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SB 1559: Updating Oregon's Emissions Goals

When the Oregon Legislature created Oregon's climate action goals in 2007, it used the best goals and methodology of the time. It established emissions-reduction goals for 2010, 2020, and 2050 and created the Global Warming Commission to track our progress in achieving them.

However, we now know that the pace of warming is increasing exponentially, and the effects of climate change are becoming ever more serious. Targets that made sense in 2007 no longer do and should no longer be in statute. The scientific consensus has now become clear: in order to avoid the worst effects of global warming, we must limit the rise in warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit).

In order to do our part, Oregon needs to modernize its goals and aspirations. California and Washington have already done so, and LC 173 will do the same for us.

It does six things:

- Clarifies that the purpose of our goals is to limit warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius.
- Updates the 2050 goal to bring it into line with current science and global agreements.
- Removes the outdated 2010 and 2020 interim goals from statute and replaces them with new interim goals for 2030 and 2040.
- Incorporates Oregon's newly-recognized ability to naturally store and sequester carbon through its forests, fields, marshes, and other natural resources, aspiring to achieve net-zero by 2050 and net-zero-minus thereafter.
- Clarifies that these goals do not create additional regulatory authority for the state.
- Aligns with current terminology by replacing "global warming" with "climate change" throughout this section of statute.

We had hoped to make these changes part of the omnibus Climate Action bill (HB 3409) that passed last session, but lingering disagreements over language led to their

removal from the final bill. Those language problems have been addressed and resolved in SB 1559.