

# Connecting People, Place *and* Politics to Grow Climate Power



A REPORT BASED ON THE 2022 **uniteoregon** CLIMATE JUSTICE LISTENING TOUR



Read the Executive Summary  
by snapping the QR code.

## CO-CREATED IN PARTNERSHIP WITH

**Black Community Organizers from:** BASE, The Father's Group, Black Rural Network, Urban League of Portland

**Indigenous Community Members** including folks from

- Tribal Community Members\* from the Confederated Tribes of Umatilla Indian Reservation, Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon, Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians and Burns Paiute Tribe;

*\*Please note that people are not speaking on behalf of their Tribes in this report.*

- Indigenous-led organizations like Red Lodge Transition Services, Lomakatsi Restoration Project, Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians (ATNI), Native American Youth and Family Center (NAYA) & Native American Rehabilitation Association (NARA).
- People who self-identify as Indigenous and have not specified affiliations with Tribal entities and organizations.

## Community Review Committee Members

Derek Kimbol, Lotus Duff, Maia Barnes, Toni Frank, Shalaya Williams, Cecilia Huizar, Sean Shearon, Rachel Mitchell, Rayline Bradshaw, Warren Randals, Matthew Thomas, Tyanna Van Pelt and Marie Knight.

## Unite Oregon

**Initiator & Guide:** Jairaj Singh

**Facilitators and Report-Writing Team:** Lorri O'Neill, Marion Powell, Emilie Pilchowski, Becca Phelps and Ayman Irfan.

**Facilitator-Consultant:** Hobbs Waters

**Partner Organization:** Amanda Hudson (Participatory Budgeting Oregon)

**Data Analysis:** Training & Support from Mira Mohsini and Khanya Msibi from the Coalition of Communities of Colors (CCC) and consultant Kit Batten

**Policy Team:** Gloria Ochoa-Sandoval, Metzin Rodriguez

**Communications Team:** Luann Algosu

**Communications Consultants:** Christina Newhard and Lokyee Au

**Report-Writing Consultants:** Anita Yap and Ridhi D'Cruz

*Funded in partnership with Meyer Memorial Trust, Oregon Health Authority and Oregon Consumer Justice.*



## Opening Blessing

A blessing to get us started.

First and foremost, I want to thank the Creator for giving us another day

To be here amongst our family, friends and colleagues.

That everyday we give thanks.

The light we see from the Sun and the warmth it brings us.

The air that we breathe.

The water we drink and the foods that surround us on this mother earth.

That we bless everyone of you enduring day to day.

That you need good health for the elders and children.

We ask for strength and guidance.

Day by day and season to season.

And again, we thank our Creator for another day.

*-Lorri O'Neill, Indigenous Organizer at Unite Oregon*



# An Introduction

*Who We Are, Unite Oregon and the Climate Justice Team*

Unite Oregon has 6 pillars which serve as the foundation for our work. The pillars are Climate Justice, Reimagining Community Safety, Housing Justice, Economic Justice, Education Equity, and Health Equity. Climate Justice is a key concern of Unite Oregon (UO) and Unite Oregon Action (UOA). UO and UOA demand a bold vision and plan with achievable goals and actions to address climate justice as well as the intersecting

crises of an inequitable economy, public health disparities and continuing racial injustice. UO and UOA call upon our private and public sectors to prioritize partnerships and increase support for nonprofit organizations that represent communities disproportionately impacted by climate change and to challenge existing laws, policies and strategies that place the interests of profit over people and planet.

## ABOUT UNITE & THE CLIMATE JUSTICE LISTENING TOUR



**Lorri O'Neill,**  
(she/her)  
Indigenous  
Organizer



**Hobbs Waters,**  
(pronouns?)  
youth con-  
sultant, artist,  
student



**Jairaj Singh,**  
(he/him)  
Climate Justice  
Team Manager  
(Summer 2022-  
November  
2022)



**Becca Phelps**  
(she/her)  
Climate Justice  
Team Manager  
(January-July  
2023)



**Emilie  
Pilchowski,**  
(she/her)  
Climate Justice  
Organizer



**Marion Powell,**  
(she/her)  
Clackamas  
Chapter  
Manager



**Ayman Irfan**  
(she/her)  
Climate  
Resilience &  
Community  
Innovation  
Fellow



**Gloria Ochoa-  
Sandoval**  
(she/her)  
Policy & Political  
director at Unite  
Oregon/ Action



**Metzin  
Rodriguez**  
(she/her/ella)  
Climate &  
Environmental  
Justice Policy  
Coordinator



**Anita  
Keahilani Yap**  
(she/they)  
Unite Oregon  
Strategic  
Initiatives  
Advisor



**ridhi d'cruz,**  
(they/them)  
Place Justice  
Consultant

# Our Goals: Connecting, Learning & Leadership

*What is the Climate Justice Listening Tour and Why it is Important*

## LISTENING TOUR GEOGRAPHIC REACH

In the summer and fall of 2022, Unite Oregon's newly formed Climate Justice Listening Tour team engaged community members state-wide from the Portland Metro area (Washington, Clackamas, and Multnomah counties), Oregon Coast, Rogue Valley and Central Oregon regions. Simultaneously, Unite's Indigenous Organizer – Lorri O'Neill hosted interviews with ten Indigenous community members living all across the state.

### Overall Goals

The overall goal of the listening tour was for Unite Oregon to learn about climate related needs, concerns, solutions and desires from frontline and fenceline communities who face the first and worst impacts of climate change and are adjacent to the worst pollution<sup>1</sup>. This goal emerged from Unite Oregon's organizational priority to better understand how to support the leadership and advocacy of communities most impacted locally and statewide.

### Other initial goals included:

- 1. Building relationships and trust by**
  - a. Centering the voices of Black and Indigenous community members within the larger umbrella of immigrants and refugees of Color.
  - b. Connecting community members and Unite Oregon around Climate Justice (CJ) organizing.
- 2. Sharing information, frameworks and concepts including**
  - a. Current climate-related state policies and legislative initiatives<sup>2</sup>;
  - b. Building on the work of the Oregon Just Transition Alliance's 2020 Green New Deal statewide listening tour and the Just Transition framework<sup>3</sup>,
  - c. Sharing about Participatory Budgeting<sup>4</sup> as a means for advocacy and community participation,
  - d. Piloting a Data Justice<sup>5</sup> approach to community organizing and reporting with the Coalition of Communities of Color.
- 3. Leadership Development**
  - a. Co-creating a foundational report that listening tour participants, Unite Oregon and partner organizations can use to advance BIPOC-led climate leadership across all levels of organizing.





# Connecting with Community: Outreach and Engagement

*Our strategies and decision-making*

## CENTERING INDIGENOUS/ NATIVE & BLACK COMMUNITIES

Unite Oregon focused on engaging with community members in specific geographic areas around the state. We wanted to engage with rural and urban communities and primarily focus on Indigenous/Native and Black community members, as well as Latinx/o/a/e, Asian, Pacific Islander and other people of the global majority.

### Deepening Relationships

Unite Oregon's (UO) approach to relationship and trust building was and continues to be foundational to this work. In the summer and fall of 2022, Unite Oregon's Climate Justice team engaged with Black, Indigenous, Asian, Pacific Islander, Latinx/a/e/o and other people of color and community members statewide from the Portland Metro area (Washington, Clackamas, and Multnomah counties), Oregon coast, Rogue Valley and Central Oregon regions. The team reached out to community leaders and organizations it had existing relationships with and regional chapters in the Portland Metro and Rogue Valley areas and also built newer relationships across the Coast and Central Oregon.

Recognizing the need to center Indigenous and Black communities in this work, the team hosted an informational meeting with prospective Black-led organizations the group wanted to partner with and to gauge if the organization was interested in helping host and recruit participants for the listening sessions. UO provided stipends to organizations that agreed to participate and help host and recruit participants in their community. UO also provided stipends to participants who attended the 2 ½ hour virtual listening session.

Recruitment partner organizations all received \$10K for their participation in recruiting their community members to attend listening sessions. All of the consultants including Hobbs Waters – a Black youth leader, received \$10K to facilitate the sessions. All Indigenous Interview Participants, Zoom Listening Tour Participants, and Committee Review Members were given stipends for their participation.

While this Climate Justice Listening session is just the beginning and had limited reach, the people we engaged with, expressed powerful stories that inform statewide policy and opportunities for organizing around common concerns and potential solutions.



Image of people gathered outside the Cathlapotle Plankhouse in Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge in Ridgefield, WA. Photo credit: ridhi d'cruz.

## INDIGENOUS/NATIVE RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

The Indigenous organizing has a special focus and respect for Oregon's Tribal community. Rather than doing region-wide listening sessions, Unite Oregon's Indigenous Organizing team conducted one-on-one interviews. This interview structure was prioritized as a means to build trust and personal relations with the Indigenous communities of Oregon, a process that is still ongoing.

This strategy allowed the group to acknowledge the mistrust by Tribal leaders towards policy-work because of the history of colonialism and broken treaties. Given this harmful past, the team intentionally focused on relationship building and moving at the speed of trust, by focusing on in-depth interviews that provided a safe space for Indigenous community members to share their opinions and stories. Moreover, this approach was chosen to uplift Indigenous and tribal leaders by building positive relationships.

To recruit participants, we began with existing Indigenous relationships and followed their recommendations for other Indigenous folks to interview. In the process, the team prioritized deepening relationships over reaching a larger number of people because the depth of each interview and the connections were prioritized and valued above the quantity of interviews. As a result, there is a limited number of interviews and

not every federally recognized tribe of Oregon is represented in this report.

Red Lodge Services is a Native American led organization that provides culturally focused programs for women released from jail, prison or treatments in Clackamas county. NAYA Family Center provides academic and social opportunities to grade school, middle school, and high school students to help them reach their full potential through academically rigorous learning opportunities, culturally specific programming, and provision of professional counseling and other support services. Lorri connected with a community outreach worker at NAYA and started participating in the community talking circle. She also attended the ATNI (Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians) winter conference. These in-person events helped Unite Oregon continue building connections with Indigenous communities across the region.

The group prioritized deepening relationships over reaching a larger number of people. As a result there is a limited number of interviews and not every federally recognized tribe of Oregon is represented in this report. The team valued depth of interviews and connections over quantity. In total the team interviewed 10 Indigenous community members. This included people from the Umatilla, Grand Ronde, Burns Paiute, Cow Creek, Warm Springs and Tillamook tribes along with Indigenous community members from



(Left) Umatilla Tribal Youth Council at Doubletree Inn in Portland. (Right) Lorri & Emilie participating in a Round Dance at Southern Oregon University (SOU)





Red Lodge Services, NARA Northwest ( Native American Rehabilitation Association for Alcohol and Drug Use) , and the Lomakatsi Restoration Project.

Recruited interviewees included

- \*Tribal Community Members from the Confederated Tribes of Umatilla Indian Reservation, Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon, Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians and Burns Paiute Tribe; *\*Please note that people are not representing their tribes in this report.*
- Indigenous-led organizations like Red Lodge Transition Services, Lomakatsi Restoration Project, Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians (ATNI), Native American Youth and Family Center (NAYA) & Native American Rehabilitation Association (NARA).
- People who self-identify as Indigenous and have not specified affiliations with Tribal entities and organizations.

COVID-19 posed an additional challenge to outreach efforts and we followed a safety protocol for large gatherings. All the interviews were conducted remotely either via phone calls or video calls over the internet using platforms such as zoom and google meets.

Participants were compensated for their time with stipends of one hundred dollars in the form of a check or gift card based on the participants preference. Additionally, beaded necklaces created by Unite Oregon staff were sent to participants along with tea to thank people for sharing their experiences.



This is not a comprehensive report for all federally recognized tribes in Oregon. The interview process focused on building one on one relationships with individuals who identify as Indigenous and getting a nuanced understanding of the concerns in their unique communities. Interview participants spoke from their own lived experiences and how they were impacted by their environment. They did not make comments on behalf of any tribes. These interviews were a means to share their individual opinions and are not representative of any larger entity.

