

February 24, 2014

Representative Jules Bailey  
Chair, Energy and Environment Committee  
Oregon House of Representatives  
900 Court St NE, H-274  
Salem, Oregon 97301

**Subject: Senate Bill 1578A**

Dear Chair Bailey and Members of the Energy and Environment Committee,

The businesses, agencies, and non-profit organizations listed below strongly support Senate Bill 1578 A-Engrossed, to make woody biomass an eligible green technology to meet the State's 1.5% investment requirement for new public buildings and major renovations.

Woody biomass energy is an important renewable technology that improves the health and well-being of Oregon's communities and forest landscapes. Today we have 19 biomass thermal energy projects across ten Oregon counties with another 12 in development. These systems provide space heat and hot water to schools, hospitals, airports and visitor centers. These projects save thousands of dollars in annual energy costs, reduce carbon emissions, create much needed jobs in rural communities, and keep energy dollars local for economic development. Using biomass for energy also supports Oregon's state investments in forest health. By building new markets for the byproducts of forest restoration, we create jobs in the woods, decrease the risks of extreme wildfire, and improve the quality of air and drinking water for all Oregonians.

The 1.5% requirement increases Oregon's energy independence and provides numerous economic and environmental benefits. However, exclusion of biomass as an eligible technology limits the mandate's efficiency and effectiveness to provide maximum local benefit and utilize Oregon's diverse renewable resources. We support a level playing field for renewable energy technologies, to ensure that the appropriate technology is tiered to the local resource. For certain areas of the state, the best renewable energy choice may be biomass, and Senate Bill 1578A, which the Oregon Department of Forestry supported in Senate committee testimony, will make sure this option is on the table.

We request that you please support Senate Bill 1578A to create new green energy jobs in Oregon's forest communities, keep energy dollars local, support forest stewardship, increase our energy independence, and reduce carbon emissions.

Sincerely,

Commissioner Tony DeBone, Deschutes County  
Phil Chang, Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council (COIC)  
Jim Walls, Lake County Resources Initiative (LCRI)  
Andrew Haden, Wisewood

Dylan Kruse, Sustainable Northwest  
Nils Christofferson, Wallowa Resources  
Cam Hamilton, Ameresco  
Commissioner Ken Fahlgren, Crook County  
Bob Sourek, Bear Mountain Forest Products  
Bruce Daucsavage, Ochoco Lumber and Malheur Lumber  
Mark Nystrom, Association of Oregon Counties  
Tracy Rutten, League of Oregon Cities  
Tom Kelly, Neil Kelly, Inc  
Amanda Rich, The Nature Conservancy  
Chuck Burley, Interfor US, Inc  
Betty Roppe, City of Prineville  
Liz Shelby, Southern Oregon University  
John Milandin, City of Oakridge  
Commissioner Joe Laurance, Southern Oregon Clean Energy Alliance  
Mayor George Endicott, Central Oregon Cities Organization  
Bend Mayor Pro Tem Jodie Barram  
Bend City Councilor Sally Russell