



State of Oregon Department of Environmental Quality

Convening Interviews Executive Summary

**Greenhouse Gas Emissions 2021- Climate Protection Program
Rulemaking Advisory Committee**
January-February 2021

Overview

The Oregon Department of Environmental Quality is conducting a rulemaking to establish a new Climate Protection Program to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and address the effects of climate change. To support this process and inform its draft rules, DEQ convened a Rulemaking Advisory Committee (RAC) to provide diverse perspectives on policy proposals including fiscal, environmental justice, public health and economic impacts.

Kearns & West is a neutral process support firm hired by DEQ to help facilitate RAC meetings with the goal of creating a constructive and ongoing dialogue between the DEQ, RAC and Oregon residents. To assist early planning for the RAC, Kearns & West interviewed 14 RAC members representing a range of interests. The purpose of the interviews was to learn about RAC member background and interests, better understand member hopes and expectations for the RAC process, and hear suggestions for how to have a constructive RAC process.

This executive summary provides key themes from the interviews relating to the following topics as it relates to hopes and visions of success for the RAC, Greenhouse Gas Emissions Program 2021 Rulemaking goals, key issues, equitable outcomes and participation, and RAC process suggestions.

Hopes and visions of success for the RAC

Interviewees expressed the following comments about their hopes and visions of success for the RAC process and rulemaking.

Process

- Ensure that people feel heard, discussions are balanced, and all RAC members' perspectives are fairly considered.
- Result in a strong and effective climate program.
- Encourage a collaborative effort between different interest groups at the table.
- Center equity.
- Provide a safe space for participation.
- Use time efficiently and focus on key objectives aligned with the RAC's charge.

Rules

- Result in a strong and effective climate program.

- Shape rules that achieve greenhouse gas emissions reductions.
- Balance costs equitably between interests.
- Design rules with the understanding of who will bear climate related impacts.
- Include achievable and implementable targets.
- Avoid complexity.
- Informed by best available science.
- Arrive at practical policies and maintain affordability to achieve equitable outcomes.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions Program 2021 Rulemaking goals

Interviewees expressed the following comments about DEQ’s proposed three goals for this new Climate Protection Program, including suggestions for additions or adjustments.

- General support for DEQ’s overarching three goals.
- Address the goals of cost and equity equally as the goal of reducing emissions.
- Some interviewees commented on the second goal related to equity, including ensuring that cost and emissions are also viewed through an equity lens and an interest in specific actions to help impacted communities.
- Interviewees commented on the third goal related to minimizing costs, including a suggestion to reframe the goal to economics, promoting ways to save money through sustainability strategies and other potential opportunities, and an interest in finding ways to balance costs.
- Concern that DEQ may not be able to achieve program goals if the electric sector is exempted from this program.

Key issues to address

Interviewees expressed the following comments and concerns about the major issues that the RAC will need to address.

Policy issues

- Setting ambitious emissions reduction targets in developing the rules.
- Opportunities for co-benefits in Oregon communities.
- Considering the cost burden on businesses and ways to acknowledge early actions.
- Addressing leakage risks.
- Assessing relationship and impacts with related efforts.
- Concern about potential exception of the electric sector.

RAC process

- Many commented on the challenges presented by the size and diverse interests of the RAC, as well as the different levels of technical understanding.
- Concern that RAC members may not be operating on the same set of premises on certain issues.

- Concern that some interests may look for exemptions or special rules to address their concerns.

Equitable outcomes and participation

Interviewees provided the following hopes for equitable outcomes and suggestions for encouraging and providing equitable opportunities for participation during the rulemaking process.

Hopes

- Acknowledge historical inequities and support healthier communities for frontline, BIPOC, and indigenous people.
- Consider how rules will affect rural communities.
- Maximize benefits to most impacted communities.
- Ensure impacted community voices and needs are considered.
- Avoid rules that would disproportionately impact small businesses.

Ideas for equitable outcomes

- Invite perspectives from Tribal, environmental justice, and frontline communities early on.
- Call on stakeholder interest groups who have not provided comments to encourage input.
- Provide opportunity first for clarifying questions.
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- Provide opportunity first for clarifying questions.
- Ensure meeting materials are easily accessible.
- With only two RAC members representing tribal interests critically important that DEQ fulfill its commitment to conduct government-to-government consultation with the nine Oregon tribes.

RAC process suggestions

Interviewees provided the following reflections on ways to support their participation in the RAC and support a productive process. Some who were interviewed after RAC Meeting #1 shared their reflections about the first meeting.

- Provide background information as early in advance as possible.
- Allow more time for RAC comments.
- Share calendar invites for each meeting.
- Be specific about DEQ's desired outcomes and feedback needed.
- Ensure the language in the meeting materials is understandable.
- Provide ample time for RAC discussion and provide a balance of speaking time.
- Consider opportunities for break-out group discussions, ways for people with different communication styles to provide input, and ways to encourage interaction.

- Recognize the varying levels of knowledge on subject matter presented in meetings.
- Interest in extending the length of the comment period or providing more than one opportunity for public comment.
- Recognize technical challenges presented by attending the virtual meetings and ways to make this process more accessible, especially for rural residents.
- Suggestions for other opportunities to review staff analysis and discuss questions

Incorporating Feedback

DEQ and KW considered the feedback received and worked to make changes for the second RAC meeting. DEQ and KW will continue to look for ways to improve the overall RAC process, including planning for future RAC meeting. Some steps taken included:

- Follow-up on specific questions, as requested by a few interviewees.
- Consideration of whether adjustments to the program goals may be appropriate.
- Incorporated suggestions to create more effective agendas, meeting materials and presentations for second RAC meeting
- Identified and developed additional background materials and resources.
- Added breakout sessions to the second RAC meeting to support RAC discussion and participation.
- Developed guiding principles for the RAC process to shape future meetings.

Alternative formats

DEQ can provide documents in an alternate format or in a language other than English upon request. Call DEQ at 800-452-4011 or email deqinfo@deq.state.or.us.