

SB 557 Hearing Testimony, 1 March 2016

Committee on Environment and Natural Resources. (2 minute limit?)

My name is Michael Mitton and I am a resident of Portland. For the past 25 years I have been closely following the science of climate change and its likely impacts on society. I am deeply concerned about the threats posed by climate disruption, as are the DOD, the global science community and many, many others. Nevertheless, I am equally convinced that it also presents the biggest economic opportunity we have ever seen.

Clean energy is clearly the energy of the future. It's already cheaper and it will reduce pollution and help restore our natural climate. Converting to clean energy is an economic opportunity that will benefit rural areas as much as urban, especially the early adopters. SB-557 will help Oregon achieve these and other benefits particularly if GHG reduction goals are based on the best available science and the use of offsets are reduced.

New wind power and/or solar power plants are now typically cheaper than new coal or natural gas power plants — even without any governmental support. Utility scale unsubsidized levelized costs for wind start at 3.2 cents per kWh and 4.6 cents for solar. This compares to 4.8 cents for natural gas and 6.0 cents for coal.

Furthermore wind and solar do not have the significant health and environmental burdens that coal and natural gas imposed on society. Harvard Medical School estimates coal alone costs the US an extra \$500 billion per year in healthcare.

Renewable energy and energy efficiency are several times more labor-intensive than fossil fuels. Clean energy jobs also generally are more distributed and largely higher quality jobs. US wind power jobs were up 20% in 2016, many of those were in rural areas.

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