeting the basic needs of our citizens during this time of economic instability,” stated Representative Hayden. “Expanding LCFS and driving up fuel costs at a time when people can barely afford rent, groceries, and medicine, isn’t the best use of our tax dollars at this point in time.”

Hayden, who has had decades of wildland firefighter experience, noted that reallocating the \$5 million from DEQ intended for LCFS toward urgently needed fire protection programs would be a win/win for Oregonian during this revenue shortfall. “When our firefighters are properly equipped, we can fight fires faster and safer. Not only does this protect lives, homes, and area wildlife, we reduce carbon emitted when the forests burn. Smartly fighting fire is a benefit to all Oregonians and reduces the overall budget impacts of protracted fire seasons that can cost the General Fund tens of millions of dollars.”

As the state enters into another high-risk fire season, Representative Breese Iverson expressed concerns that while Covid-19 garners daily headlines, clean air should remain top of mind.

“Covid-19 is a respiratory disease and common sense tells us smoke and air quality issues exacerbated during fire season will compound healthcare challenges of people who have or are recovering from coronavirus,” Breese Iverson said. “This is particularly concerning in rural

communities where we're already limited in our access to healthcare facilities and we're seeing increases in new coronavirus cases.”

Breese Iverson urges Governor Brown to remember, summers often include air quality alerts as fires spread across Oregon and surrounding states. “We need to shift gears in public health investments. While reducing carbon is important, the immediate need is mitigating smoke damage and increasing good air quality in order to protect the health of our citizens. It should be a top priority.”

Both lawmakers stressed that programs like LCFS could come back online when the budget recovers, but for now, Brown and state agencies should focus budgets to directly meet the needs of critical human services, public health and the needs of citizens related to the Covid-19 crisis.

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