

Oregon Governor Kate Brown Bypassed the Legislature and Signed an Executive Order to Reduce Greenhouse Gas



After Oregon's state legislature was unable to pass a cap-and-trade bill, Governor Kate Brown enacted an executive order to cut the state's greenhouse gas emissions to 80% below 1990 levels by 2050. Brown doesn't have the legal authority to implement a cap-and-trade system with an executive order, but she vowed to make sure that Oregon state agencies will prioritize cutting emissions. -GEG

After cap and trade couldn't pass through the state legislature during the last two legislative sessions, Oregon governor Kate Brown once again channels her inner tyrant and has started to implement the policy via executive order.

Oregon Public Broadcasting reports:

Closing a loop on a pledge she made last year, Gov. Kate Brown issued an executive order Tuesday that aims to sharply curb greenhouse gas emissions with a full-court press by government agencies.

The 14-page order comes less than a week after a Republican walkout killed Senate Bill 1530, Democrats' signature proposal for a cap-and-trade system in Oregon. It contains ambitions that are at once equal to and much broader than that bill.

“The executive branch has a responsibility to the electorate, and a scientific, economic, and moral imperative to reduce [greenhouse gas] emissions,” the order says, “and to reduce the worst risks of climate change and ocean acidification for future generations.”

Like SB 1530, Brown’s order updates the state’s carbon reduction goals, setting targets of a 45% reduction below 1990 levels by 2035, and an 80% reduction by 2050. But its path to those goals extends well beyond the regulations in the legislative proposal.

In total, the action impacts 19 state agencies and commissions, directing a large portion of the state’s bureaucracy to do its work with an eye toward reducing emissions. That sweeping nature is certain to make it a target – both legally and rhetorically – of Republicans and industry groups.

“This executive order is extensive and thorough, taking the boldest actions available to lower greenhouse gas emissions under current state laws,” Brown said in a statement. “As a state, we will pursue every option available under existing law to combat the effects of climate change and put Oregon on a path we can be proud to leave behind for our children.”

For its differences to SB 1530, a central piece of Brown’s order bears a resemblance to the primary enforcement mechanism in the scuttled bill. Under the order, carbon polluters in the industrial, transportation and natural gas sectors would have their emissions capped by the state’s Environmental Quality Commission and Department of Environmental Quality, with allowable emissions reduced over time.

The new law, which effectively acts as a carbon tax, would decimate the logging and trucking industries, resulting in thousands upon thousands of people losing their jobs and

raising energy costs across the board. As it was being proposed and debated in the legislature, massive protests took place in and around the capitol building, spurred on by Timber Unity. Thousands of people showed up to the protest, and hundreds of truckers in a convoy circled around the building and capitol.

The democrats, which hold super majorities in both chambers, refused to listen to their republican counterparts or consider any of the republicans' concerns. This resulted in republican legislators walking out and going into hiding, denying the democrats a quorum, effectively killing the cap and trade bill, as well as other dangerous wacked out leftist bills.

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