

Yes on HB 4036: Clean Electricity and Coal Transition

No-coal proposal will help environment, Oregonians (OPINION)

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Collaboration and compromise to achieve shared goals are all too rare these days, but it's happening in Oregon right now, where a diverse group of allies came together and drafted a plan to remove coal from the state's energy mix and increase its renewable portfolio standard to 50 percent by 2040.

The Clean Electricity and Coal Transition Plan, now under consideration by the Oregon Legislature as House Bill 4036, will benefit customers, utilities, renewable energy and environmental advocates alike.

Both Pacific Power and the Sierra Club recognize the plan opens a world of opportunity for Oregonians while ensuring a cleaner, prosperous future. Voters agree too: One recent poll finds 70 percent want the Legislature to pass the plan.

Wind power and other renewables can affordably and reliably help Oregon achieve these goals and positively impact communities across the state along the way.

Today, wind energy supports up to 2,000 jobs in Oregon and 10 factories that build wind-related parts and materials. While wind power currently supplies enough electricity for 695,000 Oregon homes, the Department of Energy's 2015 Wind Vision report says that could increase to over two million by 2030. Reaching that goal will create hundreds of thousands of well-paying jobs. Wind turbine technician is already the fastest growing job in the U.S.

Wind has attracted over \$6 billion in capital investment to Oregon, while land lease payments from wind farms return nearly \$10 million to landowners every year. By 2030, these payments could double to over \$20 million per year, and property tax revenue from wind farms could grow to over \$48 million each year.

These are much needed, stable revenue streams communities can count on to fix roads, build new schools and improve health care facilities.

Growing wind can also help keep the state's air safe and clean today and for future generations. In 2014, wind helped avoid 307,000 cars' worth of carbon emission in Oregon. By reaching the Wind Vision scenario, wind could help avoid over 2.1 million cars' worth of carbon emissions every year.

Phasing out coal imports means Oregon can tap into more of its locally grown wind resources while keeping money in the pockets of its homeowners and businesses. The Department of Energy recently reported that electric prices are 20 percent less sensitive to changes in natural gas prices in scenarios with large amounts of wind energy.

By increasing Oregon's renewable energy standard, the Oregon Clean Electricity and Coal



Transition Plan builds on a policy

Windmill turbines overlooking the Columbia Gorge on the Washington side in 2011. (Bruce Ely/Staff)

framework with a long history of success. The Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory found renewable energy portfolio standards created \$7.5 billion in annual environmental benefits from reduced air emissions, \$1.3 billion to \$4.9 billion in reduced consumer energy prices, and 200,000 American jobs through 2013.

Both the environmental and business communities are on the same page: The Oregon Clean Electricity and Coal Transition Plan charts a successful path for Oregon's future, and wind energy can help the state get there.

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