

GREEN ENERGY INSTITUTE

AT LEWIS & CLARK LAW SCHOOL

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GEI Receives \$180,000 Grant for Project to Prevent New Fossil Fuel Investment and Infrastructure Development

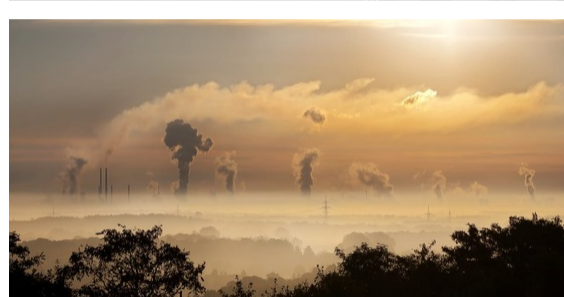
GEI has received a 3-year grant for a new project that will identify the best legal and policy avenues to increase the near-term costs of fossil fuels as a means of preventing new fossil fuel infrastructure development and quickly transitioning to zero-carbon resources. There have been many excellent and innovative fossil fuel pricing proposals developed by economists, advocates, and social scientists, including proposals to create climate risk bonds and reform subsidies, but they are not usually tailored to fit within the existing legal system. Our project would seek to align the best pricing strategies with a clear legal strategy for effective implementation. Our project will focus on the Pacific Northwest for starters, but we have ambitions to expand the scope of the research in the future. Stay tuned for more information!



GEI Submits Comments on EPA's Proposed Vehicle Rollbacks

GEI submitted [comments](#) on behalf of several Oregon organizations opposing the EPA's damaging proposals to roll back fuel efficiency standards and vehicle greenhouse gas emissions standards. **The revised "Safer Affordable Fuel Efficient" (SAFE) vehicles rules will dramatically reduce the amount of projected emissions reductions from vehicles according to the EPA's own data.**

- EPA and National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) project that vehicles subject to the proposed weakened standards will emit an additional 872 million metric tons of CO₂ over the vehicles' lifetimes, as compared to the current standards;
- EPA estimates that the proposed rule will result in an additional 3.8 billion tons of CO₂ emissions compared to the existing standards.
- [View GEI's full comments in opposition to the SAFE rule on our website](#)



Oregon Stands Up to EPA

EPA issued the proposed rollbacks, along with a proposed repeal of the Clean Power Plan (which would have reduced carbon dioxide emissions from fossil fuel-fired power plants), in late August. EPA then refused multiple requests to extend the timeframe for concerned citizens to comment on the rollbacks. EPA also held only four public hearings regarding the rollbacks, despite a broad public outcry. Oregon's DEQ, however, stepped up to the bat and provided a public hearing on the regulatory rollbacks on October 23.



GEI Director Melissa Powers provides testimony on the proposed "Affordable Clean Energy" rule

GEI presented testimony during the public hearing. "Thanks to current standards, the current fleets are safer and cleaner," stated GEI staff attorney Amelia Schlusser. "Now the Trump Administration is putting the brakes on progress."

Thanks to Neighbors for Clean Air and others who helped to organize and publicize this event, as well as those who showed up in support and to submit comments. All comments provided during the hearing were recorded and will be submitted to the EPA by the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality.

View [photos](#) and [read Multnomah County's coverage of the hearing here](#).

GEI Director Melissa Powers Online and on the Air Discusses the Administration's Stance on Climate, Comprehensive Decarbonization Strategy, and *Juliana v United States*



"For years, many conservatives have denied that climate change is real and that humans have caused climate change by burning fossil fuels," Melissa writes on [the Center for Progressive Reform's blog](#). "Buried in a 500-page justification for a rule that would prevent California (and, by extension, other states) from regulating emissions of greenhouse gases from new vehicles, **the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) states that any regulation of greenhouse gases would be futile** because climate models show that global temperatures will increase by up to 7 degrees Fahrenheit no matter how the United States behaves... It's hard to imagine a more cynical reversal in positions...The Trump administration's cynical claim that incremental efforts are futile **could become the new strategy for the federal government and other polluters to deny states and concerned citizens access to the courts.**" Read Melissa's full post on the legal ramifications of the administration's change of heart on [the Center for Progressive Reform's blog](#).



Melissa also contributed to the [Environmental Law Prof Blog](#) (published piece forthcoming) to suggest the way elected leaders can and should address climate change. **"Every system is perfectly designed to get the results it gets."** If that's so, **our climate and energy laws have been perfectly designed to fall short. They will not avoid the catastrophic consequences of climate change** or enable a swift transition to a zero-carbon energy system, because they have not been designed to achieve those outcomes. Instead, climate and energy laws in the United States, including those promoted by the most progressive jurisdictions, are **designed to gradually reduce some emissions** and eventually phase out fossil fuels from some sectors, but they are not designed to achieve the drastic systemic changes in our energy sectors and human behavior that are necessary to quickly and permanently reduce greenhouse gases...We must change this approach. The United States and the rest of the world must quickly establish and achieve end goals for climate mitigation. **U.S. lawmakers at the local, state, and federal (after the Trump Administration is out of office) levels must commit to complete energy decarbonization by 2050.** They then must design their decarbonization strategies to ensure they meet this ambitious target." Stay tuned for the full blog post on the [Environmental Law Prof Blog](#).

On OPB's Think Out Loud segment, Melissa Powers discussed *Juliana v United States*, the case of 21 young plaintiffs suing the federal government for infringing on the plaintiffs' rights to a healthy, livable future. "They [the plaintiffs] are asking the federal government to develop a plan to eliminate fossil fuels from our energy system so that we can turn to carbon-free energy sources," said Melissa. The trial had been scheduled to begin in Eugene on Monday, but the Supreme Court has issued a temporary stay. Melissa explained how any further intervention from the Supreme Court would be extraordinary. [Listen to the full segment on OPB's site here](#).



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