We continued to engage with these community members after the initial interviews and offered them a way to participate in the co-creation of the report. We held two virtual Indigenous community gatherings over zoom in the spring where we reconnected with interviewees and updated them on the progress of our report. We shared the policy briefs with them and asked for their feedback on our process and on how to move forward with our final report. This was a space for community members to shape our research, and the structure of future community projects. Moreover, interviewees were invited to join a Report Review Committee to have more involvement in the process. Staying engaged with these community members throughout the project has remained essential to building lasting relationships that will last long beyond the release of our report.

## BLACK-LED ORGANIZATIONAL PARTNERS

The team partnered with the following organizations for the regional zoom-based sessions and online surveys

1. **BASE**, southern Oregon, [baseoregon.org/base](http://baseoregon.org/base) serves to create a welcoming and supportive community where Black people in Southern Oregon feel safe, respected and comfortable being themselves.

2. **The Father's Group**, central Oregon, [thefathersgroup.org](http://thefathersgroup.org) The Father's Group was founded by several Black fathers who were concerned about the experiences their children were having both in school and in the broader community. The Father's Group is Black-led, but embraces collaboration and cross-cultural influences, operating not just as a group, but also as dedicated individuals who are doing great work in the community in education, business and social services.
3. **The Black Rural Network**, statewide, LaNicia Duke. [www.facebook.com/BlackRuralNetwork](https://www.facebook.com/BlackRuralNetwork) connects with Black individuals in Rural Oregon and provides outreach and advocacy for rural issues.
4. **Urban League of Portland**. [ulpdx.org](http://ulpdx.org) Urban League of Portland is one of Oregon's oldest civil rights and social service organizations, empowering African-Americans and others to achieve equality in education, employment, health, economic security and quality of life. They do this by investing in stable housing; through workforce development; community health; education and well-being; for our youth, adults and seniors. Their culturally specific programs and services, combined with their powerful advocacy and civic engagement, empowers Black communities to thrive across Oregon and SW Washington.



# About the Listening Tour

*What we did, with who and how.*

## OVERVIEW

From August–November 2022, Unite Oregon hosted, facilitated and sought input through four regional interactive virtual listening sessions. In the listening session, we provided information about the Oregon Environmental Justice Mapping policy<sup>6</sup>, the principles and framework of a just transition, and participatory budgeting for climate justice.

## Total Number of Participants

There were a total of 123 participants with the virtual listening sessions; 37 from the Rogue Valley, 25 from Central Oregon, 44 from the Tri-County area, and 17 from the Oregon Coast.

## About the Zoom Sessions

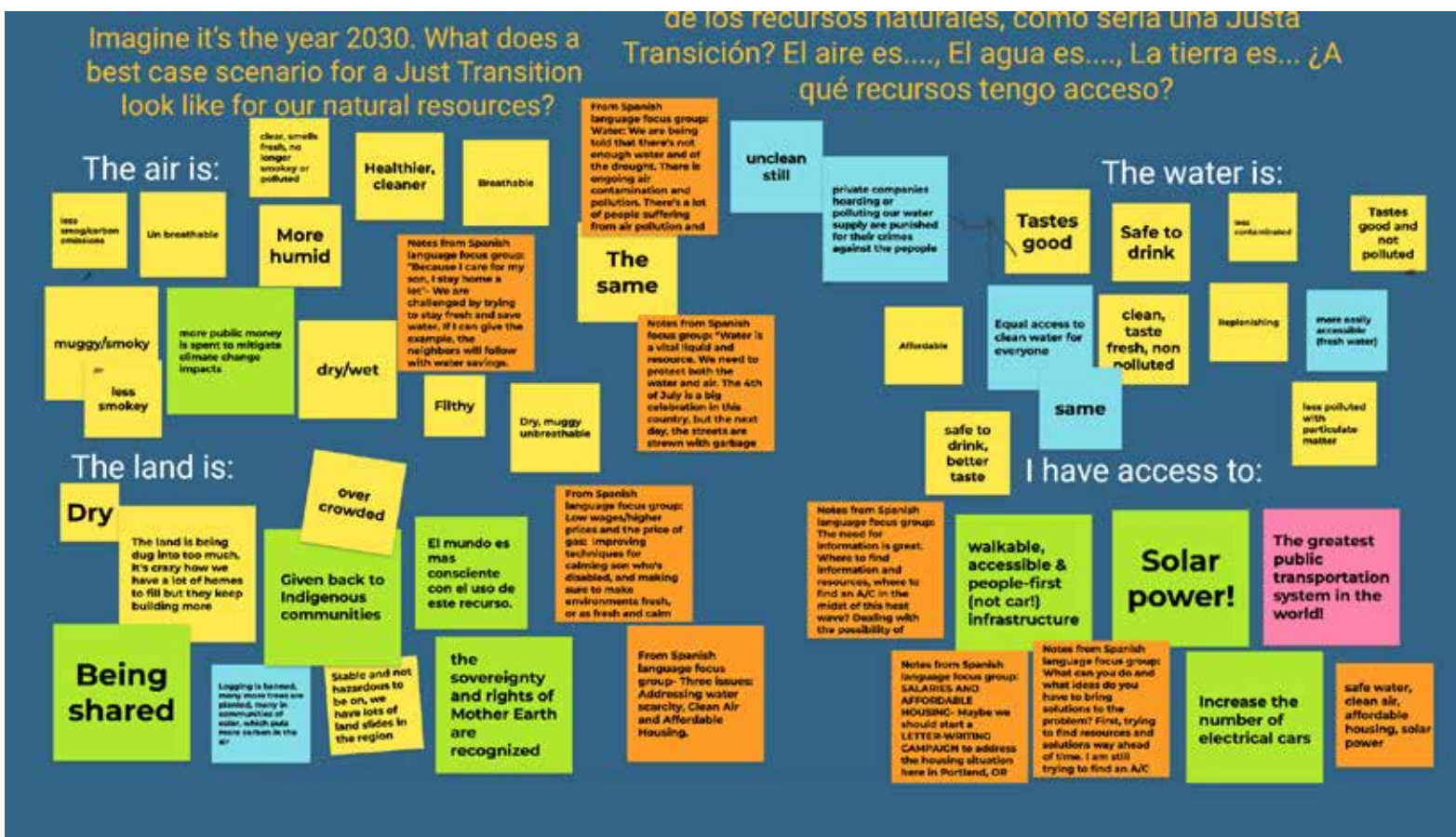
The Zoom listening sessions were 2.5 hours in duration, and each participant received a \$200 stipend for participating. The format of the

session included a Google Slideshow presentation (a collaborative digital slideshow presentation), prompted Google Jamboard (a collaborative digital whiteboard) interactive exercises, Zoom breakout rooms, and a demonstration of the Participatory Budgeting online tool.

## Jamboard & Post Zoom Session Survey

We had a total of 359 comments from the collaborative digital whiteboard used during

the listening sessions; 112 from Central Oregon, 88 from the Oregon Coast, 85 from the Rogue Valley, and 74 from the Portland Metro Tri-county area. We also sent out an online post-listening session survey to individuals living in counties that had low representation in our listening sessions. We collected a total of 31 submissions from this survey.



Sample comments from digital jam board during Zoom listening sessions.



# Participant Map and Demographic Break Down

## OREGON CLIMATE JUSTICE LISTENING TOUR GEOGRAPHIC MAP OF PARTICIPANTS IN 2022

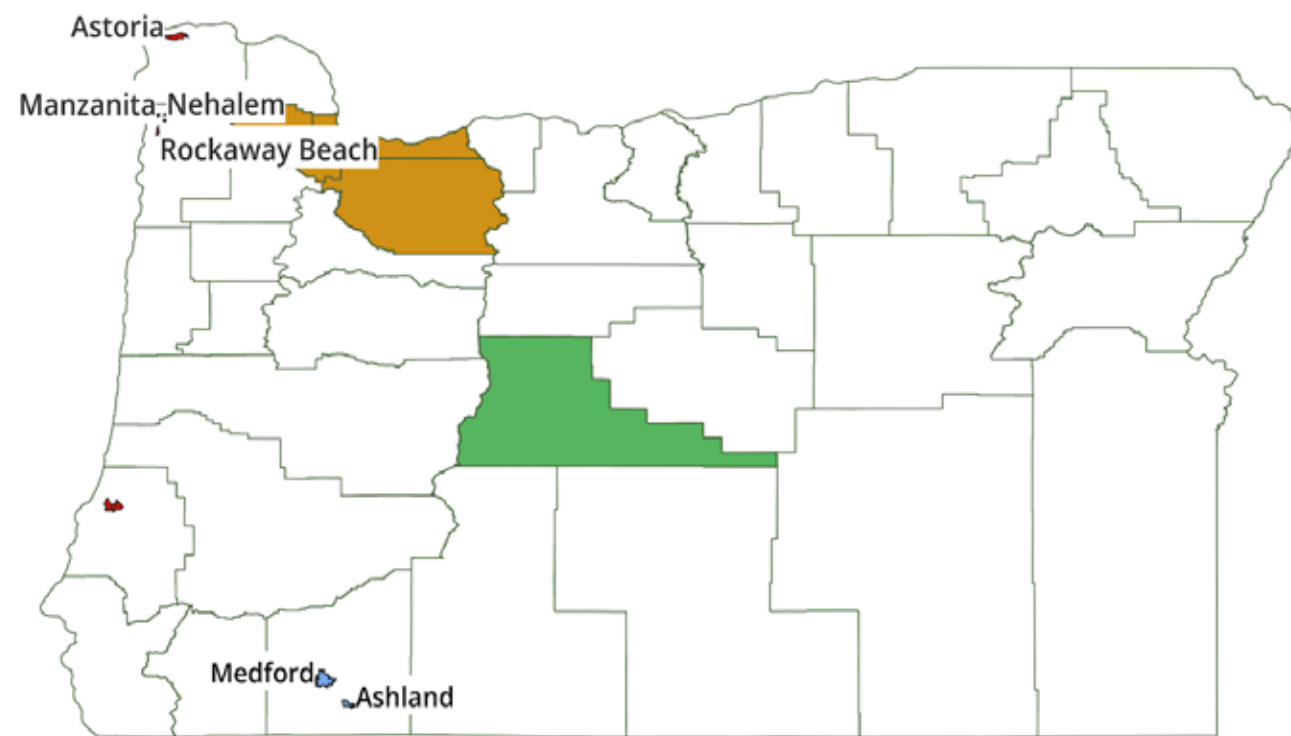
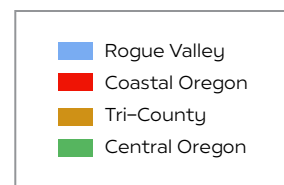
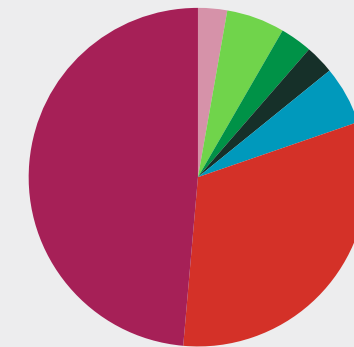


Figure 1. Listening Session Participation by Geographic Region



## Rogue Valley Zoom Session



The Rogue Valley listening session had the highest number of participants identified as Black/African American at 44%, with the second highest race and ethnic background being White/Caucasian at 30.6%, and third being mixed Black/African American and White/Caucasian at 5.6%. The rest of the participants identified as Asian, Mexican American, Quechua, Indigenous, and African immigrants. As for age ranges, the highest percentage of participants came from the ages 25–34 and 45–54.

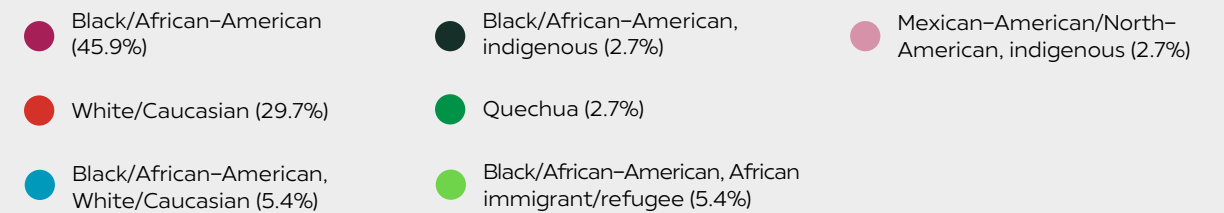
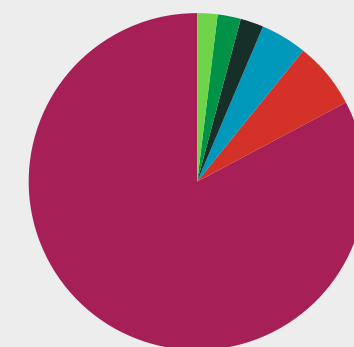


Figure 2. Rogue Valley Demographic Participation

## Tri-County Portland Metro Area Zoom Session



The highest attending race and ethnicity that participated in the Tri-County listening session was Black/African Americans at 75%, Black/African American and American Indian/Indigenous at 5.8%, and Black/African and African immigrant/refugee at 3.8%. The rest of the participants identified as White/Caucasian (9.6%) and Asian (1.9%). As for ages, the highest percentage of attendees came from the age group 25–34 and 35–44.

