



Environmental Justice & Climate Action for the Portland City Charter

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350PDX

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Why now?



- **Emissions & impacts**

- We are in the climate crisis: we are already experiencing increases to extreme weather, drought, food insecurity, displacement, climate refugees & species extinction. Even drastic changes we make now will not take effect for decades.
- Portland must phase out out new fossil fuel infrastructure, halve our carbon emissions by 2030, and achieve net zero emissions by 2050.

- **Local barriers to action**

- Oregon and Portland's history of racial exclusion, land theft & displacement tend to lock in status quo policies and power structures
- Portland's emissions are up since 2010 along with rest of the nation
- Current city climate plans are unfunded or are severely underfunded, non-binding
- Community-led efforts face severe challenges, extraction, bias

Poet Ocean Vuong on language:

“When you’re using language, you can create it, use it to divide people, and build walls, or you can turn it into something where you can see each other more clearly, as a bridge. That notion that you are a participant in the future of language...if you surrender that agency, you get played. We often tell our students, the future is in your hands. But actually, I think it’s in your mouth. You have to first articulate the world you want to live in first. What you are you going to say into the world?”



Interview on On Being with Krista Tippett, June 16, 2022

To Achieve Climate & Environmental Justice



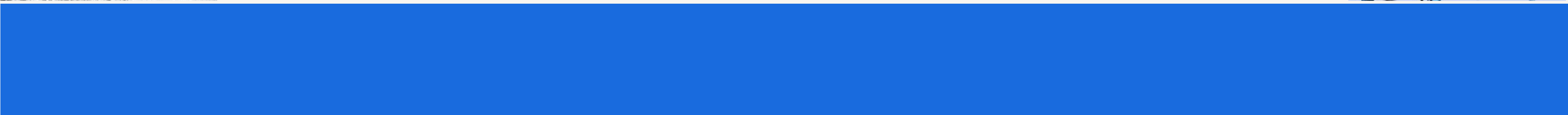
- Language has been used in Oregon to *take away* people's basic rights
 - Oregon and Portland's history of racial exclusion, land theft & displacement written into laws

We have an opportunity to use *language* in the charter to give people back their basic rights and to redress communities that have had those rights taken away.

- Our hopes for Charter reform:
 - Redress past harms in addressing the climate crisis, facilitate a just transition
 - Further democratize current processes to give people a voice in local government
 - Create City infrastructure equipped to treat ecology, health, and justice as interconnected concerns, respond to emergent needs



Use ecological crisis as
opportunity to redress
past harms and harness
People Power to
innovate



Shared Goals: Portland Metro People's Coalition (PMPC) draft charter amendments



**Environmental Rights
& Responsibilities**



**Climate
Assembly**



**Participatory
Budgeting**

Environmental Rights & Responsibilities

1. Create a provision in the Charter that:
 - a. Establishes the environmental rights of Portlanders,
 - b. Assigns the City responsibility to protect them, and
 - c. Defines accountability mechanisms useable by the public.
2. Rights vs. Public Trust
3. Case studies
4. Recommended resources



Climate Assembly

1. Create a provision in the Charter that:
 - a. convenes City residents to develop climate mitigation and adaptation strategies,
 - b. selects participants through a democratic lottery, and
 - c. has the authority to refer their approved proposals directly to City Council and/or Portland voters.
2. Equity and accessibility
3. Case studies
4. Recommended resources



Participatory Budgeting

1. Create a provision in the Charter that:
 - a. establishes a citywide participatory budgeting process by 2025 aligned with the proposal led by Participatory Budgeting Oregon.
2. Climate and PB
3. Case studies
4. Recommended resources



Emerging proposals



Prior consent and tribal consultation

1. Key features
 - a. Obligation to consult with the objective of consent on legislation or policies that affect Indigenous people
 - b. City is responsible for initiating and resourcing



Fossil fuel phase-out

1. Key features
 - a. Establish a binding commitment for Portland to phase out fossil fuels that policies can be “tested” against
 - b. Incorporate a just transition framework

Further considerations:

1. Defending forests
2. Equitable urban tree canopies
3. Rewilding land
4. Transition to regenerative plant-based food system
5. Support community food justice efforts & home gardens

Past Experience from Yaqui Tribal Leader



“From my experience when tribes are asked to consult with local government so many times the recommendations are not followed or they are changed from what the tribes actually recommended.

Additionally tribes are most often not compensated for their time and efforts. Like when white people ask people of color to explain something about racism to them, instead of the person doing the “work” for themselves.

Finding out what issues the local tribes are working on and having the City back the the tribes efforts would be backing Native/ Indigenous leadership and care of the environment.”

Process recommendations



Timeline

Questions?



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Thank you for your time today. We look forward to working with the City Charter Commissioners and the Environmental Justice & Climate Subcommittee!