

Mayor Bennett, City Councilors, and Staff,

My name is Laurie Dougherty. I live in Ward 1 and am a Co-Coordinator of 350 Salem OR, local affiliate of international climate justice network 350.org.

Oberlin Professor Emeritus David Orr in the introduction to his book *Hope is an Imperative* says: "... *hope* is a verb with its sleeves rolled up. In contrast to optimism or despair, hope requires that one actually do something to improve the world. Authentic hope comes with an imperative to act." Later in the book he says in comparison to optimists who believe the odds are in their favor, "Hopeful people are actively engaged in defying the odds or changing the odds."

The odds we face today include an overwhelming array of crises and tragic events. It would be easy for climate change to drop off the radar. But it's there, feeding into one catastrophe after another. The odds we face include powerful industries and their political allies who put profit over the well-being of people and our planet. Defying and changing these odds is exactly what this subcommittee must do. Salem will not be alone. Cities are taking the lead in changing the odds on climate change. [A recent report](#) finds that: "cities are often the first to set ambitious climate goals, including some two dozen U.S. cities that are on track to surpass the Paris Agreement climate targets for greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reductions goals by 2025"

We would like to change the odds even more by requesting some changes to this committee. A committee with five members will be stronger, able to resolve disagreements with a clear majority. Councilor Stapleton, now an alternate, would be a great addition as a full member. In the Council meeting that established the subcommittee she expressed eagerness to dig deeply into climate solutions. She collaborated on Salem Bike Vision which can play a big role in reducing greenhouse gas emissions from transportation, Salem's biggest source.

We also suggest that Mayor Bennett offer his seat to one of the Councilors who was on the CAP Task Force. There is a steep learning curve to understand and grapple with the complex, interconnected issues of energy, natural resources, transportation, and development. As members of the Task Force, Councilors Andersen and Nordyke, have a head start on working through these questions and have demonstrated commitment to climate action. Either one would be a valuable member of the subcommittee.

One last suggestion regarding the recommendations for early implementation in the Staff Report: Some actions listed for later years involve ensuring that development patterns align with Salem's climate goals. Development is ongoing and results in infrastructure that lasts for decades, so these actions need to begin as soon as possible. Two examples are: using [System Development Charges](#) as incentives for compact mixed use development convenient to public transit; and planning to phase out natural gas**. Actions like these need early stage attention.

*[System Development Charges](#) (SDCs), as described on the City of Salem website, are " a financing mechanism for funding of Parks, Transportation, Water, Wastewater, and Stormwater systems that are needed to serve new developments. SDCs are collected from developers at the time of building permit issuance based on the relative impacts of each project and are used to pay for construction of new public infrastructure." Reducing or waiving SDCs can be used as incentives for development patterns that will reduce the need for motor vehicle use which is Salem's greatest source of greenhouse gas emissions. Co-benefits include greater safety, less traffic congestion, and improved health from reduction of other pollutants and an increase in active mobility.

**Natural gas is a fossil fuel. Combustion, while cleaner than coal still emits greenhouse gases. Uncombusted natural gas is nearly all methane, a potent greenhouse gas. Methane leaks at all stages of production and transportation. Methane is explosive and causes suffocation if leaked in enclosed spaces. Using natural gas for heating and cooking results in unhealthy indoor air, exacerbating asthma and cardiovascular conditions.

[Methane Gas Health, Safety, and Decarbonization](#)