



Fly Like a Bumblebee...

Envisioning an Oregon that Is Sustainable for All

A few weeks ago I was reminded of what is possible and the power each of us has when we join together for what we believe in.

If you're like me you've noticed that the world looks different today than it did just a few short years ago. In 2004, some said the environmental movement was dead. Today it's hard to look at any media outlet without seeing "green" in a headline. For those of us concerned with protecting the environment and what we love about Oregon, this is a gratifying shift in culture. While I'm wary of trends, I think there is something more subtle and profound going on here.

Still it's easy to get caught up in the mental math: Do individual actions really add up to make a difference? If

they do, can we stem the tide of global climate change? What about the widening gap in access to natural resources between rich and poor around the globe? You only need to see pictures from Darfur, New Orleans, or – closer to home – Vernonia, to wonder if we can change not only the future path of global warming, but also the economic reality that deals a double blow to citizens with few resources. It can be difficult to maintain hope in the face of these questions.

Two weeks ago when I had the pleasure of spending time with the founders of OEC, a common theme in their stories stopped me in my tracks. Forty years ago when they started this work, they didn't spend too much time worrying about whether it was possible or not. They knew that to make real change we need both individual and political leadership. Meaningful and lasting change cannot happen without the power of people, the will for something better and – most of all – the belief that we can make it better.

Early OEC volunteer Gay Graham put it this way: "Aerodynamically, a bee is not supposed to be able to fly. But, like the bee, we just didn't know any differ-

ent. We accepted nothing else but the preservation of Oregon and our global environment, and so we flew."

What if we stopped worrying about whether it's possible to stop global warming and create a sustainable society? What if we simply act on our values, declaring our intention and vision?

In this issue we look at inclusive solutions that are so creative, elegant and exciting that they keep us flying like the beats of a bumblebee's wings: Green collar jobs. Climate fairness. Cleaning up the air in urban Portland's poorest neighborhoods.

So is it possible to create a society where all citizens – from every race, culture, and economic strata – have a stake in what our environmental and economic future looks like? I don't know. All I know is that it's impossible for us not to try.

Andrea C. Durbin
Andrea Durbin

You can view and order **Stories**, a limited-edition book of recollections from many of Oregon's early environmental champions, at www.oconline.org.



In this Issue:

Environmental Justice: Creating a sustainable Oregon depends upon our ability to engage all of our state's citizens in solutions that make human, economic and environmental sense.

3

Green collar jobs. Van Jones on smart economic and environmental solutions.

5

How we get there matters. Smart transportation planning for people and place.

6

Cap & trade equity. Ensuring fairness in the development of climate policy.

7

OEC joins EPA lawsuit. Holding decision makers accountable to the law.



Van Jones



The green economy needs Ph.D.'s and Ph.-do's. We need people who are highly educated at the theoretical level, and we need people who are highly educated at the level of skilled labor."

Millions of Jobs of a Different Collar
The New York Times,
March 26, 2008

Standing Up for People and the Planet

Before the concept gets watered down by its very popularity, now is a good time to give a clear and uncompromising answer the question: **What exactly is a green-collar job, anyway?**

We asked **Van Jones**, founder of the **Ella Baker Center for Human Rights and Green for All**, to explain.

Green Collar Jobs Rebuild a Strong Middle Class. Green-collar jobs are good jobs. Like blue-collar jobs, green-collar jobs pay family wages and provide opportunities for advancement along a career track of increasing skills and wages. A job that does something for the planet and little to nothing for the people or the economy is not a green-collar job. The green economy cannot be built with solar sweat shops and Wal-Mart wind farms.

Green-Collar Jobs Provide Pathways out of Poverty. Most green-collar jobs are middle-skill jobs requiring more than

high school, but less than a four-year degree - and are well within reach for low-skilled and low-income workers as long as they have access to effective training programs and appropriate supports. We must ensure that all green-collar jobs strategies provide opportunities for low-income people to take the first step on a pathway from poverty to economic self-sufficiency.