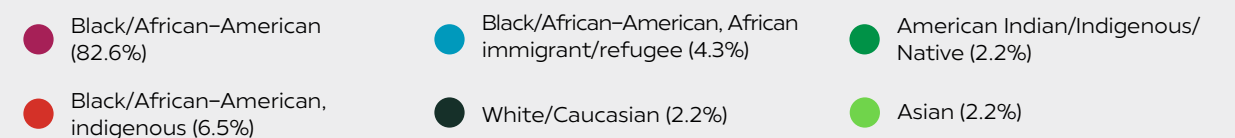
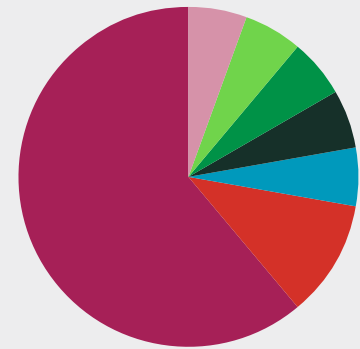


Figure 3. Tri-County Demographic Participation

## Oregon Coast Zoom Session



The Oregon Coast listening tour consisted of 61.1% White/Caucasian, 11.1% White/Caucasian, Jewish, 11% Black African American and African immigrant/refugee. The ages of the attendees usually fell in the 35–44 age range. The Oregon Coastal listening session was the only listening session that had a majority White/Caucasian identifying participants.

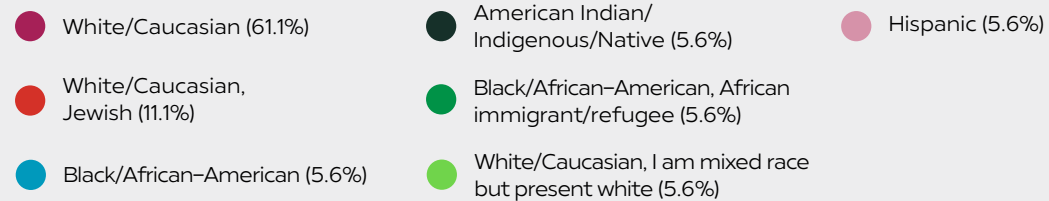
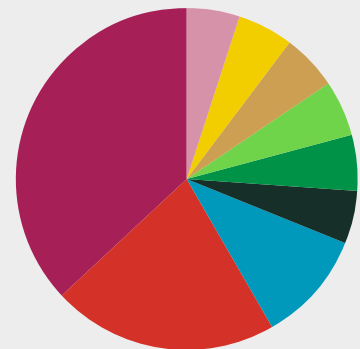


Figure 4. Oregon Coast Demographic Participation

## Central Oregon Zoom Session



The Central Oregon listening tour included 30.4% Black/African American, 17.4% American Indian/Indigenous, 17.4% White/Caucasian. The age range with the largest participation fell in the 35–44 age range.

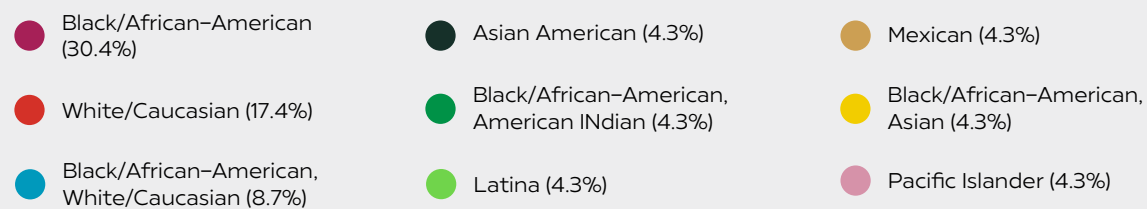
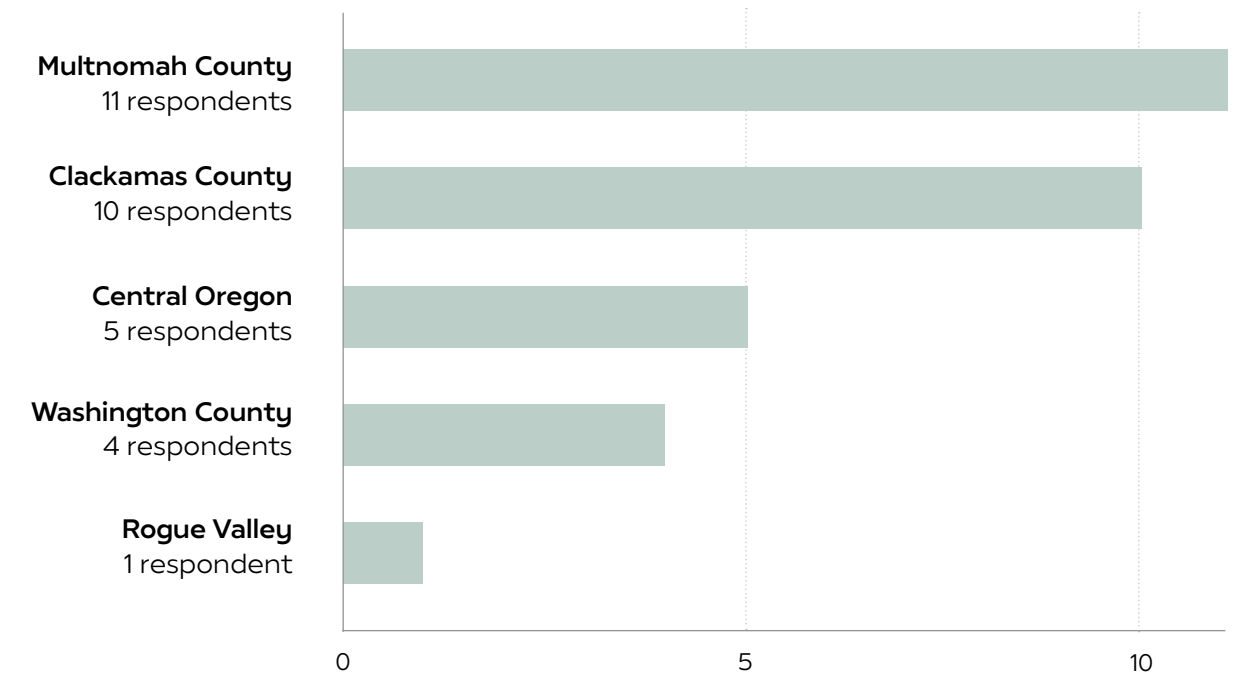


Figure 5. Central Oregon Demographic Participation

# Online Surveys

As for the 31 online survey responses, there was 1 response from Rogue Valley that identified as a White/Caucasian in the 25–34 age range. There were four responses from Washington County that consisted of 75% White/Caucasian and 25% Black/African American and the average age range falling in the 25–34 range. Central Oregon had five respondents where 80% identified as Caucasian and 20% as Asian, Asian American. The typical age range consisted of 25–34. Clackamas County has 10 respondents and the demographics consisted of 40% Black/African American, 40% White/Caucasian, 10% Latino, 10% mixed and the age range of 35–44. Multnomah County had 11 respondents with demographics of 81.8% Black/African American, 9.1% Caucasian, 9.1% American Indian/Indigenous and two most frequent age ranges of 25–34 and 35–44.





# Data Justice: Meaning-making

With the support from the Coalition of Communities of Color<sup>7</sup>, UO piloted a data justice approach to analyze feedback and comments referred to as “qualitative data”, from the listening sessions. Data justice involves using data and technology in a way that promotes social justice and challenges systemic inequalities including those within the field of research where numbers/ quantity is prioritized over a more nuanced approach. The specific tool utilized for the qualitative data analysis was Atlas.ti<sup>8</sup>.

**Collecting and selecting data:** The first step in a data justice approach is to ensure that the data collected is relevant and representative of the communities that participated in the climate justice listening tour. In this case, qualitative data on climate and environmental justice impacts on communities in Oregon were collected through interviews, surveys, and focus groups with community members.

**Data analysis:** The qualitative data analysis involved identifying themes and patterns within the data and coding them in relation to solutions, concerns, climate impacts, community impacts, and needs using a software system called Atlas.ti. After “coding” community answers, the coding team – Marion, Emilie and Becca, grouped similar ideas in focus groups. They then used the focus groups to find the overall solutions and concerns to support the analysis.

The goal for utilizing a data justice approach included promoting social justice and addressing systemic inequalities including those within the field of research where numbers/ quantity is prioritized over a more nuanced approach.. This involved advocating for policy changes that address the climate and environmental justice impacts on communities in Oregon, as well as supporting community-led initiatives that promote resilience and sustainability.



## Summary of Concerns & Solutions



## A. HIGHLIGHTS FROM 10 INDIGENOUS INTERVIEWS

**Overview:** We are intentionally beginning this section with the following summary of individual interviews with Indigenous community members to provide insight into climate issues of concern. The summary below includes names and locations of those who agreed to be identified in this report. Other contributors' locations and affiliations are not included and an overall summary is provided to respect their wishes not to be identified. We are grateful for their leadership and courage to share their experiences.

### Amanda Rose

*Intern at Lomakatsi Restoration Project & Student attending Southern Oregon University.*

#### **How are Indigenous traditions and practices threatened by climate change?"**

**Threat to First Foods:** Amanda Rose noted that the climate is getting not only drier and hotter but also more irregular, erratic, and unpredictable with smoky summers from wildfires. Amanda Rose expressed concern about the impact these wildfires and changes in climate are having on the availability of food items and specifically the gathering of Indigenous first foods.



**Exacerbating Economic Disparities:** Amanda Rose is also concerned that climate change is making current disparities even more pronounced.

She sees how climate change is impacting the economic wellbeing and stability of Indigenous communities in Oregon and across the globe. Communities that have more than enough can cushion themselves from the catastrophes of climate change meanwhile those already struggling remain on the frontlines. For example, in Ashland while a lot of people have access to privilege there are also communities that struggle with their health, well being, and safety.

#### **In what ways are Indigenous communities working to counter climate change/crisis by preserving or re-envisioning their different traditions and practices?"**

**Educating Funders:** Amanda Rose emphasized the importance of working with funders to re-prioritize and focus where money goes so that there is more self determination and equity to support communities. She would like to see unlimited funding given to those in need without strings attached. More specifically, she would like to see support of the Indigenous garden network with federal funds to support traditional ecological knowledge led by Indigenous community members to center first foods, climate resilience, and traditional ecological knowledge

**Land Access:** She also suggested supporting Indigenous sovereignty by expanding conversations about who is present on the land and who has access to it. This goes alongside normalizing honoring that we are on native land and teaching a more truthful and comprehensive Indigenous history. We also need to reconnect those with ancestral land claims to elevate Indigenous

sovereignty and self determination. A specific example she would like to see is to plant a Three sisters plot on the land every year and give the food to the Shasta Takelma Learning Garden.

**Cross-species crisis and relationships:** As for restoration work, she would like society to re-envision climate change as a cross species crisis and to re-envision ecology as ways to rebuild, protect, and honor cross species relationships

### Cheryl Shippentowner

*Tribal Member of Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation*

#### **How are Indigenous traditions and practices threatened by climate change?"**

**Wildfire impacts:** Cheryl explained that her community experiences several weeks of smoke each year and how it is progressively getting worse. Even if the fires aren't close, she shared that they are still impacted by the smoke. There are also impacts on forest, fish, and wildlife. They've experienced evacuation issues during extreme weather events that create anxieties during flooding and drought seasons.

