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QuickPoint! - DEQ's Plan to Raise the Cost of Driving Should Be Cancelled

By John A. Charles, Jr.

On November 21, the Oregon Environmental Quality Commission is scheduled to adopt a carbon rationing scheme known as the Climate Protection Program.

The regulation will set a statewide cap on the emissions of human-caused carbon dioxide, and then steadily reduce the cap over time. By 2040, most fossil fuels will be outlawed.

The effects of this cap will be swift and painful. Based on experience in Washington and California, the DEQ regulation will increase the cost of gasoline sold in Oregon by at least 25 cents/gallon, and possibly as much as 45 cents.

None of this will benefit drivers, and it won't even benefit the environment. Carbon rationing will force fuel suppliers to rely on corn-based ethanol and other agricultural commodities, which will vastly increase the amount of land, water and fertilizer needed to produce automotive fuel.

The Climate Protection Program was ordered by former Governor Kate Brown, who is no longer in office. But elected officials who *are* in office should note that the number one message from voters in the recent election was that they can't afford the rising cost of consumer goods.

If state legislative leaders are smart, they will tell DEQ to drop the carbon tax. Elections matter, even in Oregon.

John A. Charles, Jr. is President and CEO of Cascade Policy Institute, Oregon's free market public policy research organization.