Green-Collar Jobs Require Some New Skills (and some new thinking about old skills). The green economy demands workers with new skill sets. Some green collar jobs - say renewable energy technicians - are brand new. But even more are existing jobs that are being transformed as industries transition to a clean energy economy: computer control operators who can cut steel for wind towers

as well as for submarines; or mechanics who can fix an electric engine as well as an internal combustion engine. We need to identify the specific skills the green economy demands. Then we need to invest in creating new training programs and retooling existing training programs to meet demand.

Green-Collar Jobs Tend to Be Local Jobs. Much of the work we have to do to green our economy involves transforming the places that we live and work and the way we get around. These jobs are difficult or impossible to offshore. For instance, you can't pick up a house and send it to China to install solar panels and ship it back. In addition, one of the major sources of manufacturing jobs - a sector that has been extensively off-shored - are components parts for

wind towers and turbines. Because of their size and related high transportation costs, they are most cost-effectively produced as near as possible to wind farm sites. Cities and communities should begin thinking now about ways their green strategies can also create local jobs.

A Green Collar Job Strengthens Urban and Rural Communities.

Urban and rural America have both been negatively impacted over the past decades by a failure to invest in their growth – green collar jobs provide an opportunity to reclaim these areas for the benefit of local residents. From new transit spending and energy audits in inner cities to windmills and bio-mass in our nation’s heartland, green jobs mean a reinvestment in the communities hardest hit in recent decades.

Green-Collar Jobs Save Planet Earth.

This may be obvious. The “green” in green-collar is about preserving and enhancing environmental quality. Green-collar jobs are in the growing industries that are helping us kick the oil habit, curb greenhouse gas emissions, eliminate toxins, and protect natural systems.

Green-collar workers are installing solar panels, retrofitting buildings to make them more efficient, constructing transit lines, refining waste oil into biodiesel, erecting wind farms, repairing hybrid cars, building green rooftops, planting trees, and so much more. And they are doing it today. There are already many green-collar jobs in America. But there could be so many more if we focus our economic strategies on growing a green economy.

It is exciting that the Presidential candidates have taken up this banner. We must thank them for their leadership. And we must help them ensure that the green jobs of tomorrow build a green and prosperous economy for everyone, here and around the world.

To Learn More Online:

www.vanjones.net
www.greenforall.org
www.ellabakercenter.org

Environmental Justice: An Oregon Voice in the National Conversation

By Alejandro Queral

Several years ago, State Senator Avel Gordly started a conversation about environmental justice in Oregon, or as she puts it, “the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of people of all colors, national origins, cultures, income levels, ages, gender and education levels, in the development, implementation and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations and policies.”

Most recently, Sen. Gordly championed Senate Bill 420, establishing the Environmental Justice Task Force, which will advise the Governor and state agencies on environmental justice issues. The bill also directs natural resource agencies to promote more public participation in decision-making and identify the concerns of communities “directly affected by environmental decisions made by the agencies.”

This is an opportunity for the environmental and civil rights movements to create a bridge that could benefit both efforts. Communities of color should be included in environmental decision-making. These movements together can craft policies needed to reduce existing racial disparities in enforcement, siting of toxic industries, and remedial clean-up of brownfields.

It’s also necessary to promote and support proactive policy initiatives, like affordable housing that meets stringent environmental and energy efficiency standards. In fact, OEC has been serving on the City of Portland’s Quality Rental Housing Group to identify program and policy changes necessary to eliminate substandard housing conditions – including environmental hazards – in rental housing in Portland.

At the same time, civil rights organizations must look at how environmental discrimination perpetuates racial inequity for future generations and actively pursue policy changes with the same force we saw during the Civil Rights Era.

The time is ripe for a national conversation about environmental justice, and for Oregon to tap into its history of innovative solutions to show leadership on the issue. Tackling environmental issues in this way includes all the communities affected and, in the long run, will be more successful.

One* contributor Alejandro Queral is former Executive Director of the Northwest Constitutional Rights Center, and a current contributor to Street Roots and KBOO Radio. He has worked in Washington, D.C. for groups like the Sierra Club and for human rights, democracy and environmental policy in Mexico, Venezuela and Guatemala.

Three OEC programs help Oregon school children and neighborhoods breathe a little easier.