**Connecting Environmental, Spiritual and Mental Health:** Cheryl has witnessed the decline of natural resources. Faster snow melt leads to flooding. Fast melt-off impacts the water flow and in turn, the fish are affected and there is a loss of First Foods for the season. First Foods, like chokecherries and huckleberries, have shorter seasons and tribal members have to drive further to gather. Along with natural resources, wildlife like white tail deer are also on the decline due to food shortages and higher temperatures.

These climate impacts lead to loss of First Foods and traditional and spiritual gathering places. The loss of natural resources and lack of access to declining resources also impacts the health and well being of the Umatilla Tribe and community, especially those with pre-existing conditions. For example, diabetes is prominent in Native American communities and the impacts from the climate crisis are contributing factors to this ongoing disease. In order to maintain connections to the land and food, she sees a

strong connection between spirituality and mental health.

**Energy Justice:** Cheryl mentioned that many homes don't have air conditioning, aren't weatherized, and it's hard to navigate the social services that are offered or available, if any. Cheryl also shared that while Umatilla Tribal members support increasing usage of renewable resources, they do so in a way that impacts natural resources as minimally as possible. The land where wind farms are constructed are important places for tribal members and hold much meaning and value.

#### **In what ways are Indigenous communities working to counter climate change/crisis by preserving or re-envisioning their different traditions and practices?"**

**Growing First Foods:** The Umatilla Tribe hosts garden events where folks can grow their own food and experience First Foods. This preserves their rich, cultural traditions and engages the community, especially those who might not have transportation access to go on First Food excursions. This also helps to protect resources from climate change and helps to restore natural resources, especially waterways.

**Clean Energy & Home Weatherization:** Cheryl envisions moving toward cleaner energy sources and wants to support things like updating houses for weatherization.

**Climate Change & Health:** She is proud of including community members in the climate adaptation plan. It gives people voices and ensures there is shared input in those plans and projects. People are beginning to understand climate change and the lines of communication are open. Trust is built. There is a need to build on climate policies to include health and living conditions as climate change progresses. They are in a crisis and low-income families need help.

**Tribal Community Outreach & Engagement:** The Umatilla Tribe does a lot of outreach and community events to include everyone in cultural activities and maintain community connection. The work they do is to benefit Tribal membership and preservation. This is in line with preserving natural



resources and keeping balance with the planet. They value collaboration and working together.

## Denise Harvey

*Confederation Tribes of Grand Ronde Tribal Council Member*

### **How are Indigenous traditions and practices threatened by climate change?"**

Denise is concerned about the changes in the weather. Climate change has made it more unpredictable and harder to prepare for its impacts. For instance, there is limited access to air conditioning and Denise's community struggles to prepare for extreme weather events such as ice storms.

### **In what ways are Indigenous communities working to counter climate change/crisis by preserving or re-envisioning their different traditions and practices?"**

**Earlier and Accurate Education:** Denise believes a part of the solution to the climate crisis is becoming educated on how humans can respect the environment and become part of the solution. Denise feels that people need to learn about the environment, climate, and recycling at an earlier age like middle and high school and have these teachings as a part of the school's curriculum. Denise says that it is important that people have awareness and each person can do more to take part in it. In addition to implementing environmental education in school's curriculums, there also needs to be education reform on teaching accurate Native American history, which was passed through Senate Bill 13<sup>9</sup>. Teaching students about the historic truths will bring positive impacts 5-10 years down the line for this social justice issue.

**Infrastructure & Energy:** There also needs to be policies to provide resources for Indigenous communities to mitigate climate impacts. Denise provides examples such as using recycling bins, providing air conditioning units, power stations in case of an ice storm, and providing a move-in trailer that has a generator. The Grande Ronde Tribe provided these resources in the past two years to ensure community safety. It is also

important to ensure that these solutions have positive impacts for people and wildlife.

**Indigenous engagement with online questionnaires:** Denise would like more Tribal members to have an understanding of climate impacts, she suggested posting a questionnaire on social media as Native Americans have some resistance to participating in surveys and census.

## Marshall Gambee

*Housing Specialist, Veterans Services. Native American Rehabilitation Association of the Northwest*

### **How are Indigenous traditions and practices threatened by climate change?"**

**Health Impacts on the Vulnerable:** The unpredictability of weather and climate impacts the mental health of Marshall's community. Specifically heat waves and wildfire smoke affect Tribal Members with health vulnerabilities, like respiratory issues. Marshall also explained how the heat waves directly and drastically impact the homeless community along with the biodiversity of the lands. He mentioned how Douglas Fir trees retain water and provide shade protection, but are being destroyed by wildfires.



**Lack of policies and motivation:** Marshall said that there are limited policies to mitigate the increasing impacts from climate change. People are apathetic when they should be taking action as

a community. Corporate greed exists; the value of profits over people is impacting the health and well being of all of us.

### **In what ways are Indigenous communities working to counter climate change/crisis by preserving or re-envisioning their different traditions and practices?"**

**Need to Return to Traditional Wisdom & Management:** Native communities understand how to coexist with the land, plants, and animals and respect their traditional wisdom. They consider these sacred to our environment and ecosystems. Trusting the original stewards of the land and moving away from the current system in place where we take more than we give is imperative.

Marshall would like local officials, lawmakers, and agency leaders to amplify traditional practices and natural preservation techniques like controlled burns and maintaining salmon populations. He noted the need for an educational tool that details the best practices of biodiversity of the region and that teaches us about native plants and the ecosystems in order to stop destroying them and instead, interact with them.

## Patrisha "Trish" Jordan

*Executive Director, Red Lodge Transition Services*

### **How are Indigenous traditions and practices threatened by climate change?"**

**Poverty & Access to Food:** Trish is worried that from an economic standpoint, a good number of Native Americans live below the poverty line, where they are impacted by the rise of food costs from climate change and have to limit their community gatherings as there are costs to travel and food.

**Energy Justice:** Clean energy is also not easily accessible due to economics. Trish said that Communities of color have more exposure to toxic pollution with fewer alternatives due to the expenses of clean energy. For instance, putting solar panels on the roof costs at least \$40,000 and even with government rebates this is unaffordable for many within the Indigenous

community. Trish warned that the exposure to pollution and the dependence on fossil fuels by consumers and large industries will ultimately affect people's health and increase the risk of cancer. On reservations, they are still extracting fossil fuels and the pollution from this is also impacting Indigenous communities.

**Pollution & Waste Management:** Trish is also concerned that the government is not doing enough about climate change. Trish shared she believes that the technology is there, but there is no action. She emphasized the need to improve waste management and specifically that there shouldn't be plastic anymore and that textile waste should be recycled as it is a major polluter. In what ways are Indigenous communities working to counter climate change/crisis by preserving or re-envisioning their different traditions and practices?"

**Green Jobs:** Trish highlighted the solutions to these issues include creating living wages by increasing green jobs that not only benefit low-income and BIPOC communities economically, but also reduce harm to the environment.

**Clean Energy:** There also needs to be an increase in solar and wind energy to no longer rely on extractive industries.

**Waste Management:** We also need to improve our waste management, for instance compost more and turn food waste into soil.

**Earth as a Living Organism:** Trish shared that as humans, we need to do what we can. We cannot give up on our planet because our planet gives so much to us and we are so selfish. We need to think of Earth as a living organism and unfortunately most people don't see it that way.

## Anonymous

*Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians, Tribal Member Liaison*

### **How are Indigenous traditions and practices threatened by climate change?"**

**Wildfires, Forests & Health:** The tribal member shared that climate change has affected their ability to access the forest due to dry conditions



and the increase in wildfires. They talked about how devastating fires can prevent animals from returning to the forest and streams from remaining healthy. They said that a lot of Indigenous peoples rely on the forest for hunting, fishing, gathering, and logging and specified that logging families practiced selective logging that kept the forest healthy and not overcrowded. They also talked about being concerned about air quality as community members have lung issues and breathing problems which can be devastating with the forest fires and COVID pandemic.

***In what ways are Indigenous communities working to counter climate change/crisis by preserving or re-envisioning their different traditions and practices?***

**Educational Programs for Youth:** They shared that they took young people to a site where there was a really devastating fire, and logged some of the timber after the burn. They went on to say that the kids learned about the environment, the plants, the animals, the critters, the insects, water quality, and the kids replanted trees. They said that this program is a good teaching and learning moment and that it is important to pass on the land knowledge. Someday, they said, those trees will take care of the air and will provide shade.

**Persistent Advocacy:** They shared that it takes courage to create change. For example, if you're going against City Hall, things get knocked down so quickly by people in higher positions who fear the unknown. So they emphasized that it takes those people who are dedicated to staying there and to educate, educate, educate for there to eventually be a breakthrough.

## **Anonymous**

*Indigenous Community Member and Student*

***How are Indigenous traditions and practices threatened by climate change?***

**Climate Education for Individual & Collective**

**Action:** This participant is an Indigenous community member and student. As a young adult, they noticed in their rural community that there is less engagement around climate issues. They have

concerns about the education around the climate impacts that are occurring in their community, and how to increase education and awareness while also using reliable resources. There is a need for individual action and behavior changes to take place in order to make changes within the community. Indigenous practices are built on community unity and there is a sense of loss when it comes to the lack of shared knowledge and understanding around climate change.

**Decreasing Environmental Health & Its Impacts:**

They have noticed a decrease in wildlife, pollinators, and lower water levels in rivers, which impacts not only the ecology but also opportunities for recreation in the community.

***In what ways are Indigenous communities working to counter climate change/crisis by preserving or re-envisioning their different traditions and practices?***

**Individual Action:** The participant shared that they are extremely action oriented with very specific ideas to implement in their community. They said that these actions include talking with and listening to the community to understand how individual actions can actually have a big impact on the climate. They also desire to be an advocate for climate and environmental justice as a model for others in the community to do the same. This is also a way to give back to the community. They said that as an Indigenous person, they connect with their cultural traditions and practices, and giving back to the community and the planet is their way of re-envisioning these traditional practices into direct action at the local level to address climate change.

**Scaling Composting & Recycling:** In their search for action and change, they have found a local co-op store that teaches the community how to sort waste. They use pictures by the bins for education. You can even bring your home compost and recycling to the co-op if you don't have curbside options at home. This is especially helpful in rural communities. They see leaning into small yet impactful practices like bringing your own reusable bags to the grocery store could be one place for folks to start. Then, as the community becomes more committed and knowledgeable



about actions that can be taken, it can roll out to restaurants and stores where they can compost and repurpose waste, they added.

They shared that they are a strong advocate and are committed to repaying gratitude to their community. They feel like they are awareness driven and want others to be knowledgeable about climate impacts within the community.

## **Anonymous**

*Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs*

***How are Indigenous traditions and practices threatened by climate change?"***

**Impact on First Foods & Gatherings:** They shared about how climate change impacts ceremonial feast seasons, with specific regard to the stunted growth of the roots for berries and First Foods on tribal land. They also mentioned that ceremonial feasts are celebrated earlier due to warmer temperatures coming sooner than in the past. Similarly, when winter comes sooner, there is less time to prepare supplies and manage tribal lands.

**Lack of Adequate Funding for Climate**

**Emergencies:** They also have concerns around how little their community receives funding for projects and community development. Specifically, there is not enough funding for when climate emergencies occur, which are beginning

to become more regular.

***In what ways are Indigenous communities working to counter climate change/crisis by preserving or re-envisioning their different traditions and practices?***

They shared that they participate in a climate change grant in their community on the Warm Springs reservation. They explained that they are committed to learning from their culture and heritage to build upon their cultural roots. They said that they are action oriented and understand that there is no time to wait for the next climate emergency; that we need to counter the climate crisis together and understand cultural practices and traditions in order to preserve the resources in our community and on this planet.

## **Biologist**

*working for Burns Paiute Tribe*

***How are Indigenous traditions and practices threatened by climate change?"***

**Wildfires:** The whole community both on and off reservation have been impacted by wildfires as it has been a couple of very dry years.

In what ways are Indigenous communities working to counter climate change/crisis by preserving or re-envisioning their different traditions and practices?

