



Office of the President

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Date: May 22, 2013
Subject: Written Testimony to Members of the Senate Finance and Revenue Committee

Dear Chair Burdick and members of the Senate Finance and Revenue Committee,

An amendment is being introduced to HB2435A to provide Oregon Institute of Technology with the opportunity to utilize its geothermal and solar energy generation to reach its goal of becoming the first Net Zero University Campus in the nation. I am seeking your support for the amendment.

Current law (ORS 757.300) requires utilities to aggregate customer utility meters for green energy generation under 2 megawatt (MW). The utility may aggregate by physically connecting the meters or aggregating using an accounting method, which has minimal costs. The current law poses two issues for Oregon Tech: it does not include geothermal energy in the definition of net metering, and our combined solar and geothermal capacity will exceed the 2MW limit.

While we understand that both of these limitations have been widely deliberated, we are seeking a very narrow exception to the rules to accomplish something great for Oregon, our students, and our university. Without the narrow exception, our new geothermal energy project will cost an additional \$250,000 so that we can physically connect the meters on our campus. With the narrow exception, Pacific Power, the investor-owned utility that provides services to our Klamath Falls campus, will have the authority to include our geothermal resources for purposes of net metering, and to allow an exception to the 2MW limitation for a public university. With this authority, we will reduce our energy costs, provide an opportunity for teaching and research with our students, and be allowed the flexibility to conduct applied research with companies on integrating geothermal energy with other renewable and fossil-based energy sources.

The Governor and legislature have encouraged all of Oregon's public universities to pursue sustainability by adopting executive orders and legislation which established the state's overall sustainability policy. Beginning with the State of Oregon's Sustainability Act of 2001, we have worked together to demonstrate lasting solutions that address economic, environmental, and community well-being.

Programs that have furthered our state's sustainability goals include the following programs at Oregon Tech: the legislatively established Oregon Renewable Energy Center, the Geo-Heat Center, and the American College and University Presidents Climate Commitment (ACUPCC).

However, as we strive to meet our energy efficiency and renewable generation goals, we find that several statutes need to be amended to achieve our common sustainability objectives.

Hands-on education for real-world achievement.

Oregon Tech proposes that ORS 757.300 be amended to support public universities with energy-related education and research programs by providing a higher cap and including geothermal in the list of approved electricity generation sources. We also ask that the amendment to ORS757.300 included in this bill become effective immediately, so that the final construction phases of Oregon Tech's new 1.75 MW geothermal project can begin on schedule, and we can meet our substantial completion date of December 2013.

Thank you very much for your consideration and thoughtful deliberation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Maples', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Christopher G. Maples
President