



Oregon Senate
Committee on Rural Communities and Economic Development
Attn: Beth Patrino, Committee Administrator

February 10, 2014

Subject: Hearing Testimony for SB 1578

To Whom It May Concern:

Wallowa Resources' strongly supports 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.

Wallowa Resources has been promoting biomass energy in eastern Oregon since 2007. We have led three biomass energy projects, two biomass thermal units and one combined heat and power system, in Wallowa County. The two biomass thermal installations are saving their facilities (one school campus, one non-profit commercial building) over \$150,000 a year in heating costs relative to their original heating oil systems. The biomass combined heat and power system provides business process heat and power to a new wood processing business that supports 26 jobs.

The 1.5% requirement stimulates new economic opportunity and employment in our rural communities. Including woody biomass as an eligible technology supports new businesses and markets that compliment State investments in eastside forest restoration – reducing the risk of wildfire, and generating local jobs and revenue from forest stand improvement. Developing these new markets reduces smoke emissions from slash pile burning and uncontrolled wildfires, reduces CO2 emissions associated fossil fuel heating (in particular heating oil and propane), and improves the energy independence of our local communities.

There are over 20 projects across Oregon that demonstrate the potential of biomass thermal energy. Exclusion of woody biomass from the eligible technologies is undermines public benefit from the investment requirement. Public agencies should be encouraged to pursue the most suitable and beneficial option available. In some areas this may be solar or geothermal, but in other areas biomass energy has clear public benefit advantages and similar or better rates of return on investment.

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 CO₂ emissions. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Nils D Christoffersen
Executive Director

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Promoting land and community stewardship: the idea, the practice and the jobs