**Youth:** The participant talked about how the Burns Paiute tribe is expanding their youth climate education programs. They speak highly of the power of youth as they are the future and they hold a lot of knowledge about climate issues and climate justice and their voices need to be heard.

**Environmental Monitoring for Culturally Specific**

**Species:** In addition to youth education programs, there is also action being taken to monitor stream temperature and native fish response. There is action being taken to monitor wildlife, especially species that hold significant cultural importance to the Burns Paiute tribe.



## B. CLIMATE JUSTICE LISTENING SESSIONS: STATEWIDE COMMUNITY MEMBERS' CONCERNS & SOLUTIONS ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE/CLIMATE CRISIS

The Climate Justice Listening Sessions provided opportunities for community members to express concerns and suggest solutions for specific topics. Statewide concerns and solutions are summarized below.

### Natural Resources: Linking Environmental & Public Health

**Concern:** Natural and cultural resources are threatened and becoming scarce. Community members shared concerns about environmental degradation, such as loss of biodiversity and natural ecosystems. Specifically, participants noted that the decline of wildlife, including pollinators, deer, and rodents, adversely impacts the health and well-being of communities. Additionally, threats to natural resources are also experienced as the loss of native plants and, subsequently, of cultural foods, especially for Indigenous communities. Participants identified the prioritization of profits over people and ecosystems as a major threat to the environment. In addition to naming these threats, community members shared concerns about certain natural resources becoming more scarce. Fear of losing access to water was a particularly salient fear. Participants mentioned concerns about fluctuating river water levels due to floods and droughts, fears about the availability of water to meet agricultural needs, and concerns about current water systems and infrastructure. The impact of wildfires on community health, wildlife, natural spaces, and food sources was a recurring concern for community members.

**Solutions:** Community members suggested solutions to reduce waste by holding sources of pollutants accountable and creating more options to reduce waste in public areas, nature sites, and multi-family use units. It is also important to provide incentives and encourage community members about how to properly recycle and the benefits that come from recycling. Additionally, participants want to see an increase

in indigenous-led restoration and protection of natural resources and to respect the traditional wisdom of the lands. Community members want more basic services to mitigate climate impacts from natural disasters, such as evacuation shuttles, air quality alerts, providing A/C during heat waves and more funding for climate disaster mitigation services. Another solution community members presented was to create jobs or paid opportunities to advance climate justice efforts. These climate justice jobs could be led by front-line community members to best meet their needs. Overall, there is also a need to address long term issues and make sure the solutions to these issues are truly sustainable.

### Negative Health Impacts. Public Health, Environmental Health & Cultural Health:

**Concern:** "Climate crisis is contributing to worsening health conditions. The changing climate is deteriorating our health and we will only see worsening health outcomes in the future; The climate crisis is accelerating the loss of natural resources -- and for Indigenous communities this loss has been ongoing -- which communities depend on for wellbeing, including mental, spiritual, and physical health." – *Listening Tour Participant*

Participants clearly identified climate impacts as determinants of health. Participants connected the negative impacts on health directly to the climate crisis. For example, they shared that wildfire smoke and poor air quality are having a direct impact on people's pre-existing health conditions. They also framed poor air quality due to wildfires as a community health issue.

Participants connected the loss of natural resources as directly linked to a decrease in well-being including increased rates of diabetes and loss of cultural connection to land/environments. They also shared that community members are experiencing heightened levels of anxiety related to the climate crisis and increasing rate of natural disasters. In addition to this, they identified a lack of mental health support for survivors of natural disasters and for those who are continuously at risk of experiencing natural disasters/at the frontline of climate change. Overall, community members expressed that the climate crisis feels daunting and scary, and that they feel powerless to do anything beyond surviving. Participants also expressed feeling concerned about future generations.

**Solutions:** Community members suggested numerous solutions in relation to health during the statewide listening session. The solutions include, programs to mitigate stress and encourage physical activities, affordable access to health and mental health services for low-income families affected by climate disasters, and having support programs provide hygiene materials for houseless and low income individuals. It would also be beneficial to educate community members about the health impacts from environmental hazards, such as pesticide use. Additionally, having sustainable green spaces in low income and underserved communities can improve health conditions. Community members also want to see more land being used to grow organic foods in local communities to reduce mass monoculture production and instead make healthier foods available to underserved communities.

### Inaccessibility or Unavailability of Services and Resources:

**Concern:** Community members shared there is a consistent lack of access to emergency preparedness services and infrastructure, green spaces, and renewable energy. In the case of emergencies, particularly wildfires, people do not have access to emergency preparedness kits, snow plows, cooling centers, survival supplies or evacuation infrastructure. Participants noted difficulty accessing resources because of scarcity, lack of awareness of what was available or how to

access resources and inconsistency in information shared. Moreover, green spaces like parks and community gardens are becoming increasingly inaccessible to the wider public through gate-keeping. This has serious community impacts as access to green spaces is crucial in developing connecting the local lands and waters and developing a better understanding of our relationship to our natural environment.

**Solution:** Community members spoke about encouraging existing service programs to include information in multiple languages, especially information pertaining to mental health, housing, and transportation. Also, in the transition to 100% renewable energy and green transportation, it is important to offer incentives for renewable energy such as offset programs, rebates, and credits for low income individuals.

### Housing and Homelessness

**Concern:** Community members shared concerns about the ways in which extreme weather events can impact their housing and the specific ways climate change disproportionately harms houseless community members. Extreme weather events such as heatwaves and wildfires create exacerbated concerns of safety and can disrupt stable housing. Moreover, one of the top concerns for many participants was not having access to air conditioning in their homes. Participants noted the challenges of accessing air conditioning in low income housing and buildings where there are landlord restrictions on air conditioning. All of these concerns are amplified for houseless community members.

**Solution:** Community members would like to see air conditioning in all living quarters, especially new developments to mitigate heat waves and extreme heat events. In order to make AC units accessible, community members would also like to see a policy that requires landlords to provide energy efficient AC units.

### Environmental Racism

**Concern:** Community members shared concerns around environmental racism and the ways in which already marginalized communities, notably



BIPOC and low-income communities are experiencing disproportionate impacts of climate disasters.

Participants shared that for low-income, black and brown and working class communities, climate change is a very real phenomenon felt on a daily basis and that they are disproportionately bearing the effects of climate change. This can be seen in the ways heat waves and power outages caused by ice storms impact the mental health of elderly and low-income residents and how houseless community members are more vulnerable to climate impacts, such as smoke from wildfires. Moreover participants highlighted the lack of tree coverage, increased flooding due to poor drainage, lead poisoned waters, and urban heat islands in predominantly BIPOC neighborhoods.

**Solution:** None suggested yet.

#### **Out of touch politicians and policies**

**Concern:** Community members said that politics and politicians are disingenuous and performative when they interact with community members and hear their concerns, which is causing barriers to a true just transition that mitigates climate change.

**Solution:** Community members want actions that address the issues such as community education, food systems, advocacy efforts, pollution testing, and empowering different/underrepresented voices and developing skills in having difficult conversations about these topics. Create opportunities to develop community leadership skills to create solutions to collectively reduce their individual climate impact.

Community members suggested ways to change current funding patterns such as disinvesting in historic harms and putting funds toward community progress and climate preparation for vulnerable communities. Suggested opportunities for change include electing new leadership that can add new perspectives to changing systemic issues like advocating for wage increases. Those in power should focus on advocating for wage increases and having decision making led by frontline and fence-line climate mitigation workers (firefighters, waste management, farmers). Investing in direct and specific government action and change for gun reform and addressing bipartisan conflict.



## **C. REGIONAL CONCERNS AND PROPOSED SOLUTIONS**

The section provides a summary of geographic specific concerns and solutions. This information from listening session participant

### **i. Oregon Coast Listening Session Summary**

Participants in the Oregon Coast listening session shared many concerns and solutions for issues they face living at the coast. In particular, the impact of tourism, associated traffic and transportation system limitations, lack of affordable housing for local residents and climate issues.

#### **Traffic/Roads**

**Concern:** Community members stated concerns about traffic increases, road damage, and dangerous infrastructure especially during high tourist season. There are only two ways in and out of coastal towns and there are many concerns about access to medical services and health-care, especially during times of natural disasters, like tsunamis. The influx of people also brings air pollution with it, impacting the air quality and the health of the ocean.

**Solutions:** Community members suggested that an evacuation and resource shuttle service would be helpful in order to provide services for the community during times of natural disaster, climate impacts, and basic health needs.

#### **Economy**

**Concern:** Participants said that tourists seem to be driving up prices at local businesses. However, local workers are not being paid fair wages and often cannot afford to live in towns where tourists and vacation homeowners have taken over. There needs to be a balance between on and off season taxes.

**Solution:** Community members suggested increasing taxes on take out food would put more money back into the local economy. Cannon Beach imposed this tax, and other coastal towns doing this could help pay local workers better living wages.

#### **Housing**

**Concern:** Participants said that there is overpopulation of tourists and many unoccupied, large vacation homes. They stated that the vacation homes that are newly built contribute to deforestation due to their size and impact on the lands.

Community members who have lived on the coast for much of their lives said that vacation homeowners don't contribute to the local workforce. The local workers can't afford to live nearby and those who can afford to live here don't work here.

#### **Community engagement, leadership and climate policy**

**Concern:** Community members shared that they feel powerless when trying to address climate impacts and policies. They said we need to look at things at a human level instead of centering corporate greed.

**Solution:** Participants suggested that they have power in how they spend and invest our money. It only takes one person to make a change in the community. They would like to unite with others to be the voice for justice and encourage others to speak up.

Participants said they would like to host educational events like an energy summit to learn about renewable energy, especially solar. Invite speakers to share local information about impact, incentives and opportunity to be involved in planning processes and decision making around renewable energy.

#### **Local food economy**

**Concern:** The coast is known for seafood production and nearby dairy farms. However,



community members said that they see no local seafood in their grocery stores and dairy production from local farms has been outsourced to other parts of the country.

Community members shared concerns that there is a lack of support for the local fishing community and preserving first foods and traditional resources for the Indigenous community.

**Solutions:** Community members said they understand how the food system works and that we should be committed to keeping food as local as we can. Oregon can process, grow, and harvest plenty of our own food here locally and we need to keep it that way. The more our food systems are led by community, the stronger our health and economy will be.

## ii. TriCounty Portland Metro Listening Session Summary

### **Community Safety & Accountability**

Community members in the Tri-county Portland Metro area are concerned about safety in their communities. For instance, a Portland area resident spoke about how gun violence hangs over her neighborhood like a dark cloud and how concerning it is that even young people can easily access guns. Other community members mentioned the issue of over policing in their low-income and BIPOC communities where people in need are criminalized instead of addressing systemic failures including the lack of infrastructure people have access to. Another community member talked about the importance of following Maslow's hierarchy of needs to contextualize how people need to have their basic needs met to be able to self-actualize.

People also mentioned pollution as a threat to community safety. Folks mentioned desiring to see polluters like Portland Public schools take accountability for the lead pipes that are polluting drinking water in Black and Brown neighborhoods. Some steps towards accountability that folks identified included reparations, EPA lawsuits, and/or taxing industries.

The solutions people brought forward for gun violence include gun reform and licensure. Folks

also expressed the desire to take action for themselves and make positive impacts, such as feeding the homeless or having a letter writing campaign to the President about how the pandemic created less work and inflation. People also mentioned the need for community unity in order to create community based solutions and support like community centers and welcoming spaces for everyone.

### **Unequal Impact of Climate Catastrophes in BIPOC Communities**

Community members in the Tri-County area are concerned about the inequities within BIPOC communities such as how housing affects underserved/ underprivileged communities by displacing of black and brown communities. Historically BIPOC and immigrant populations are under-resourced which means when disasters hit, these communities are hit harder. For instance, there is more flooding in BIPOC communities due to poor drainage systems. BIPOC communities need reparations to address these inequities and historical oppression.



### **Natural Elements: Air and Water Quality**

Tri-county community members are concerned about water contamination and the lack of care of the water which is also causing water scarcity issues. Air quality is also becoming poorer which is affecting BIPOC community member's health and creating more asthma issues. In Northwest

Portland, people are concerned about smoke caused by wildfires and some don't have the money to pay for a doctor. The fires are creating lots of smog and air pollution in the Tri-county area.

