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EUGENE, OREGON TAKES HISTORIC CLIMATE ACTION

The City is the First in the Nation to Adopt a Law Incorporating a Viable Scientific Prescription for Climate Recovery

Eugene, Oregon – Last night, with a vote of 6-2, the Eugene City Council adopted a powerful [Climate Recovery Ordinance](#) that was promoted by the city's young people, and backed by a scientific prescription for climate recovery. The Ordinance is the first in the country to require carbon neutrality, fossil fuel use reductions, and the development of a carbon budget based on the best available science.

At a public hearing on July 21, over 100 community members showed up to testify or stand in support of Eugene adopting the Climate Recovery Ordinance. Eugene's faith community, scientists, lawyers, business owners, children, parents, and students all spoke in favor of the Ordinance.

"I am amazed by the young people of Eugene. For months they have come to us to speak about climate disruption, and to ask us to take action to protect their futures. I'm proud of this City and our community for rising to the challenge of taking meaningful action on the biggest threat of our time. My hope is that other cities across the nation will follow Eugene's example to combat climate change," said Mayor Kitty Piercy. "Here at home, we now need to redouble our efforts to make sure this new law is fully implemented and to meet our City's carbon budget."

This climate victory is the result of a group of young people in Eugene who have been working hard for the past 10 months to get the Eugene City Council to adopt the Ordinance. With the help of [Our Children's Trust](#), the young people came together last September to create the [Youth Climate Action Now \(YouCAN\) Campaign](#) to advocate for their right to a safe and stable climate system. The youth and their supporters have attended every City Council meeting since last fall to present testimony to the City Councilors, voicing their concerns about the negative effects of climate disruption in Eugene, Oregon, and beyond, as well as the need for urgent action by every level of government. Last night, their leaders took action. The vote to adopt the Climate Recovery Ordinance left the young people behind this effort feeling celebratory and proud of their city.

"It was awesome!" exclaimed 10-year-old Zealand Bell, who testified before Eugene's City Council and was there for the vote on the Climate Recovery Ordinance. "I'm glad that the City of Eugene is helping us stop climate change so that I can live a healthy life when I'm an adult and be able to see the wilderness and have fun like I do now. I want to enjoy what I do now my whole life."

“Now in my early twenties, I've come to realize that the places we live are ultimately what we make of them. In this imperative time, the Climate Recovery Ordinance instills the City of Eugene, young and old, a realization of the power we hold in making our world what we want and need it to be,” said Kyra Gunther, a college student, activist, and artist, who helped lead the YouCAN Campaign and worked side-by-side with young people like Zealand Bell to paint a climate mural on the wall of a local business, Arriving By Bike, to bring more climate awareness to Eugene.

The Climate Recovery Ordinance legally commits the City of Eugene to its pre-existing climate goals of carbon neutral internal operations by 2020 and reduction of citywide fossil fuel use by 50% by 2030. The Ordinance directs staff to develop a citywide, science-based target and carbon budget for emission reductions consistent with achieving 350 ppm of CO₂ in the atmosphere by 2100. The Ordinance also requires regular reports on the City’s progress toward meeting its climate obligations and creates a mechanism for getting back on track if the City is not meeting its obligations.

“Eugene is a leading example of what governments can do to help avoid the most catastrophic consequences of climate disruption and ocean acidification,” said Dr. Pushker Kharecha, climate scientist with the Columbia University Earth Institute who is working with the City of Eugene to help the City align its emission reductions and carbon budget with the trajectory of reducing carbon dioxide levels to 350 ppm in the atmosphere. “I applaud Eugene for enacting a law grounded in the science of stabilizing our climate system and seeking to protect our youth and future generations. I hope it inspires many such laws around the nation and the world.”

The Climate Recovery Ordinance is informed by and incorporates a viable scientific prescription for climate recovery from one of our nation’s top climate scientists and other experts from across the globe. [According to Dr. James Hansen](#), “the science is crystal-clear we must rapidly reduce fossil fuel carbon dioxide emissions if we are to have a chance of protecting Earth’s natural systems for these young people.” The best available science prescribes that atmospheric carbon dioxide levels must be reduced from the current annual mean concentration of 397 parts per million (ppm) to 350 ppm by 2100 in order to achieve climate stabilization and protect our oceans from catastrophic acidification.

***Our Children’s Trust** is a nonprofit advocating for urgent emissions reductions on behalf of youth and future generations, who have the most to lose. OCT is spearheading the international human rights and environmental TRUST Campaign to compel governments to safeguard the atmosphere as a public trust resource. We use law, film, and media to elevate their compelling voices. Our ultimate goal is for governments to adopt and implement enforceable science-based Climate Recovery Plans with annual emissions reductions to return atmospheric CO₂ concentration to 350 ppm. www.OurChildrensTrust.org/*

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