



November 5, 2025

Dear Mayor Knudson and City Councilors,

The Fossil Free Eugene Coalition – collectively representing tens of thousands of local residents including renters, conservationists, climate advocates, and environmental justice organizations – is writing to share our priorities for the expertise, values, and leadership experience needed in the City of Eugene’s next City Manager. Our city is facing increasing economic and public health and safety challenges, amplified by our rapidly changing climate, including frequent extreme weather events and climate-driven wildfire risk and smoke impacts. Our next City Manager needs a strong understanding of the intersection of these issues with other crises facing our city, and an unwavering commitment to reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and improving community resilience.

Climate, Cost of Living, Housing Access, and Businesses

Experts in economics, agriculture¹, insurance², and public health³ are continuing to demonstrate the many ways the climate crisis is increasing cost of living and worsening inequality. A 2024 report by the Forum for Oregon Climate Economics examined costs from recent events and global analyses to calculate local costs, finding:

- An estimated reduction of Oregon’s GDP by \$7,500 per Oregonian per year over the next several decades;
- Economic costs of \$1.3-4.6 billion from heat-related deaths during the 2021 heatwave;
- Costs to Oregon households of \$450 per day due to wildfire smoke, with statewide costs from the 2018 fire season potentially reaching \$6.8 billion; and

¹ Environmental Protection Agency. Climate Change Impacts on Agriculture and Food Supply. <https://www.epa.gov/climateimpacts/climate-change-impacts-agriculture-and-food-supply>

² Elissa Tennant (2025). Climate Change and Insurance. <https://citizensclimatelobby.org/blog/policy/climate-change-and-insurance/>

³ World Bank (2024). The Cost of Inaction: Quantifying the Impact of Climate Change on Health in Low- and Middle-Income Countries. <http://hdl.handle.net/10986/42419/>

- Expected losses for \$12,000 in personal income per year for the average Oregonian, due to the effects of climate change on the cost of food, goods, and services.⁴

These are costs for the average Oregonian and the economy as a whole. The financial and emotional toll is much heavier for those who lose their homes to fires, floods, and storm damage, as well as those who lose loved ones to the adverse health effects of extreme heat, poor air quality, severe ice storms, and other events directly attributable to climate change and continued GHG emissions.

Emissions Reduction and Equitable Adaptation

Eugene's next City Manager will help determine whether we achieve the commitments made in the Climate Recovery Ordinance (CRO),⁵ and the Climate Action Plan 2.0 (CAP 2.0)⁶, and more generally whether we continue to reduce our GHG emissions and invest in community resilience. Eugene has an opportunity to be a leader in this area, attracting investment and opportunities while infusing that money into our local economy. The new City Manager must be able to work effectively with conflicting parties and have a willingness to take on entrenched business interests that have put their own profits above community wellbeing. By supporting residents in weatherization, air purification, and electrification efforts, and continuing to address dangers related to heatwaves, wildfires, heat domes, floods and other climate-driven extreme weather events on a city-wide scale, Eugene can reduce costs to residents and the city as a whole. Economists consistently demonstrate the value of investing in resilient, sustainable infrastructure⁷, and it is vital for our next city manager to be ready to bring those benefits to Eugene.

Conclusion

Eugene has taken positive steps towards reaching the CRO and CAP 2.0 goals, but our Mayor and Councilors recently recognized that there is still much that needs to be done and that we are not on track to do so. The City must also address affordability and housing needs that make it increasingly challenging for residents and small businesses

⁴ Miller et al. (2024). The Economic Costs of Climate Change for Oregonians: A First Look. <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/66b3a62bbf13723aab123b5d/t/6719d4ea8e78834f3d956c0b/1729746160697/economic-cost-of-climate-change-oregonians.pdf>.

⁵ Eugene City Code §§ 6.675-6.685, <https://eugene.municipal.codes/EC/6-13/>.

⁶ City of Eugene (2024). CAP 2.0 Story Map <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/4fa9114cdc08452f845c251f53ddf64f>

⁷ Deseglise and Downing (2025). Why investment in sustainable infrastructure is key to financial resilience in a changing climate. <https://www.weforum.org/stories/2025/04/why-investment-in-sustainable-infrastructure-is-key-to-financial-resilience-in-a-changing-climate/>

to sustain themselves. Our next City Manager must be ready to tackle both by recognizing they are connected, possessing the leadership experience to work with diverse interests, and a commitment to ensuring a just and sustainable future for our city. We urge you to select a candidate with a strong commitment to climate justice, and the skills and expertise necessary to move forward with progressive solutions to the many crises in our community with an equity lens, and who can strengthen Eugene now and in the years to come.

Sincerely,

Fossil Free Eugene Coalition