In terms of solutions, some folks mentioned the need to create more opportunities to access and to take care of water. One participant shared the impact that one individual can have if they start to care about water conservation and how it can inspire the entire community to make a change. In relation to air pollution, a community member suggested banning fireworks during celebrations like the 4th of July to reduce air pollution.

### **Climate Preparedness: Community Resources, Temperature Control & Road Safety**

Participants shared that in their experience, Oregon's climate has shifted dramatically over time in ways that are negatively affecting Oregon natural resources making the future feel uncertain. People expressed concerns regarding the lack of extreme weather relief services, such as plows during snow storms or AC units during heat waves. Folks also talked about the need for extreme heat responsive architecture such as AC units especially in low-income buildings, but shared barriers including Landlords not allowing everyone to have a window AC unit. A participant shared the importance of creating programs for low-income, BIPOC community members to access AC units and other resources needed to mitigate the effects from natural disasters or extreme weather events. For example, one participant emphasized that window AC units are more affordable than portable ACs but that even then, people didn't have enough money to afford them. Community members also spoke about coming together as tenants to tell the landlords that they can access rebates and work together to ensure that there are proper windows, energy efficient appliances, greenspaces so there's not as much concrete. Community members expressed the need for more community centers and informational stations for shelters/resources in the area as well as desiring to see an increase in programs with volunteer training for fire prevention.

### **Greenspaces**

Tri-County community members are concerned about the lack of access to green spaces especially in areas with more infrastructure and high crime rates. There is also the concern of a lack of tree coverage in BIPOC communities, which increases severity of heatwaves and can cause a heat island effect.

Community members would like to see more programs to increase low-income and BIPOC youth involvement in outdoor education and reduce the attitudes of gatekeeping green spaces from certain communities. Also, folks expressed that there needs to be more planning and development to create more green infrastructure in under-resourced communities.

### **Health**

Participants shared that climate change has worsened allergies and breathing problems especially for frontline community members. These health issues are amplified with the inequities in the medical system for BIPOC communities and the lack of affordable healthcare. Also, there are inequities in exposure to hazardous environments for BIPOC community members, for example, in Portland there are cases of lead poisoned waters in Black and Brown neighborhoods.

Solutions the community brought forward include an increase in access to healthy foods to function better in school and work, more resources for hygiene especially for the unhoused, more programs to promote physical activities for adults, and stress relief programs.

### **Transportation, Noise pollution & Walkability**

Community members are concerned about the pollution from transportation, such as noise pollution and trash on the roads.

A participant shared how they felt that Portland is a car-centric city with increasing gas prices, expensive parking, and lacking sufficient infrastructure for pedestrians. They shared the need for policies to limit car infrastructure and increase accessible public transit to create a



more walkable city. Community members would like to see more pedestrian streets to create a livable city particularly for children and more quiet spaces.

### **Affordable Housing**

Participants talked about the housing crisis in the Tri-county area, sharing that it is negatively impacting underserved communities, decreasing affordable housing, increasing homelessness, and increasing rent. Solutions the community spoke about included increasing affordable housing development, stabilizing rent so there are fewer rental price increases, advocating and organizing as tenants for fair housing policies that benefit underserved communities, tenant education programs, and having livable conditions within affordable housing such as having proper windows.

### **Access to healthy foods & gardening**

Community members have concerns related to food and farming practices such as the lack of access to healthy foods, food waste, and farming practices that use pesticides and monocropping that destroys the soil and pollutes the environment. Solutions community members brought forward include free and reduced prices for fruits and vegetables and more u-pick free fruits and vegetables. Sourcing produce locally and creating community gardens. Also, having educational programs on sustainable farming, food sovereignty, nutrition education, and youth farming.

### **Renewable Energy**

Folks expressed how renewable energy can be unaffordable for those that identify as low income. People talked about how, for instance, electric vehicles are not the most affordable and there is a lack of access to EV charging for low income housing and apartments. But, there is also the concern that simply buying an electric vehicle is not enough to solve climate change. Some solutions to renewable energy accessibility community members included was to have state policy requiring building owners to install EV charging stations, require landlords to have energy efficient AC, have more EV charging



access, and increase access to energy efficient appliances.

### **Skills-based & learner-centered Education**

Community members are concerned that there is a lack of climate and environmental education in schools, and want to see more of climate and environmental education as a part of the curriculum. Also, community members would like to see improvements in the education system, such as having education accessible for all people, increase resources to support youth, teach applicable life skills, tailor education to a student's needs and learning preferences, and value community expertise and knowledge as a part of their education.

### **Economics and Policy**

There are many economical inequities community members within the Tri-County area mentioned during the listening session. For instance, the living wage is not sustainable for many as the cost of living is too high for many people, especially families who have members with disabilities. Also there are many local businesses that are closing due to the unaffordability of owning a small business in the Tri-County area. Some community members are concerned that the economic crisis is compounded by government officials who are misusing funds and can not relate to their economic struggles.

Community members suggest increasing taxes on industries to give back to the communities they are exploiting. They also expressed the need for equal pay and increasing the living wage. They also shared that there should be financial support programs through schools for youth/families and local business network opportunities so small local businesses can support one another.

### **Waste Management, Pollution and Recycling**

At the systemic level, participants talked about the importance of waste producers taking responsibility for the pollution they are creating and actively working to reduce their waste. At the consumer level, folks also expressed the need for more education on how to recycle and an increase in programs providing recycling options, for example toys and clothes. They also shared that waste management infrastructure needs to increase by highlighting the need for more trash cans on the street.

## **iii. Central Oregon Listening Session Summary**

### **Indigenous land and resource management**

Community members of Central Oregon are concerned about Indigenous land rights and resources management, such as the infrastructure issues with water rights and their allocation within tribal communities.

The solution to this concern from community members is to return stolen land to Indigenous peoples so that they can once again manage their natural resources.

### **Housing and Neighborhood Development**

Central Oregon community members brought up concerns about a housing crisis. They shared that the housing market is very geared towards those who are at a different economic level or catered towards short term-rental/tourist homes. They emphasized this by highlighting that there are 100s of displaced community members, while some folks own multiple homes. In addition, there are restrictions to building affordable and tribal housing within the urban growth boundary. They explained that the lack of affordable housing and inequities, force BIPOC community

members to live in the projects. They also shared that most current housing plans are isolated and ineffective and that there is not enough building structure with multi-use options. As a result of all of these factors, being houseless is a huge issue that is not being addressed as some community members are trying to relocate, but they have nowhere to go and the shelters are overcrowded. One community member also stated that they got elected to the school board but had to resign because she got priced out of Bend.

Some of the solutions community members in Central Oregon would like to see include, subsidized housing (especially for healthcare and education workers), the use of available land for affordable housing, increasing homeless shelters, creating buildings with mixed use housing, improving neighborhood infrastructure to promote access to necessities, listening to renter's voices in housing decisions, and having housing resources available in multiple languages. Additionally, Indigenous community members would like to see communal living as it is something true to their ancestral and cultural ways but it is currently not allowed.

### **Inequitable and unrepresentative Government**

Community members are concerned about a slate of candidates that represent local government since they are land owners, dominant culture, multiple homeowners. People shared how they felt like these elected officials run as progressive candidates but lack a shared lived experience as their constituents – renters disabilities, etc. People feel that their government is not properly representative of the people. Folks also expressed concerns about the lack of community engagement opportunities, especially in multiple languages that keep decision making processes inaccessible. Folks noted that when there is community outreach with elected officials, there is no action or follow through afterwards which makes their leadership seem performative and creates community burnout.

Solutions community members brought forth included coalition building at a statewide level, creating more opportunities for community engagement like listening sessions, paying people for their time through stipends, being sure to include



communities of color in decision making processes and equitable policy, and having new leadership that reflect the communities they represent.

#### **Increase public transit/active transportation and transit safety**

Community members raised several transportation issues. Folks shared that Central Oregon is rural and spread out, and so the insufficient bus stops require people to walk far to access the bus lines and this creates barriers for community members with disabilities. They also highlighted the lack of safety for cyclists because roads are not built well for cyclists and have resulted in fatal accidents. People added that the unaffordability of public transportation created challenges especially for low-income single parent households.

Community members would like to see an increase in bike and bus infrastructure to make public transit more accessible for folks and increase public safety. Additionally, the Indigenous community would like to see an increase in transportation options for folks to reach free tribal health care in Warm Springs from Bend or other Central Oregon locations. Some folks also suggested other forms of public transportation such as rapid buses and a light rail system similar to Portland. Some community members also suggested affordable public transportation programs such as rebates for electric bikes or having discounted bus passes for those that need public transit to access their jobs or school. Also, there should be multilingual resources for those that need access to transportation resources.

#### **Community-Led Food Systems**

Community members also brought up a concern on accessing food. Solutions for this concern include a community-led food system that eliminates the issue of food deserts and allows folks to cultivate and share their own food within their communities.

#### **Natural Resource Water Access, Impact, and Management**

Community members are concerned about water availability especially in relation to the

inequitable use of water by the agricultural and golf sectors.

Solutions to this issue include revamping the community's water rights, and having large corporations create an agreement with community members to give back to the community in ways that benefit the climate.

#### **Youth Education and Leadership**

Folks were interested in creating educational opportunities and programs to teach climate and environmental science to community members, and especially to youth. People were also interested in developing ways for youth and community members to be directly involved through citizen science and youth leadership programs.

#### **Community Resilience**

Central Oregon community members shared that they are located in an area that faces horrific wildfires that affect the air quality, which in turn leaves long lasting effects on community members' health.

Solutions community members expressed their desire to build community reliance, unity and solidarity in the face of these natural disasters, taking part in civic engagement, accessing climate mitigation programs with resources available in multiple languages and having resilience hubs to shelter in during disasters.

#### **Investment in BIPOC Neighborhoods**

Community members in Central Oregon brought up concerns regarding a historic disinvestment in BIPOC neighborhoods that have created an urban/rural color code. They shared how this distinction creates low property value in BIPOC neighborhoods and a prioritization in investing in tourist-heavy neighborhoods instead. They highlighted that this segregated housing also increases crime and the presence of liquor stores in dominantly BIPOC neighborhoods. Community members want to see a correction made to the historic disinvestment and desire investments in BIPOC-majority neighborhoods to make them more livable and safe.

### **iv. Rogue Valley Listening Session Summary**

#### **Affordable Housing**

Rogue Valley community members expressed concerns regarding the housing crisis that has increased homelessness and negatively impacted community members' mental health.

Solutions community members would like to see include an increase in funding for affordable housing and the development of affordable housing for vulnerable populations, such as Seniors.

#### **Environmental Quality & Natural Elements**

Community members in the Rogue Valley are concerned about their air and water natural resources. These concerns include access to water and water use, impacts of drought and agriculture on water quality and depletion, and poor air quality especially from agricultural and industrial areas. Folks talked about restoring their water and air resources by increasing water regulations, examining water contamination issues, restoring stream flow, and sending out air quality alerts to community members.

#### **Community Inclusion and Accessibility**

Folks from Rogue Valley talked about issues they were facing regarding community inclusion and accessibility including aspects of living in



an environment where BIPOC, low-income, and other disadvantaged communities are not set up to succeed. They identified contributing factors like the lack of representation, only having certain thoughts and opinions matter, scarcity of resources to support marginalized communities, and the lack of transparency surrounding current plans that will affect the community.

The community solutions to address the issues of inclusion and accessibility include holding space for community engagement and dialogue, especially encouraging the most impacted community members to collaborate and problem solve together. Folks emphasized that decision makers should also involve youth as they are knowledgeable and have ideas on how to improve sustainability and environmental practices. People also shared the importance of making resources and information involving climate, housing, and economics available in multiple languages. Community members highlighted how being a part of the climate conversation takes time that some folks can not afford. Some community members also wanted to see basic survival needs prioritized before participating in the climate conversation. For instance, childcare services and worker equality are support systems needed to encourage community member's involvement.

Additionally, when engaging with community members, folks expressed the need for utilizing an equity lens while evaluating and measuring the success/outcomes. There is also the desire for more follow ups post engagement, for instance having updates and follow ups after listening sessions.

#### **Community Development and Planning**

Community members talked about how the process of developing climate resilience plans can seem concerning for some folks that are focusing on surviving and want to see the prioritization of basic needs first before implementing climate plans.

