



THREE DIMENSIONAL TIMBERLANDS, LLC.

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Oregon Senate Committee on Rural Communities and Economic Development

Attn: Beth Patrino, Committee Administrator

February 11, 2014

**Subject: Hearing Testimony for SB 1578**

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing on behalf of Three Dimensional Timberlands, LLC., to express support for SB 1578, as amended, to make biomass an eligible green energy technology to meet the state's 1.5% investment requirement for new public buildings and major renovations.

The 1.5% requirement can help us increase our energy independence and lower our carbon footprint. It can also stimulate new economic opportunity and employment in our communities. Adding biomass to the list of eligible green energy technologies will put green energy jobs within reach of many of our rural forest communities.

Today we have over 20 community-scale biomass thermal energy projects scattered across 10 Oregon Counties providing space heat and hot water to schools, hospitals, airports and visitor centers in small communities such as Burns, Enterprise, Days Creek, Estacada, Oakridge, Tillamook, John Day, Three Rivers, Sisters, Prairie City, Vernonia, and Bend. These projects provide numerous community benefits, including:

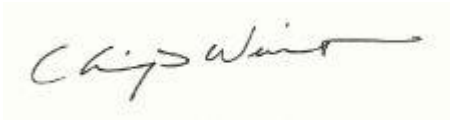
- Saving public agencies money on heating fuel purchase costs that can be used for teachers or other public service priorities;
- Keeping dollars expended on heating fuel local by re-circulating them in communities and creating jobs in woody biomass harvesting, processing, and delivery;
- Facilitating thinning of overly dense forest stands by creating market demand for small trees and biomass;
- Avoiding the smoke and cost of pile burning thousands of tons of thinning slash from forest restoration activities;
- Slashing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by thousands of tons by switching use from fossil fuels; and
- Increasing the overall energy independence of local forest communities.

These 20+ projects demonstrate the potential of biomass thermal energy. But exclusion of woody biomass from the eligible 1.5% green energy technologies will stymie widespread adoption of biomass thermal energy projects. If public agencies are required to invest part of their budget in green energy technologies but are restricted in their choices to solar and geothermal they will not be receptive to an additional biomass energy project. We will miss the best windows of opportunity for installation of renewable energy technology – when a building is first being constructed or majorly renovated.

With rural communities struggling to find a sustainably way to utilize the few resources that they have available, it makes sound economic sense to include biomass technologies as one of the acceptable green energy technologies. We are all looking for intelligent ways to help Oregon's O & C counties stay fiscally afloat, encouraging the utilization of biomass energy can be a part of that solution. Oregon was built on the timber industry, to exclude its potential use as an energy source is – in my opinion – a mistake.

Please support SB 1578 to help create new green energy jobs in forest communities, keep energy dollars recirculating locally, support forest stewardship, increase our energy independence, and reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light yellow background. The signature is cursive and appears to read "Chip Weinert".

John M. "Chip" Weinert  
Partner - Director of Administration  
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