Clearing the Air

By Jeremy Graybill

By forming local partnerships, OEC made significant reductions in dangerous air pollutants. Here's how:

Targeting Bunkers and Boilers

Over the last three years, with funding from the US EPA, OEC reduced diesel emissions from stationary sources, like boilers and oil furnaces. Our focus was on North Portland, an area with historically high concentrations of diesel pollution in lower-income family dwellings. Through voluntary measures – like servicing boilers for better efficiency and connecting homeowners who heat with oil to cleaner-burning biodiesel blends – our work made an impact.

The result: displacement of about 54,000 gallons of regular heating oil and 4,500 gallons of the dirtier “bunker fuel” (oil #5). With these efforts we also eliminated the following pollutants in 2006 and 2007:

- 4,140 lbs. of sulfur oxides (SO_x)
- 723 lbs. of nitrous oxides (NO_x)
- 216 lbs. of particulate matter (PM)
- 194 pounds of carbon monoxide (CO)
- 112 tons of carbon dioxide (CO₂)

Subsidized Furnace and Boiler Tune-Ups

A \$150 furnace tune-up can be a big barrier to many lower-income families. And with heating oil prices at record highs, many Oregonians must make do with inefficient, older boilers that burn more fuel and release more toxins.

To help these under-served communities, OEC partnered with the Community Energy Project and Portland Green Heat to provide 47 subsidized free tune-ups and repairs of oil furnaces throughout Portland. These low-income families, whose



Asthma is reaching epidemic proportions in Oregon – more than 282,000 residents have been diagnosed. In 2007, an estimated 73,000 Oregon children under the age of 18 were reported to have asthma. Removing toxins and particulate matter from the air around schools and in homes can have a positive impact on children suffering from asthma and other symptoms triggered by airborne pollution.

heating systems were in dire need of repair, now benefit from more fuel-efficient heating systems, lower energy bills and fewer toxins in and around their home.

Cleaner Heat in Portland Schools

OEC and Portland Public Schools (PPS) partnered to replace a “bunker oil” heating system with a cleaner, more efficient natural gas system at Harvey Scott Elementary in Northeast Portland. Like many other schools that were built in the 1950s, Harvey Scott heated its classrooms with a boiler that used oil #5, a particularly dirty type of fuel. Although PPS started making the switch to cleaner natural gas in 2001, more than 40 schools still await

conversion. OEC contributed toward the replacement at Harvey Scott, helping nearly 500 students and teachers breathe healthier, cleaner air.

“Portland Public Schools is fortunate to have partners like OEC that help us leverage our limited funds for capital improvement,” said Catherine Diviney, Portland Public Schools Energy Specialist.

Find out more about these OEC partners:

www.communityenergyproject.org
www.portlandgreenheat.com
www.pps.k12.or.us

Compact Communities and Transportation Choices

By Chris Hagerbaumer

After housing, transportation is the second largest major expense for most American households.

In 2006, nearly 18% of the average household income was spent on fuel and vehicle maintenance. Even worse, the poorest fifth of Americans devote the largest portion of their income – about 30% – to transportation; and families in areas with the fewest transportation choices carry even greater economic burdens. For people who don't have access to transportation and must own a car to get around, there are few ways to save on transportation expenses. A used car can be cheap, but clunkers are often unreliable, bringing high maintenance and repair costs. And many lower-income drivers pay hefty auto insurance premiums due to insurance rating factors related to their credit scores and the neighborhoods they live in.

The most affordable transportation system is one that gives people many options for getting around – from convenient and safe sidewalks and bicycle paths to frequent public transit service. These options work best in compact communities where people have easy access to the places they need to go and the population is dense enough to support mass transit.

In fact, families living in dense urban areas often pay thousands of dollars less per year for transportation than families who live in sprawling areas. For example, the difference in total expenditures between a household in New York and a household in Houston is small. The average New York family spent \$55,137 in 2006 and the average Houston family spent \$56,260. But the New Yorkers, who live

in a dense city with many transportation choices, spent almost \$4,000 less on transportation (\$7,792) than the Houston family (\$11,636). Families living in sprawling metropolitan areas have little choice but to own two or more vehicles and to drive almost everywhere they need to go – to jobs, the grocery store, to church and to ferry the kids to and from school and other activities.