In order to support community development and planning in the Rogue Valley, community members highlighted the need for comprehensive planning strategies to outline community resources, inter-agency interaction to unite organizations with common goals and mutual



support, develop economic strategies that reinvest in community needs, and use climate justice as a philosophy to govern economic strategies.

### **Government Exclusion and the need for Community Engagement in Policy and Advocacy**

Folks expressed several concerns in relation to community policy and advocacy. Some of the main concerns highlighted include the Rogue Valley's political polarization and how there can be a lack of change or action due to these disagreements. People also shared that there is a lack of government outreach. For instance, people talked about how land management policies tend to leave out public opinion, which especially negatively impacts disadvantaged communities and minimizes public opinion. Community members also spoke about politics not valuing workers rights and how community members are focused on surviving and making ends meet day to day. The solutions community members talked about during the listening session include the desire to take action as a community through local organizing efforts, civic engagement, and understanding the voting process and local elections.

### **Health and Mental Health**

Rogue Valley community members are concerned about the impact climate disasters can have on community member's mental health. For instance, people expressed that there are not enough mental health resources for people to process trauma from losing their homes. Also, limited affordable housing leads to an increase in homelessness which also impacts people's mental health. Folks also talked about impacts on physical health for homeless folks trying to stay out of jail and not die from heat stroke or other natural disasters.

### **Renewable Energy**

Rogue Valley Community members are concerned of the inequities with renewable energy, such as their affordability to low-income community members. In addition, community members are concerned about the pollution and carbon

emissions from fossil fuels and fossil fuel based transportation. Solutions the community members proposed include more electric vehicles, solar offset programs, and renewable energy incentives for low-income and disadvantaged communities.

### **Education**

Folks expressed concerns regarding unequal access to education for all people. People shared that there is little education in relation to wildfire preparedness and school safety.

Community members would like to see more inclusive learning strategies such as using hands-on learning, outdoor education programs that teach communication and collaboration in case of climate disasters, and education access across all communities.

### **Just Transition**

Concerns that community members brought forward in relation to a just transition include reducing carbon emissions and the need for more comprehensive planning strategies for climate justice efforts. For instance, community members stated that cooling centers, which is a community necessity in the Rogue Valley, seem unreliable as locations of cooling centers change and their availability is limited during heat events. Some of the solutions Rogue Valley community members said would contribute to a just transition include, community resilience hubs, connecting intersectional issues to problem-solve holistically, involve community members in stewardship programs to test sources of pollution within the community, increase underbrush management to prevent wildfires, and create a program that pays housing insecure folks to pick up recyclables and keep the returnables. In terms of food in a just transition, community members talked about food sovereignty, increasing access to healthy and sustainable foods by making them more affordable, and creating more incentives to reduce food waste.

# Community Gatherings

**Centering Community Voice:** Following the state-wide listening tour in late 2022, we continued to maintain and build relationships with the participants and interviewees. As part of our commitment to a community co-created and co-owned project we met with community members along the way giving them the opportunity to review our work and guide the future of the project. We held four community gatherings in May and June 2023 where we shared updates on our legislative work thus far, held space for feedback, and offered community members ways to stay engaged and guide our final report. The first two gatherings were dedicated to the participants from the regional listening tour sessions while the last two gatherings were dedicated to Indigenous community members who had previously participated in the interviews and/or were interested in getting involved. Community members also received stipends for participating and dedicating their time and knowledge. Overall 81 community members participated in our community gatherings with 53 participants at our regional listening tour gatherings and 28 for our Indigenous gatherings.

**Acknowledging Harm:** These gatherings were also a learning experience for the report writing team as we apologized for previous harm and missteps regarding community trust where we shared

information from the report without circling back to get community approval like we had planned. These events were a crucial part of our process of rebuilding community relationships, trust, and moving forward in our process in a way that felt collaborative and guided by community members. Moreover during these gatherings community members updated us on how climate change is continuing to affect them and their communities since the last time we had engaged with them. We incorporated this feedback into the report to most accurately reflect community perspectives.

**Staying engaged:** We offered multiple avenues for community members to stay engaged with us after the community gatherings. Community members who wanted to be more involved in the process were invited to join a review committee. This offered an opportunity for participants to read through the draft of our report before it is published and offer feedback. Additionally, we shared ways for community members to get involved with the 2023 legislative session and advocated for environmental justice bills. We shared Unite Oregon's action agenda for the 2023 legislative session and upcoming opportunities to submit written testimony in support of the bills, and ways to share information with their networks and communities.





# Possibilities for Policy

## A. STATEWIDE POLICY IDEAS

The listening tour provides a tool to better inform policies. For example, while interviewing we get to know peoples' stories and later on can be used as testimony, letters to the editor, etc. Which can be presented to committees when we have our long session and short session at the state legislature.

Policy in the end rises from research, input, problem-solving, implementing solutions and continuing to improve research studies to better showcase our community needs and provide sufficient data and evidence when drafting legislation. Our policy members are the key for the policy to be created, because from their needs that's how we draft legislation. For example, community resilience hubs were created from natural disasters, to seeing how our communities were impacted by wildfires, temperature disruptions, from the needs we saw and heard from our communities. Then, the policy team takes that information to create legislation and advocacy at the state level and hopefully at the federal level.

Policy is not the end but instead is a tool to create and look at problem-solving strategies and see what resources we can continue to distribute to our Oregonians across the state.

At Unite Oregon, we are committed to working with our communities to address climate issues and challenges faced by frontline and fence-line community members. The following topical list includes policy ideas developed by Unite's Policy team based on the summaries of concerns and solutions as well as the feedback we received during the four community gatherings and one community report review committee gathering. This list of possibilities for policy has

been compiled for community members to build advocacy, at both the state and local levels. All of these topics can be addressed at a state or local level with government officials, businesses, non-profits, schools and governmental agencies.

Unite Oregon recommends that community members interested in organizing locally and statewide review this list of policy ideas. We know that many issues are important to people around the state. Unite Oregon can assist interested individuals or groups about how to continue conversations, develop advocacy tools and local leadership to address these important issues.

### Indigenous Specific Policy Ideas

- Preservation of agriculture for an array of diverse cultures, especially Indigenous communities.
- Recognition of Indigenous leaders and natural resources. Programs that restore and protect natural resources important to Indigenous cultures and are Indigenous-led.
- Green jobs to sustain climate justice and job opportunities.
- Free tribal healthcare provided by the state.
- Return and protect certain land taken from Indigenous communities.
- Build affordable and tribal housing within the urban growth boundary.

### Shifting Access to & Management of Natural Resource

- Protections for wildlife, pollinators to preserve biodiversity and natural ecosystems.
- Access to water and natural areas for communities.

## Community Resilience

- Increase preparedness, improve responsiveness and reactions to wildfires.
- Require a certain distance between hazardous plants and neighborhoods.
- Emergency transportation plans for folks to evacuate areas during a disaster. I.e. alternative roads, community shuttles, public transit.
- State funded resources to address health impacts after disasters. I.e. all folks with asthma qualify for a portable air purifier.

## Investing in BIPOC Neighborhoods

- Community-led, government-funded land for green spaces and community gardens. This could be a government grant program with neighborhood applications or a standardized allocation for neighborhoods with a certain average income. This will help create healthier environments, decrease monopolization of healthy foods, and create stronger relationships in the community.
- Funded and managed through local governments like Parks & Recreation.
  - Activities to address stress and physical health.
  - Outdoor programs engaging low-income and BIPOC youth.
  - Physical activities for adults.
  - Educational programs on sustainable farming, food sovereignty, and nutrition.
  - Recycling education programs.
  - Increased trash and recycling bins in public areas.
- Increase statewide minimum wage.
- Local government community groups to encourage engagement and dialogue regarding community issues. Require updates and follow ups after changes.

## Community Inclusion and Accessibility

- Create protected classes or corporate accountability in order to prioritize people and environment over profits.
- Local governments can pass a policy that mandates all their materials to be published in the top 4-5 languages in their communities, and others upon request. This could also be tried for housing programs. I.e. City of Beaverton.

## Food Systems

- Food accessibility through an improved SNAP program, decrease in the cost of healthy foods, u-pick discounts, and/or community gardens.

## Waste Management/Recycling

- Create systems like Bottle Deposit to encourage reduction of waste products. This can be improved with education and incentives.
- Community-led, government-funded programs that encourage reducing waste and improving our environments.

## Youth Education and Leadership

- School curriculums regarding climate and environmental education, including supportive resources and survival skills.
- Youth leadership programs funded by local governments and run by community or funded by the state and run by schools.

## Public Education

- Environmental hazards and impacts must be disclosed to the public in the form of an educational event and public statement. This must be provided by those creating the hazard,



- including but not limited to corporations, organizations, government, individuals, etc.
- Voter education around gun safety.

### Renewable energy

- Renewable energy incentives, rebates, programs for low income individuals.
- Electric vehicles, solar panels, and renewable energy programs that are affordable to low-income residents.
- State funded EV charging stations at state buildings.

### Public Transportation/Transit

- More public transit from outside cities to tourist towns to decrease congestion.
- Income-based discount rates or free access to parking or other transportation barriers.
- Improve or increase investments in public transit, bike travel, and walkability.

### Affordable Housing

- Address cost increases in tourist towns by imposing a tourist tax and increased wages in tourist towns. This will help keep locals from being displaced.
- Impose a tax on vacation homes or a discount/home owning program for locals. We could also

- impose a limit on vacation homes using some kind of ratio of vacation vs. local homes.
- Change housing codes to allow for multi-uses.
- Subsidized housing for certain careers, for example, front line workers.
- Incentive or tax credit for farmers that distribute in-state. Something to compete with out-of-state distribution.
- Require air conditioning for all rental housing. Or require all forms of AC to be allowed in all rental housing. This can be done at varying levels of government
- Improve or increase Affordable and Fair housing investments.
- Local governments can impose reasonable rent rates lower than the state.
- Increase funding for shelters and temporary housing.
- Community hubs in communal living, provided by local governments.
- Neighborhood equity investment programs that prioritize revitalization in neighborhoods with primarily underserved communities.

## B. CURRENT POLICY INITIATIVES

The work of Unite Oregon in environmental and climate justice policy continues to expand every year, and thanks to the Climate Justice Listening Sessions and Indigenous interviews, we can continue to draft concise, comprehensive, and



well-equipped policies backed by our underserved communities as well as research.

We will continue to advocate for culturally appropriate, inclusive, innovative approaches and campaigns. One example of how we can organize with others includes work during the 2023 long legislative session. Unite Oregon formed a coalition table with organizations such as Oregon Just Transition Alliance, Oregon FoodBank, Rogue Climate, Spark Northwest, Adelante Mujeres, and Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon. We pushed for HB 2990 Community Resilience Hubs, which became part of the passage of HB 3409 Climate Package.

Along with our bill champions, Representatives Pam Marsh and Khanh Pham, we lobbied at the State capital, held bipartisan legislative meetings, community forums, sent letters to the editor, and worked on social media toolkits.

Currently, we are working on implementing the Climate package because the time for climate change emergencies and resilience is NOW. This involves continuing to create policies with the intersectionality of climate and people at the center and finding tools and resources to make this more language accessible and motivate our communities to be part of this movement.

You can find more information about some existing legislation below.

