

From: Ernie Niemi <[REDACTED]>
Sent time: 03/30/2024 03:56:26 PM
To: Noelwah Netusil <[REDACTED]>; John Talberth <[REDACTED]>; Joshua Skov; Keaton Miller
Subject: Fwd: Introductions
Attachments: PastedGraphic-6.tiff

FYI

Begin forwarded message:

From: Roger Worthington <[REDACTED]>
Date: March 30, 2024 at 3:24:18 PM PDT
To: Thomas Potiowsky <[REDACTED]>
Cc: Ernie Niemi <[REDACTED]>
Subject: Re: Introductions

Hello Tom:

Thank you so much for helping. And I would very much like to read your work on the social costs of carbon.

As you may know, in 2007 the Oregon legislature created the Oregon Climate Change Research Institute (OCCRI). They did so to research and assess "the state of climate change science, including biological, physical and social science, as it relates to Oregon and the likely effects of climate change on the state." This biennial assessment by renown experts provides policy makers with a valuable resource that helps in the development of legislation, policies, practices and programs.

The 2023 report contains a subchapter on the "economic implications of climate change for Oregon." The three authors do an excellent job presenting an overview of the "economic concepts and tools" that help us better understand Oregon's climate challenges. The authors also address the impact of global warming on particular sectors in Oregon, such as food production, agriculture, forestry, water supply, housing, transportation, biodiversity, wilderness habitat, tourism, fishing (e.g., salmon and crab resources), recreation, migration, human health and mortality, and employment.

After adeptly spotting the issues, and identifying the sectors impacted by climate change, the report **does not attempt to quantify** the actual economic losses imposed on those sectors by climate change - the so-called "external costs." Setting aside the sources of the carbon pollution that have historically and cumulatively driven the frequency and severity of catastrophic weather events, such as floods, wildfires, heat domes, and drought, the question remains: how much is global warming costing Oregonians now? And how much will it continue to cost, over the next 50 years, if carbon emissions continue to rise (or stay the same)? How much of those costs will governments, already strapped for cash, need to spend to adapt or mitigate? And where will they get the funds?

We look forward to building a team with the skill and expertise to help formulate a credible answer to these questions.

Cheers!

Roger

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On Mar 28, 2024, at 6:12 PM, Thomas Potiowsky [REDACTED] > wrote:

Hi Ernie,

Thanks for contacting me. I want to be value-added, if I can, on climate change costs. Be an honor to be on the advisory panel. You should add to the new denial people the argument that if China is not doing anything, why should the US? Harkens back to the 1970s when the Japanese were going to buy up the US. I guess they want the US to remain the number one economy as we all go down the tubes. Sure we are all going to die, but we won't die as bad as China.

I am a member of the Oregon Climate Action Commission, and a few years ago I gave a presentation on the Social Cost of Carbon. As you are well aware, lots of good work in this area.

Bottom line, sign me up and I will contribute.

Regards, Tom

On Thu, Mar 28, 2024 at 1:12 PM Ernie Niemi [REDACTED] > wrote:

Hi Tom,

Dunno if you remember—our paths crossed briefly when you spent time with ECONorthwest. I was managing the natural-resources unit in Eugene.

Some background:

In 2009, for the UO's Climate Leadership Initiative, I led a team of about 20 economists to describe the economic costs climate change will impose on Oregon, Washington, and New Mexico. It was the first sub-national effort of its kind. We were responding to requests from legislative and other leaders. They complained they were unable to take meaningful action to reduce greenhouse-gas emissions because they had no response to the loud voices saying such actions would be too expensive. We widely heard back that the information was useful and much appreciated.

Political winds shifted, and we never followed up, but I continue to believe that economics has a critically important role to play, to help workers, families, students, businesses, communities, and public officials anticipate and prepare for what's coming.

In recent weeks I've come to believe it is even more important for a team of economists to develop a new credible estimate of climate costs, and to repeat the exercise on a regular basis. The urgency comes from reports such as these:

"Old Denial" might involve claims that climate change just isn't happening or is not caused by greenhouse gas emissions. New denial, however, does not reject that climate change is happening but instead pours scorn on climate solutions or makes claims such as 'plants and animals are benefiting from climate impacts or are unaffected,' [[Here](#)]

“Where once climate deniers would outright reject climate change as a hoax or scam, or claim that humans were not responsible for it, many are now shifting to a different approach, one which attempts to undermine climate science, cast doubt on climate solutions and even claim global warming will be beneficial at best, harmless at worst,” reports Rachel Ramirez of CNN. [\[Here\]](#)

So, last month I began asking economists from around the state if they’d be interested in joining me. I heard back broad enthusiasm for the objectives, but most folks are too busy. But...we now have a team of five: Keaton Miller and Josh Skov from the UO, Noelwah Netusil from Reed, John Talberth from Institute for Sustainable Economy, and me. And we have some funding from Roger Worthington.

The team now is working to add an Advisory Panel. As Tobias said: occasionally calling on members for insights about conducting the research and communicating their findings effectively to elected officials, business leaders, and the public.

We’d very much like you to join us.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Thank you,

Ernie Niemi

President, Natural Resource Economics

On Mar 26, 2024, at 2:40 PM, Tobias Read <[REDACTED]> wrote:

[TRYING AGAIN - as I had a typo in Roger's address...]

Hi Tom,

Thanks for the phone call this afternoon. It was good to hear your voice and to hear about all the things you're working on. As I said, I can't really get used to the idea of you in retirement.

I want to introduce you to Roger Worthington and Ernie Niemi. These two are, as I mentioned, working to convene a small (5) team of economists from UO, Reed, and the private sector among others in an effort to help Oregonians better understand the economic costs that changes in climate have imposed and will impose on Oregon's workers, households, businesses, and communities. They want to establish an advisory panel, occasionally calling on members for insights about conducting the research and communicating their findings effectively to elected officials, business leaders, and the public.

I of course thought of you immediately, and was glad to be reminded of your work with the Global Warming Commission.

Roger and Ernie,

I imagine you probably know or at least know of Dr. Potiowsky. Even though I was never formally his student, I always felt like I was because when he was the state economist, and I was a member of the House Revenue Committee, I felt like I was in his class at every quarterly revenue forecast.

I know you'll have plenty to talk about so I'll get out of the way now.

Thanks all for your devotion to Oregon!

Best,

Tobias

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Tom Potiowsky

Senior Advisor

Northwest Economic Research Center

[REDACTED]

<https://www.pdx.edu/economics/northwest-economic-research-center>

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