May 13, 2020

Robin McArthur, Chair, and Katie Pearmine, Vice-chair
Land Conservation and Development Commission
esther.johnson@state.or.us

Re: Testimony on Agenda Item 5: Reducing Greenhouse Gas Pollution - Executive Order and Scenario Planning

Dear Chair McArthur, Vice-Chair Pearmine, and Members of the Commission:

The Oregon Chapter of the American Planning Association (OAPA) supports scenario planning by local and regional government for greenhouse gas emissions reductions (GHGs).

OAPA is an independent, statewide, not-for-profit membership organization of over 950 planners from across the state working for cities, counties, special districts, state agencies, tribes, community-based organizations, and private firms. OAPA provides leadership in the development of vital communities by advocating excellence in community planning, promoting education and resident empowerment, and by 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 provide ongoing economic, environmental, and social benefits.

OAPA appreciates the years of State and Legislative effort to address climate change on many levels. We have been strongly advocating for the inclusion of funding and technical assistance for local governments to develop and implement long range land use and transportation plans to address climate change in an integrated manner. Throughout our testimony during the past two legislative sessions and prior, OAPA has consistently supported funding for scenario planning and has strongly recommended that scenario planning be required, not voluntary, to most effectively reduce emissions from the transportation sector. OAPA also supports Governor Brown’s March 10 Executive Order on Climate, Executive Order 20-04, which reiterates the direction the Governor gave DLCD and partner agencies in September 2019 to implement the Statewide Transportation Strategy.

As such, OAPA strongly supports requiring cities and counties within metropolitan areas to have locally adopted and LCDC-approved land use and transportation scenario plans prior to receiving State funding for the purpose of reducing GHGs. Scenario plans consistent with ODOT/DLCD Scenario Planning Guidelines\(^1\), initiated by ORS 184.893 and 184.899, identify land use and transportation

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strategies to meet their GHG targets, ensuring consistent and coordinated action across MPO’s. ORS 184.893 provides voluntary guidelines, which are not binding and do not ensure accountability. While we think that it is certainly in the best interest of all of the cities and counties of the state to act on their own to do whatever they can to reduce the effects of climate change, OAPA recognizes that because of the urgency involved this effort calls for more financial resources than many of them can redirect from existing sources. It is critical that all metropolitan regions in Oregon use their established regional GHG reduction targets as a performance measure against which to build their scenario plans to access implementation funds. Additionally, MPOs need to be held to an established standard regarding monitoring and evaluation, especially related to implementation, using a supportive, not punitive, approach.

Since progress toward the State’s GHG reduction goals cannot be met without bold action it is critical that requirements and implementation strategies, such as performance measures that clearly spell out for their partner MPOs and local governments how to align their transportation and land use plans and implementing measures to significantly reduce GHG emissions, be implemented quickly within MPO regions. Technical changes to our transportation and energy sectors alone, while important, will not get us there. Local land use plans and regulations must be brought into alignment as quickly as possible to help meet these ambitious but critical goals. Since land use and development changes on the ground happen slowly, these new local plans and programs must be developed and implemented within the next couple of years to have any hope of affecting significant GHG reductions within the next 20-30 years. That means the state needs to act boldly to require and support effective and timely action by local governments.

OAPA realizes that ideally it is better to make such scenario planning voluntary. However, since speed is essential, stronger action must be taken by the state to make significant progress soon. Oregon’s Land Use Planning Program already provides the vehicle for significant land use actions that will allow Oregon to meet its GHG goals in a more comprehensive way than other states. However, the State needs to seize the initiative now to work with its local government and MPO partners to update and implement their transportation and land use plans. For those MPOs and local governments that need further assistance, OAPA recommends funding through grants or legislative appropriation be provided to complete scenario planning, particularly for smaller MPOs in the state.

OAPA supports requiring the implementation of scenario planning to reduce GHGs because it strongly aligns with OAPA’s adopted legislative priorities to support state action to address climate change (available here), including:

- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions to mitigate the effects of climate change and implement strategies that support a transition toward low-carbon communities. OAPA supports efforts to reduce GHG emissions through land use and community design, natural resource protection and enhancement, and continuing improvement in transit and transportation choice.
- Plan for and implement strategies to improve the health, safety, and resilience of our communities. OAPA supports policies, funding for planning and coordination, and technical assistance that help state, regional, and local government to develop and implement integrated strategies to reduce risk and improve the ability of communities to adapt to climate change.
• Fund planning for and the development of infrastructure. Access to financial and technical resources is important for successful planning to minimize costs and ensure infrastructure is designed to support a community’s immediate and long-term goals in light of climate change impacts, and increased occurrence of weather-related natural disasters.

Our members work every day in their respective communities to implement today’s plans and to create plans for future decades. Planners have a unique lens to see the interconnectedness of challenges and opportunities that face communities. As an association of planners, OAPA understands that the intertwined challenges of climate change, social inequity, economic uncertainty, degraded natural systems, and the rising cost of living demand responses that go far beyond cutting carbon. We support integrated solutions to address these challenges, with an emphasis on environmental justice and lessening impacts on vulnerable communities, including rural Oregonians.

Thank you for your time and attention to our testimony.

Sincerely,

Aaron Ray, AICP, President
Board of Directors

Damian Syrnyk, AICP, Chair
Legislative and Policy Affairs Committee