

Beth Stewart

February 19, 2013

Oregon Senator Chris Edwards, Co-Chair
Oregon Representative Ben Unger, Co-Chair
Ways and Means Subcommittee on Natural Resources

To the Honorable Sen. Edwards and Rep. Ben Unger,

It is my pleasure to write you both in support of the Oregon Department of Energy's Cool Schools program. I am a member of the Union School Board and have taken the lead on our Cool Schools Energy-Efficiency Project (please see our attached flier). Contractors are on campus as I write, implementing several energy-efficiency measures designed to save energy, and improve the learning and teaching environment in our classrooms.

It wasn't two days after we registered with ODOE when I received a phone call from Rob Nicol of Cool Schools welcoming us to the program and offering to meet with us on campus the following week. Mr. Nicol and his colleague toured our campus and helped us identify key energy-saving opportunities. The newest building on our K-12 campus is 50 years old; our high school building was built in 1912, the year the Titanic sank. During the coldest months of the year, our district of 365 students is faced with energy bills of up to \$10,000 a month. Needless to say, we were in desperate need of making our buildings more comfortable and energy efficient.

After a short, but focused six months working with the knowledgeable and enthusiastic staff of Cool Schools and its auditors, Union was able to put together a workable and promising plan. We then qualified for a 2.5 percent interest loan under the Small-Scale Energy Loan Program, which was crucial for the \$370,000 project to proceed, as the Union School District has no general funds available for such a program. Four local contractors began work on campus this October. I am happy to report that the plumbing, insulation and electrical work are complete. The more extensive mechanical work will wrap up this April.

I can honestly say that if it were not for the Cool Schools program and funding opportunity, Union would not have embarked on its energy-efficiency project. Our lighting throughout campus would still be inadequate and inefficient, our old water heaters would still be guzzling energy, our old buildings would still be void of insulation, and our high school gym's temperature would still be as temperamental as the weather outside.

I highly encourage you and your colleagues to continue Cool Schools so that other districts throughout the state can take advantage of the opportunities it offers. Small districts like Union do not have the manpower or expertise to tackle these worthwhile energy-efficiency projects on their own. They need the guidance and resources of Cool Schools. I wholeheartedly support the program. Thank you.

Yours Truly,



Beth Stewart
Union School Board member

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