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A Strategy for Livability: 1000 Friends of Oregon Supports LCDC Greenhouse Gas Reduction Targets

Yesterday the Land Conservation and Development Commission (LCDC) took an important step in helping Oregon communities meet the challenge of climate change. LCDC adopted greenhouse gas reduction targets for six of Oregon's urban areas to use as they conduct land use and transportation planning in their communities. The six urban areas are the Portland metropolitan area, Salem/Keizer, Eugene/Springfield, Corvallis, the Rogue Valley, and Bend.

1000 Friends of Oregon has participated in the process leading to the recommended targets and supports them. Executive Director Jason Miner explained: "Planning to build walkable, bikeable neighborhoods, with transit and a diversity of housing options located near the places we go every day – like school, work, or the grocery store – turns out to also greatly reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the transportation sector. We simply won't choose to drive as much. The benefits don't stop there: burning less gas saves you money, and being able to walk when you want to builds a healthier community."

In 2007, the Oregon Legislature declared that "[g]lobal warming poses a serious threat to the economic well-being, public health, natural resources and environment of Oregon" and that "[a]ctions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions will reduce Oregon's reliance on foreign sources of energy, lead to the development of technology, attract new businesses to Oregon and increase energy efficiency throughout the state, resulting in benefits to the economy and to individual businesses and residents."

The Legislature established statewide goals for greenhouse gas reduction:

- By 2010, stop the growth of Oregon's greenhouse gas emissions.
- By 2020, achieve greenhouse gas levels that are 10 percent below 1990 levels.
- By 2050, achieve greenhouse gas levels that are at least 75 percent below 1990 levels.

Transportation is responsible for about 1/3 of all greenhouse gas emissions in Oregon, and Oregonians driving cars and light trucks make up about 60% of that. Therefore, providing choice in how the state's urban residents get around can go a long way to meeting Oregon's climate goals. Working with stakeholders from each region, LCDC set individualized reduction targets for each urban area, in order to reflect that region's particular transportation and land use characteristics. Except for the Portland Metro area, the targets are voluntary.

1000 Friends will be working with residents and decision-makers in these six urban areas to explore how land use and transportation strategies can create and maintain communities that are both livable and climate-friendly. For more information, contact Mary Kyle McCurdy, Policy Director, at 503-497-1000 x 130 or 503-407-3334. In Central Oregon, contact Ben Gordon, Central Oregon Outreach Coordinator, at 541-728-3812.