



American Planning Association  
**Oregon Chapter**

*Creating Great Communities for All*

December 24, 2020

Lisa Arkin, Executive Director, Beyond Toxics  
Eric Richardson, Executive Director, NAACP Eugene-Springfield  
Sharon Gary-Smith, President, NAACP Portland  
Steve Schell

Re: Supporting House Bill 2488 - Land and Climate Justice Act

Dear Ms. Arkin, Mr. Richardson, Ms. Gary-Smith, and Mr. Schell:

The Oregon Chapter of the American Planning Association (OAPA) endorses your efforts to require the Land Conservation and Development Commission (LCDC) **to amend the Statewide Land Use Planning Goals to address climate justice and to promote environmental justice to disadvantaged and historically underserved communities**. We are offering both our support and our assistance as House Bill 2488 (HB 2488) moves forward.

OAPA's legislative priorities for 2021<sup>1</sup> include supporting legislation that confronts climate change, promotes resiliency and recovery, and advances racial equity.

OAPA believes that Oregon needs to act now to confront climate change. More needs to be done to mitigate climate change and to help communities adapt and become more resilient to its impacts, while addressing the inequitable impacts of climate change to vulnerable communities. OAPA supports legislation and other measures that further efforts to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, advance adaptation by and resiliency of communities, and increase carbon sequestration. OAPA specifically supports **creating a new Statewide Planning Goal and/or updating existing goals to meaningfully address climate change**, prioritizing planning for Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) community members and other vulnerable communities, and centering their voices when developing policy.

OAPA believes that anti-racism needs to be centered in policy and planning work in Oregon. Deliberate efforts need to be made to advance racial equity and combat systemic racism in the state. OAPA supports **changes to public engagement processes and Statewide Planning Goal 1 (Citizen Involvement) to explicitly advance anti-racism and elevate the voices of BIPOC and other traditionally-underrepresented communities**, including changing the name of the goal to remove the word "Citizen".

The concepts in HB 2488 address critical weaknesses in Oregon's statewide planning program's ability to confront climate change and promote environmental justice. It is important to note that compliance with the planning goals is mandatory for local jurisdictions, special purpose districts, and State agencies when making land use decisions. Critical weaknesses include:

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.oregonapa.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/OAPA-2021-Legislative-Priorities-FINAL-12-14-20.pdf>



1. Climate change is not mentioned or addressed in the goals. The goals and guidelines were written and adopted 45 years ago and lack any intentional linkage to actions needed to address climate change and its inequitable impacts. OAPA believes that it is imperative that the statewide planning program be modernized by updates to the land use planning goals to: mitigate greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, provide meaningful opportunities to adapt to climate change impacts, protect and increase sequestration opportunities, and address climate change inequities.

2. Lack of data on how vulnerable communities are impacted. Goal 2 (Land Use Planning) requires that there is “an adequate factual basis” for “all decisions and action related to use of land.” Changing climate trends and patterns will result in a new normal as Oregon’s communities engage in planning for long-term sustainability, their economies, public services, protecting their population and natural resources, and prioritizing their investments. **It is critical that factual data on how vulnerable communities are impacted by climate change is available and used to inform decisions if environmental justice is to be addressed.** Historic trends, past events, and institutional inequities will not provide sufficient data to make informed decisions as future climatic conditions change.

3. Land use decisions made by local jurisdictions, special purpose districts, and State agencies are based on the current planning goals and lack criteria to avoid climate impacts. The Statewide Land Use Planning Goals govern governmental decisions about the future use of land and of other resources (such as infrastructure). None of the 19 goals, adopted over four decades ago, are specific to climate change or environmental justice nor have they been amended to address these existential crises. Adopting a new climate change goal and/or revising existing goals would result in all land use decisions using climate justice criteria.

4. Required public engagement in land use planning (Goal 1) does not address historically underrepresented communities nor modern communication techniques. Goal 1 provides for how and when community members are to be involved in comprehensive planning. Its formation in 1975 was at a time prior to the internet, social media, and virtual meetings. Its guidelines only mention “television, radio, newspapers and meetings” as involvement tools. **More importantly public engagement processes are rooted in a time that did not address or acknowledge underrepresented communities, including non-citizens, and the resulting inequitable outcomes.** Addressing this is especially important as the impacts of climate change are more harmful to vulnerable populations, impacted communities, and those facing racial and other inequities. Clearly the experience of the inequitable impacts of Covid-19 and the Governor’s Equity Executive Order highlight the need to build environmental justice into the planning and land-use system throughout Oregon.

OAPA’s legislative priorities for 2021 also include **advocating for Oregon’s planning program.** LCDC has the statutory authority (ORS 197.245) to add new goals and to revise existing goals. LC 1900 will provide the legislative directive for LCDC to utilize this authority. This past September, LCDC deferred a project to engage in an initial policy discussion with stakeholders and issue a white paper about updating Statewide Planning Goals for climate change. This project was included in DLCD’s May 15 response to Governor Brown’s climate change Executive Order (EO 20-04).

This past summer, DLCD held a webinar on its EO 20-04 response and reported to LCDC that “stakeholders unanimously expressed support for this effort” and that “multiple individuals articulated this effort as one of the top three most critical actions as a response to EO 20-04.”



This project was deferred because it was not budgeted and due to DLCDC's Covid-19-related budget cuts, could not be sustained. Providing resources for DLCDC to carry out any legislative directive is critical and supports a OAPA's legislative priority for **increased funding and technical resources for local, regional, and state agencies engaged in planning work, including the Department of Land Conservation.**

OAPA is an independent, statewide, not-for-profit membership organization of more than 950 planners from across the state who work for cities, counties, special districts, state agencies, tribes, community-based organizations, universities, and private firms. OAPA provides leadership in the development of vital communities by advocating excellence in community planning, promoting education and resident empowerment, and providing the tools and support necessary to meet the challenges of growth and change. OAPA supports sustainable communities, working to enhance the quality of life for current and future generations by helping to create and stabilize places that are equitable, healthy, and resilient, and to provide ongoing economic, environmental, and social benefits.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Aaron Ray'.

Aaron Ray, AICP, President  
Board of Directors

A handwritten signature in purple ink, appearing to read 'Eunice Kim'.

Eunice Kim, AICP, Chair  
Legislative and Policy Affairs Committee