

SOCEA

Southern Oregon Clean
Energy Alliance

The Southern Oregon Clean Energy Alliance (SOCEA) Supports HB 1578

Testimony by SOCEA Co-Chairs Douglas County Commissioner Joe Laurence and Lane County Commissioner Faye Stewart

The Southern Oregon Clean Energy Alliance supports adding woody biomass to the 1.5% renewable energy requirement for public facilities. This requirement would give the woody biomass industry the nudge it needs to increase investments in heating, co-gen, and electrical generation facilities. SOCEA believes that each public facility should be able to choose what the best investment in green technology works for them. In some locations solar energy would be best, in others, geothermal and other, woody biomass. Providing contractors one more option will result in more efficient outcomes in terms of both renewable energy production and in the economics of installation.

There are several reasons why a community or a contractor may wish to choose a woody biomass system for their heating or electrical generation needs:

- Woody biomass heating systems provide clean, renewable, low carbon fuel that often provides important energy savings to facilities. Currently 19 public facilities in Oregon heat with woody biomass. These facilities include public schools, hospitals, airports, and other public buildings.
- Woody biomass heating systems burn clean and have been sited in areas of air quality non-attainment.
- Woody biomass heating, cooling, and co-generation technologies are mature, clean, and cost effective technologies.

In addition, investing in woody biomass technology is an investment in Oregon. This bill encourages more investment in the biomass heat and biomass co-generation industries and will result in more jobs for Oregonians in some of the areas hardest hit by the recession. Other reasons to invest in this industry include:

- Oregon has a strong biomass heat and biomass co-generation industries with qualified providers, suppliers, and consultants
- A strong market for biomass heat provides important co-benefits to Oregon including improved forest health, decreased particulate emissions, and rural jobs.
- The employment benefits of biomass heat endure over time through the purchase of woody biomass fuel.

Job creation goes far beyond the construction of the biomass heating or biomass co-generation facility. Workers are needed to clear fuel from the forests, transport the fuel to the facility and then operate the facility. These jobs will be needed throughout the life of the facility.

SOCEA believes that SB 1578-5/-6 will help Oregonian's by providing more flexibility for the renewable energy requirement and help create jobs for generations to come, all while contributing to our forest health. SOCEA would also like to thank Senator Knopp for his support of this important concept. If you have any questions, please contact SOCEA staff Mark Nystrom (mnystrom@ocweb.org or 503-585-8351) or Co-Chairs Commissioners Faye Stewart and Joe Laurance.