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USING THE PLANNING PROCESS TO MITIGATE CLIMATE CHANGE

This study seeks to understand how transportation planning can help slow climate change.

Action on climate change in the United States has largely stalled in recent years, pushing states, counties, and municipalities, as well as corporations and civil-society organizations, to act on an individual level to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, even in the absence of a federal mandate to do so. This study assesses how state laws in California and Oregon aimed at reducing GHG emissions from driving have affected the quality of regional transportation plans (RTPs) produced by metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs). Specifically, researchers compare plans produced before the laws took effect to plans produced afterward, to systematically evaluate how plans and planning processes comply with state-mandated emissions-reduction targets. There were two major research questions: 1) Do RTPs focus more on climate change following the implementation of regional GHG emissions-reduction targets? 2) Does the quality of climate-related planning within the RTP improve following the implementation of regional GHG emissions-reduction targets? Overall, findings indicate that SB 375 and SB 1059 have increased the salience of climate change in RTPs. Post-implementation RTPs tend to exhibit greater awareness of climate science and the impacts of climate change on the region. However, the increased focus on climate change and increases in plan quality are not universal for all RTPs. A subset of seven plans actually saw a drop in post-implementation plan-quality scores. The researchers hope to conduct interviews with planners at a range of California and Oregon MPOs in the next stage of this project.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

This research evaluates how Oregon's SB 1059 and California's SB 375 have integrated climate change mitigation strategies into local planning processes.

TITLE

Building Planner
Commitment: Are Oregon's SB 1059 & California's SB 375 Models for Climate-Change Mitigation?

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MORE INFORMATION

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