



The Corvallis Climate Recovery Ordinance: A Primer



Why climate action?

Global climate change resulting from excessive greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions is a problem that transcends boundaries. Negative impacts of climate change are now being felt around the world, harming health and livelihoods. There has never been a stronger consensus among the research community: to avoid the worst impacts of climate change, action must be swift and extreme.

Corvallis may seem small in the face of this global problem, but we are in a unique position to lead the way in climate action, as we have in past ecological initiatives. Action must occur at every level, and comprehensive, community-based approaches are the most effective way to tackle the problem of climate change.

How is our community affected?

Like many other communities, Corvallis faces drought, diminished snowpack causing decreased stream flows, and the increasing threat of catastrophic wildfires as a result of climate change. These impacts strain our economy and the natural beauty and resources that make our community so unique. Extreme heat, new infectious diseases, and spread of pests are among climate-change related crises that will put our citizens' health at risk.

What does Climate Recovery entail?

Climate recovery is a process with five essential milestones. These include:

- taking a GHG emissions "inventory",
- developing a GHG emissions reduction target,
- creating a Climate Action Plan (CAP), outlining strategies for reducing GHG emissions,
- implementing policies for achieving the goals,
- and measuring and verifying results.

Corvallis' climate action background

In 2000, the Corvallis City Council passed a resolution to develop and implement a CAP.¹ However, a general Climate Action Plan was not crafted and accepted until December 2016.

The CAP alone does not complete the process of Climate Recovery. We still need to establish an enforceable GHG reduction target for our city, and define and codify concrete strategies for meeting that target. A Climate Recovery Ordinance is necessary, in order to complete our commitment to reducing Corvallis' GHG emissions.

Why should we pass an Ordinance?

An ordinance is a legally binding and enforceable city law. Our proposed ordinance will set specific, measurable goals based on the best up-to-date science.² The ordinance goals include:

- For City government:
 - Carbon neutral by 2025
 - Reduce fossil fuel use 50% by 2030.
- For the community as a whole (individuals and businesses):
 - Reduce fossil fuel use by 47% by 2025, 68% by 2035, and 85% by 2050³

We are not alone in our commitment to climate action. Eugene, OR has also set binding GHG reduction targets, and other Pacific Northwest communities are not far behind (Ashland and Portland).

How realistic is this goal?

The proposed goals are consistent with the science-based framework of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the recent GHG reduction targets established at the 2015 United Nations (UN) Climate Conference in Paris. They are realistic if we act now.

¹ Resolution 2000-15 ² The full proposed ordinance can be found at YouCanCorvallis.org ³ In relation to 2012 levels, based on historical GHG inventory

