

The Association of Oregon Counties Support SB 634

The Association of Oregon Counties (AOC) supports for SB 634 to make biomass an eligible green energy technology to meet the state's 1.5% investment requirement for new public buildings and major renovations.

AOC believes including biomass in the 1.5% requirement as many benefits which include:

- increased energy independence for Oregon,
- lowering Oregon's carbon footprint, and
- Stimulating new economic investment and green job opportunities, especially in rural areas.

This is a tested and economical technology that is used in over 20 community-scale biomass thermal energy projects scattered across 10 Oregon Counties providing space heat and hot water to schools, hospitals, airports and visitor centers in small communities. These projects provide numerous community benefits, including:

- Saving public agencies money on heating fuel purchase costs that can be used for teachers or other public service priorities;
- Keeping dollars expended on heating fuel local by re-circulating them in communities and creating jobs in woody biomass harvesting, processing, and delivery;
- Facilitating thinning of overly dense forest stands by creating market demand for small trees and biomass;
- Avoiding the smoke and cost of pile burning thousands of tons of thinning slash from forest restoration activities;
- Slashing CO₂ emissions by thousands of tons by switching use from fossil fuels; and
- Increasing the overall energy independence of local forest communities.

By including woody biomass in the eligible 1.5% green energy technologies will encourage more wide spread adoption of biomass thermal energy projects. Public agencies will be more likely to invest in an additional biomass energy project. This provides us an opportunity to install renewable energy technology at the best time: when a building is first being constructed or majorly renovated.

AOC strongly supports SB 634. For more information on AOC's position please contact policy manager, Mark Nystrom (mnystrom@oregoncounties.org/503-585-8351)