



March 4, 2015

Representative Jessica Vega Pederson
House Committee on Energy and Environment
c/o Beth Patrino, Committee Administrator
Re: Support for House Bill 2449

Chair Vega Pederson and members of the House Committee on Energy and Environment,

Sustainable Northwest supports House Bill 2449 to extend the Biomass Producer or Collector Tax Credit and establish a pilot program for the generation of renewable energy from biomass feedstocks.

Sustainable Northwest has been a long-time supporter of biomass energy to improve the health and well-being of Oregon's communities and forest and agricultural landscapes. Today we have 20 woody biomass thermal energy projects across ten Oregon counties, providing space heat and hot water to schools, hospitals, and other public facilities. We also have a number of cogeneration facilities and anaerobic digesters that generate renewable electricity and biogas to supplement manufacturing and agricultural processes. These projects save thousands of dollars in annual energy costs, reduce carbon emissions, increase the efficiency of the agriculture and forest products industries, create much needed jobs in rural communities, and keep energy dollars local. Using biomass for energy also supports Oregon's existing state investments in forest health. By building 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. Much more can still be done.

House Bill 2449 will support Oregon agricultural, forest, and manufacturing jobs, and provide numerous economic and environmental benefits. We are particularly supportive of the pilot production-based incentive, which sustains the program's intent, and also produces a positive outcome of clean, renewable energy generation that extends the benefits of the credit. The pilot incentive leverages the state's existing investments in forest restoration and will improve the economics of sustainable forest management. This ensures that limited state and federal financial resources are available for increased stewardship activities. The bill also provides critical resources to bring idle and underutilized renewable energy capacity on line, and does so in a transparent and fiscally responsible fashion to ensure accountability.

We request that you please support House Bill 2449 to retain and create jobs in agricultural and forest communities, support working landscapes, reduce carbon emissions, and increase our energy independence. Thank you for your consideration of this important legislation.

Sincerely,

Dylan Kruse
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