1. **Community Resilience Hubs:** HB 2990. 2023. Community Resilience Hubs became part of HB 3409 Climate Package and passed both the House of Representatives and Senate in June 2023. This Bill aims to create a grant through the office of Emergency Management to create places with networks of care for communities to cultivate physical, social, and ecological well-being. These hubs will be active to support day-to-day life and be activated during disruptions and recovery efforts in climate-related emergencies and other natural disasters. For more information: <https://www.orhubs.org/about>
2. **Building Resilience:** HB 3409. 2023. This bill is a series of energy efficient bills which also became part of HB 3409 Climate Resilience

Package. Aims to build smart and efficient buildings to be healthy and resilient, while decreasing energy waste and lowering bills. A flexible and affordable transition to clean, efficient electricity in homes and buildings. For more information: <https://buildingresilience.org/what-were-working-on>

3. **Equity Investment Act SB 1579. 2022:** This bill will help build economic stability, self-sufficiency, wealth building and economic equity among disadvantaged individuals, families, businesses, and communities in the state. The program was allocated \$15 million and will distribute funding to organizations who will, in turn, implement programs and provide resources to eligible beneficiaries to address long standing economic inequities in four key areas: ownership of land and property; entrepreneurship and business development; workforce; and intergenerational wealth building. [https://www.oregon.gov/biz/programs/economic\\_equity\\_investment\\_program/pages/default.aspx](https://www.oregon.gov/biz/programs/economic_equity_investment_program/pages/default.aspx)
4. **Reasonable Rent.SB 611, 2021.** Senate Bill 611 (SB 611) makes key changes to how the maximum allowable annual rent increases percentage is calculated for residential tenancies.SB 611 also clarifies that during any tenancy, other than week-to-week, the landlord may not increase the rent more than once during any 12-month period. <https://www.stablehomesor.org/>
5. **Healthy Homes. HB 2842, 2021.** HB 2842 directs the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) to provide grants to a wide array of third-party organizations, which in turn provide financial assistance to eligible homeowners and landlords to repair and rehabilitate dwellings to address climate and other environmental hazards, ensure accessible homes for disabled residents, and make general repairs needed to maintain a safe and healthy home. <https://www.oregon.gov/oha/ph/healthyenvironments/healthyneighborhoods/healthyhomes-grantprogram/pages/index.aspx>



# Lessons Learned

The Unite Oregon team learned a lot during the listening sessions. We developed relationships, we brought people together, we made mistakes, we acknowledged our mistakes and apologized and we continue to learn and grow together. We are grateful for the grace and forgiveness provided by community members and will continue to learn and grow.

The Listening Tour had many strengths and challenges and we acknowledge that this is a learning process and opportunity for improvement. Our team's reflections and debrief of strengths and challenges are listed below.

## STRENGTHS

1. Partnered with Black-led organizations in each listening session region and had those partner organizations support in community outreach
2. Relied on Unite Oregon communications department and made sure we included BIPOC representation in these listening sessions
3. Included rural communities that often felt excluded from these opportunities
4. All four sessions had Spanish speaking participants
5. Good participation by Indigenous communities in interview sessions.
6. Provided larger than usual stipends to participants and Black-led organizations for participation.
7. Provided an introduction about concepts of Participatory Budgeting.
8. Provided learning opportunities for Unite Oregon to admit mistakes to the community and provide opportunities for relationship building.
9. Opportunities for the community to participate in reviewing the draft report and providing feedback and including participants by name in the report.

## CHALLENGES

1. Short turn around time to recruit participants and build relationships.
2. Lack of relationships in key areas of the state, such as northeastern Oregon, focused relationships in specific coastal areas, such as north, mid and south coasts, mid-Willamette Valley, northeastern and southeastern Oregon.
3. Lack of relationships and Unite Oregon team representation with the Black community.
4. Eastern Oregon, considered it but did not have a partner in time
5. Some regions we were not able to have a majority Black/African American attendance such as the Oregon Coast
6. Oregon Coast also had some struggles in recruiting participants
7. Rural areas tended to have more difficulty in recruiting BIPOC representation, so we had to heavily rely on our community partners
8. Rural communities may have limited access to the internet.
9. Unite Oregon staff transitions during the project caused some gaps in continuity
10. Lost opportunity to bring focus group participants and Indigenous participants into Lobby Day and 2023 legislative participation.



# Next Steps

## INDIGENOUS ORGANIZING

Following the Indigenous community gatherings we received a lot of positive feedback and interest to continue these gatherings in the future. We are developing a structure for an Indigenous climate justice cohort for recurring meetings to continue building community and discussing ways in which we can support Indigenous sovereignty, climate justice, and access to First Foods. These meetings have also inspired Lorri O'Neil to seek funding and organize a Climate Summit for Indigenous youth.

## MAJOR THEMES:

Three themes that emerged from the community gatherings included: the importance of developing youth leadership, intentions behind land acknowledgements, and Indigenous connections to lands and waters.

## DEVELOPING YOUTH LEADERSHIP:

Youth are our future and developing youth leadership is one if not the most important avenues that will lead to change. Developing more opportunities for youth organizing, leading community events, environmental education and resources is important in tackling climate justice. Youth should be given more opportunities to be involved. When we invest in youth we invest in our collective futures as they are elders in training.

## LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

Community members shared that land acknowledgements are much more than mentioning who originally occupied the land you are on. Most importantly land acknowledgements take steps beyond that by listening to Indigenous people, raising their voices, and prioritizing their values. Land acknowledgements without action items, redistributing financial resources or further education feel empty and lack impact. Moreover land acknowledgements can be a space for celebrating Indigenous cultures through a tribal welcome

## INDIGENOUS CONNECTIONS TO LAND AND WATER

Community members shared the importance of land and water connection in their cultural practices. Many shared their personal experiences connecting/ re-connecting to their traditional foods, language, and lands. Decolonizing the ways we practice sustainability and conservation allows us to see that the earth is made to be nurtured in community, not owned. Many expressed the wish to represent Indigenous Nations in a sustainable way.

## CALL TO ACTION

This Climate Justice Listening Tour report and executive summary will be distributed to our community participants, stakeholders, community partners, funders and legislators and other people interested in helping shape and prioritize policy initiatives.

We know that the ideas, concerns and solutions developed by community members will inspire additional conversation, advocacy and base building throughout the state to address regional and statewide issues led by grassroots organizers. We will continue to build trust and relationships, support local organizing and advocate with the leadership of frontline and fence community members for solutions to the evolving climate crisis. We are excited to see the community's passion and leadership.

We will continue to build on this work with ongoing conversations with community participants, stakeholders, elected officials and other people interested in helping shape and prioritize future policy initiatives.

We call on community organizers, elected officials and other folks in leadership to use the information collected in this report to address the needs of community members and create strong solutions.





# Closing Summary



The Climate Justice Listening Tour deeply impacted each of the team members. We are really grateful to have worked on something of this scale and depth over a long period of time. It hit all levels of emotion. We navigated a lot of difficult conversations and withstood a lot of transitions both in our work together, as well as in our personal lives. We hope that this work helps reclaim the story of place in this area, and how it needs to be stewarded by Indigenous/Black and other frontline and frontline communities.

Dear reader, thank you kindly for taking the time to read and educate yourself on the shared issues of Oregon state and our diverse communities. We value your time. This document is a living document co-created by the community members that bring it to life. This captures a screenshot in time of decades of injustices towards frontline, BIPOC, and Indigenous peoples. Through ongoing engagement this is one iteration of many as we continue to advance climate justice across our state.

Black, Indigenous, and other people of color have long been excluded from the environmental movement and we hope that in reading this you have learned more about the larger community you are a part of and/or felt represented. Community voices matter, we are the voices of mother earth and the voices of the universe. Data is a powerful resource and frontline communities should be empowered to share their experiences and shape the policies that impact them. This is a work grounded in community and trust by bringing folks together and bridging stories from different regions.

We hope to leave you with a deeper understanding of the climate impacts that harm our communities along with the hope of solutions to build a more just and sustainable future. When communities have hope anything is possible.

– Climate Justice Team



## Closing Prayer

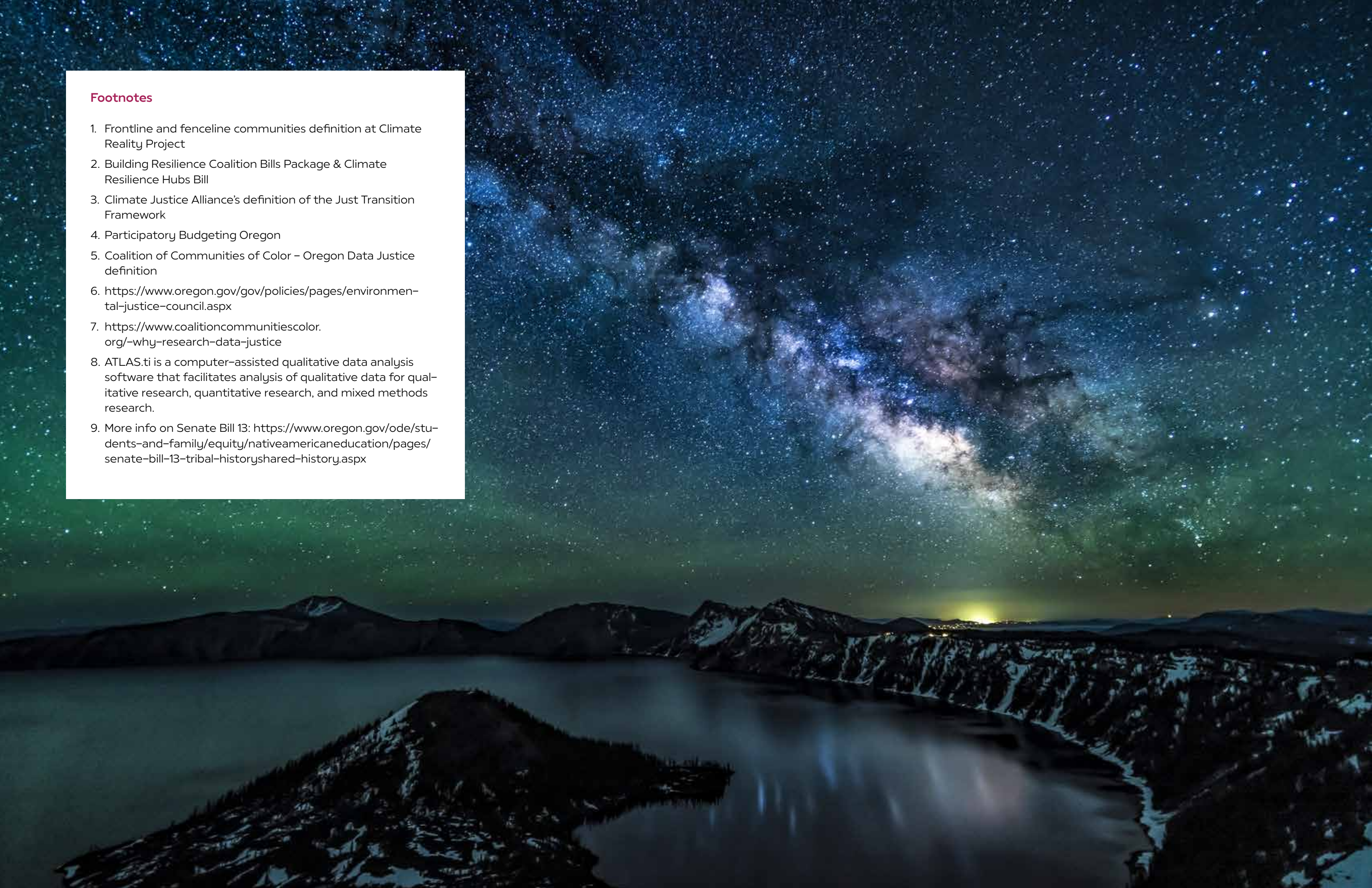
i –tah–mahin I'm thankful for this day that creator gave me. This opportunity of life that creator gave us all on mother earth. Let's bring back our Indigenous languages, the elders say it has power. Share your knowledge through dialogue, music, dance and stories. Guide others by serving your community for the younger generation to have the spirit of courage and confidence to have growth and development through the struggles they endure and don't give up.

–Lorri O'Neill, Indigenous Organizer at Unite Oregon



## Footnotes

1. Frontline and fenceline communities definition at Climate Reality Project
2. Building Resilience Coalition Bills Package & Climate Resilience Hubs Bill
3. Climate Justice Alliance's definition of the Just Transition Framework
4. Participatory Budgeting Oregon
5. Coalition of Communities of Color – Oregon Data Justice definition
6. <https://www.oregon.gov/gov/policies/pages/environmental-justice-council.aspx>
7. <https://www.coalitioncommunitiescolor.org/-why-research-data-justice>
8. ATLAS.ti is a computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software that facilitates analysis of qualitative data for qualitative research, quantitative research, and mixed methods research.
9. More info on Senate Bill 13: <https://www.oregon.gov/ode/students-and-family/equity/nativeamericaneducation/pages/senate-bill-13-tribal-historyshared-history.aspx>





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