How we design our communities and the transportation options we provide the people who live in them can make a real difference on a family's pocketbook. It can also make a positive impact on our environment. Compact communities are more climate-friendly than sprawling communities because people don't have to drive as far or as often. And every mile not driven is a pound of carbon not emitted. Transit is also far less carbon intensive and less polluting than driving alone in your car. And walking and bicycling are emission free!



OEC promotes affordable transportation solutions. Learn more about better, cleaner transportation at oeonline.org/climate/transportation.

For more info on the impact of sprawl on household transportation expenses, download the Surface Transportation Policy Partnership's 2000 report "Driven to Spend" at transact.org/report.asp?id=36.

Board of Directors

Bill Boggess, Corvallis
Bill Bradbury, Portland
Susan Brody, Portland
S.J. Camarata, Jr., Bend
Sue Densmore, Medford
Bill Edmonds, Portland
Michele Goodman, Portland
Steve Greenwood, Portland
Rick Gustafson, Portland
Bryan Johnston, Salem
Cheryl Koshuta, Lake Oswego
Jim Lussier, Bend
Bryan McCampbell, Eugene
Jim Owens, Portland
Gary Oxman, Portland
Chris Rich, Portland
Mary Wahl, Portland

OEC Staff

AmeriCorps Member

Lily Guajardo

Communications Director

Jeremy Graybill

Deputy Director

Chris Hagerbaumer

Development Director

Kevin Kasowski

Development Assistant

Wendy Buchanan

Director of Major Gifts

Teke Dillender

Executive Director

Andrea Durbin

Executive Assistant

Melodie Bruhn

Financial Manager

JR Ralston

Marketing Director

Adrienne Kringen

National Director, Eco-Healthy Childcare

Hester Dooley

Office Manager

Cheryl Bristah

Outreach Coordinator

Suzanne Veaudry Casaus

Program Directors

John Galloway
Renee Hackenmiller-Paradis
Allison Hensey
Teresa Huntsinger
Sara Leverette
Sallie Schullinger-Krause

Cap-and-Trade Equity: Ensuring Fairness in Climate Policy

By Chris Hagerbaumer

OEC is organizing Oregonians in support of a “cap-and-trade” program being developed by the Western Climate Initiative to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in seven western states and two Canadian provinces. But if major carbon emitters like electric utilities and petroleum companies are required to reduce emissions, won't prices rise and burden those least able to afford to heat their home and fill up their tank? It depends how the program is designed.

A cap-and-trade program works like this: A regulating body (in this case the Western Climate Initiative) establishes a “cap” that limits emissions (in this case greenhouse gases) from a group of polluters. The cap is set lower than current emissions and is ratcheted down over time. The total amount of emissions permitted under the cap is divided into “allowances,” say one ton of carbon per allowance. These allowances are allocated to polluters, who are then free to buy or sell them. Polluters who are able to reduce emissions at a low cost can sell their extra allowances to polluters who face higher costs.

The beauty of a cap-and-trade system is that it utilizes the power of the marketplace to help polluters achieve the cheapest, most efficient emissions reductions first. As the cap is lowered, fewer allowances circulate in the marketplace and carbon-emitting activities become progressively more expensive, which drives further innovation toward non-polluting activities.

Under cap-and-trade, certain consumer goods will become more expensive. For example, we'll pay more at the pump. This is right price signal – if we're going to solve the climate crisis we've got to burn less petroleum. But a poor family is less capable of handling increased costs than one with more financial resources.

With or without environmental regulation, the price tag of non-renewable electricity and petroleum-based fuels is heading nowhere but up. Cap-and-trade will help spur development of sustainably produced energy and fuels, which will be cheaper in the long run. (Even now, wind-powered energy is often cheaper than coal-fired power.)

The beauty of a cap-and-trade system is that it utilizes the power of the marketplace to help polluters achieve the cheapest, most efficient emissions reductions first.

But in the mean time, we must ease the burden of increased energy costs on those with lower incomes. A cap-and-trade system offers us a way to do this. By auctioning allowances, rather than giving them away, revenues can be raised to directly compensate low-income families (for example, by expanding the earned income tax credit); expand programs that help low-income families; invest in programs that help residents save energy (like the Community Energy Project described on page 4); provide transition assistance to workers in affected industries (like aluminum

smelters); and support development of less-costly, low- or no-carbon energy alternatives.

