



House Committee on Energy and Environment

SB 324

David Roth, Feb 24, 2015

Tax Fairness Oregon isn't expert on energy or the environment, but we do consider ourselves experts on legislative sunset dates. Most of you will recall our long efforts to persuade the Legislature to rein-in the BETC program by requiring all new BETCs to have a sunset date. As far as we're concerned, the biofuels program has all the marks of a BETC. It's full of latent complexity in the rule-making and potential for unforeseen financial and environmental costs, so it demands a sunset just as much as the BETC's did.

This issue is very partisan. We share the Republicans' concern that biofuels are carbon-intensive, take up land needed to feed the world, and constitute an indirect subsidy to a particular industry imposed by the State. We also appreciate the Democrats' concern that biofuels, whatever their drawbacks, are necessary at this time because there's no way right now to replace them in the State's long-term energy plan. This is one of many political debates that will be required as we struggle with the future of our climate. Sunset dates will prod the debate along.

Don't be intimidated by industry representatives who claim a Sunset date undermines investment certainty. Every word they say is self-serving. Your job is to serve the public, not them. Besides, a Sunset date does offer investors certainty, the certainty that the effectiveness of their investments will be reevaluated at a date certain to determine whether the project is still worthy of the state's investment.