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## Summary:

Adopting California's restrictions on gasoline-powered vehicles will lead to disaster in Oregon environmental policy. They will force manufacturers to produce products consumers aren't buying, while shifting air pollution from tailpipes to smokestacks. Oregon needs to return to thinking for itself.

Word Count: 680

***“...EVs only comprise about 1% of all vehicles in Oregon, so the notion that 35% of vehicle sales will be electric three years from now is laughable.”***

## Oregon Environmental Policy Now Controlled by California

By John A. Charles, Jr.

On December 19, Oregon's Environmental Quality Commission voted 4-1 to adopt California regulations that will begin restricting the sale of gasoline-powered motor vehicles in Oregon, starting in 2026.

By the end of that year, automobile manufacturers must deliver and offer for sale electric vehicles (EVs) totaling at least 35% of their overall vehicle sales in Oregon. By 2035, that number will rise to 100%, resulting in a ban on vehicles powered by internal combustion engines (ICE).

Although several Commissioners admitted that the 100% requirement will be unpopular, DEQ staff reminded them that since Oregon began outsourcing its decision-making on tailpipe standards to California in 2005, Oregon policy makers no longer have any discretion to think for themselves. After a brief discussion, the EQC meekly adopted California regulations exactly as approved in Sacramento.

Commissioner Greg Addington, from Klamath Falls, raised multiple objections and voted against the rule, but the outcome was never in doubt.

There were many fascinating elements of this decision. The most obvious is that EVs only comprise about 1% of all vehicles in Oregon, so the notion that 35% of vehicle sales will be electric three years from now is laughable.

Moreover, when 2026 arrives and the goal is not met, there will be no way for DEQ to enforce it. The regulatory mandate is on vehicle manufacturers, not buyers. The government cannot force us to buy cars we don't want – at least not yet.

Even after the 100% requirement arrives in 2035, Oregon residents who desire to buy a gasoline-powered vehicle will have the option of buying from another state or going to the used-car market.

A major reason why so many buyers are reluctant to purchase an EV is that chargers are scarce. That problem is not going to be solved for a long time, as recent California experience demonstrates.

In June 2021, the California Energy Commission announced that the state will need nearly 1.2 million public and shared private chargers by 2030 to meet the demands of the 7.5 million passenger plug-in EVs anticipated to be on California roads. As of the date of that report, there were only 73,000 chargers, which implied



a need for new chargers to be installed at the rate of 343 per day for the next nine years.

At the end of October 2022, there were 79,023 public and shared private chargers in California. The state had increased the number of chargers by 6,023 in 17 months, when it needed to add 176,645.

Another problem is that DEQ staff insist on calling EVs “zero-emission vehicles,” but this is inaccurate. The electricity required to charge EVs has to come from somewhere, and fossil fuels are essential to the maintenance of the electrical grid. Charging an EV simply shifts air pollution from the automobile tailpipe to industrial smokestacks at fossil fuel plants.

Gov. Kate Brown may have thought she solved this problem with state legislation passed in 2016 and 2021, but she didn’t. In fact, during her tenure as governor, Oregon’s reliance on fossil fuels has actually gone up.

According to the Oregon Department of Energy, coal and natural gas accounted for 45% of Oregon’s electricity generation in 2012. By 2020, fossil fuel use had increased to 48%. The largest increase was in natural gas, which grew from 12% to 21.5%.

This was completely predictable. Oregon legislators have ordered electric utilities to rely almost entirely on wind and solar as new power sources, but those technologies are unreliable. Since the electric grid requires that supply and demand be in equilibrium at all times, wind and solar are uniquely unsuited for the role assigned them by politicians.

Every megawatt of wind and solar capacity has to be backed up by an adult source, and for the foreseeable future that source will be fast-starting natural gas plants. Converting Oregon’s auto fleet to EVs will increase electricity consumption, requiring even more natural gas.

One of EQC Commissioner Addington’s comments was, “a lot of people think adopting any regulations from California is crazy.” He’s right. Governor Tina Kotek should reverse this rule as soon as possible.

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