Low-income Oregonians tend to have less power in political settings. Key to the concept of environmental justice is participation in decision-making. We encourage low-income advocates to influence the design of the cap-and-trade program, and we will be by their side, advocating for policies that protect us all.

To learn more about the Western Climate Initiative and how you can help ensure the best design, visit oeconline.org/climate.

OEC Joins Suit Against EPA

By Sallie Schullinger-Krause

Late in December 2007, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Stephen L. Johnson announced his decision to deny California the waiver necessary under the Clean Air Act to implement stronger tailpipe emissions standards. This is the first time that EPA has denied California a Clean Air Act waiver request, after granting over 50 for the past three decades. In early January, California filed a lawsuit in the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals with EPA challenging the merits of its decision. Seventeen other states, including Oregon, joined the lawsuit. The Oregon Environmental Council has joined with national NGOs and several Northwest state-based groups to intervene in this case.

The adoption of the clean car standards was one of OEC's recent achievements in Oregon as a key way to curb greenhouse gas emissions in the state. We developed the Clean Cars for Oregon coalition, engaging over 5,000 Oregonians and spearheading a successful, diverse coalition to support the adoption of stronger emissions standards. The Environmental Quality Commission wisely adopted them in 2006. However,

implementing the standards ultimately hinges on whether EPA grants California the waiver, which would allow other states to follow its lead.

.....
“We create strong environmental policy by holding decision makers accountable and by leading broad coalitions of individuals and stakeholder groups in support of environmental progress.”

OEC's "Values in Action"

.....
OEC has a responsibility to hold EPA accountable for its decision – which was in stark contrast to what EPA staff had recommended – and fulfill the desire of Oregonians to see global warming pollution reduced. Oregon's ability to take protective measures and promote real solutions to global warming should not be preempted by the federal government.

Formation of the Clean Cars for Oregon coalition and our decision to join the legal strategy to compel EPA to grant California its waiver are embodied in our Values in Action statement, namely that “We create strong environmental policy by holding decision makers accountable and by leading broad coalitions of individuals and stakeholder groups in support of environmental progress.”



Vernonia, Oregon, December 2007.
Photo Rod Stockwell



Please visit oeconline.org/about/valuesinaction for our complete Values in Action statement.

For more information on this story, please visit oeconline.org/climate/epastalls.

It's Your Oregon

It could be the miles and miles of beautiful public beaches. Maybe it's the view of the Columbia Gorge from Crown Point. Or maybe it's the places you spend most of your time every day – your neighborhood, school or community – that you care about protecting most.

Whether you grew up in Oregon or you chose to move here because it's a great state to live in, we can all agree: Oregon is special.

That's what we mean when we say "It's Your Oregon." No matter your interests or your reasons for loving this place, what brings us all together is that common love.

This year, thanks to the commitment

of dedicated members and volunteers like you, we're celebrating our 40th anniversary.

Please mark your calendars for **September 12th, 2008**, and join us for our 40th anniversary celebration. We'll share more details in the months to come in this newsletter and on our website.

Now is a great time to invite your friends, family members and colleagues to join OEC. If you'd like us to send someone you know a newsletter and invitation to join, please call us or visit our website.

Thank you for your membership and involvement. You are the key to our forty years of success!

One*

One Oregon One Environment


(ISSN 0890-1201) is a publication of the Oregon Environmental Council. Copyright 2008 by the Oregon Environmental Council. All rights reserved.

Contact Information

Oregon Environmental Council
222 NW Davis Street, Suite 309
Portland, OR 97209-3900
503.222.1963
info@oeconline.org
oeconline.org

Become a Member

Join OEC to protect the things you love most about Oregon. Become a member today and be a part of the positive change for our health, economy and environment. Join us online at oeconline.org and click donate.

 Printed on 100% recycled PCF paper with soy-based inks



Oregon
Environmental
Council
It's Your Oregon

222 NW Davis Street, Suite 309
Portland, OR 97209-3900

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Portland, OR
Permit No. 833

*One Oregon One Environment Spring 2008

One*