

County Adds Oregon's Largest Supplier of Natural Gas to Climate Accountability Lawsuit

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PORTLAND, Oregon--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Multnomah County announced today that it is adding two new defendants to its ongoing climate accountability lawsuit: NW Natural Gas (NWN) and the Oregon Institute of Science and Medicine (OISM). The civil lawsuit, originally filed on June 22, 2023, seeks damages to help the County pay for the costs of preventing, mitigating, and adapting to fossil fuel-induced global warming.

According to the lawsuit, since the 1950s the oil and gas industry's own scientists knew that burning fossil fuels would release greenhouse gases (GHG) that would superheat the Earth's surface, and thereby cause destructive climate changes, yet they deceived the public about the likelihood those harms would occur – events such as the 2021 heat dome that killed at least 69 county residents.

NWN is Oregon's largest and oldest supplier of natural gas. The Amended Complaint alleges that NWN is responsible for a substantial portion of GHG pollution in Oregon and that the company has prolifically disseminated misinformation about climate harm caused by such emissions.

The Amended Complaint alleges that OISM serves as a propagandist for members of the fossil fuel industry and that it works to mislead the public about the likelihood and magnitude of harmful climate change wrought by the burning of fossil fuels.

"We're already paying dearly in Multnomah County for our climate crisis – with our tax dollars, with our health and with our lives. Going forward we have to strengthen our safety net just to keep people safe," said Multnomah County Chair Jessica Vega Pederson. "As we learned in this country when we took on big tobacco, this is not an easy step or one I take lightly but I do believe it's our best way to fight for our community and protect our future."

The lawsuit, *County of Multnomah vs. Exxon Mobil Corp, et al*, is pending in Circuit Court in Portland. The case has not been set for trial.

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