

Senator Richard Devlin
Representative Nancy Nathanson
Co-Chairs, Joint Ways and Means Committee
900 Court St, NE
Salem, OR 97301

March 1, 2017

Dear Co-Chairs Devlin and Nathanson,

As members of the Joint Ways and Means Education Subcommittee, we are writing to express our support for the Oregon Renewable Energy Center (OREC) at Oregon Tech, as they seek \$985,000 in biennial state support to fulfill their mandate in ORS 352.745 to "engage in renewable energy system engineering and applied research."

Oregon Tech has been a leader in the development of renewable energy generation and in the design of high-quality bachelor's and master's degrees in energy engineering. Oregon Tech is the first university in North America to reach the goal of generating almost all of the electrical power for its campus in Klamath Falls with geothermal and solar energy, and it was the first university to develop an innovative, ABET-accredited bachelor's degree in Renewable Energy Engineering. It is also the home of the Geo-Heat Center, an internationally renowned repository of information and technical advice on geothermal energy development.

We view Oregon Tech's \$985K request that has been supported by all seven universities, as part of the Higher Education State Programs budget, as an essential element of Oregon Tech's ability to meet a critical gap in technology development for Oregon companies and to fulfill its teaching mission tied to applied degrees. Unlike the large research universities, Oregon Tech and OREC play a unique role in the applied research environment. They do not focus on basic research that can be commercialized. They do focus on providing experiences for faculty and students to develop prototypes, validate and test products, analyze manufacturability, and select appropriate product materials to respond to the needs of Oregon's small and medium-sized companies who are designing or improving their clean tech products or services. The Oregon legislature authorized this public purpose center in 2001 but has never directly appropriated funds to support its mission.

Oregon Tech is striving to build OREC's capacity to offer faculty and student expertise to Oregon companies and to grow more Oregon companies. OREC will expand Oregon Tech's ability to offer applied research opportunities and real-world experiential learning to its undergraduate and graduate students, and to offer innovation and entrepreneurship opportunities for students in rural Oregon, so they consider creating and growing jobs in Oregon.

This State Program funding request will provide ongoing support for an OREC Director, and some part-time faculty to work on applied research with students and companies, so OREC can

achieve its public purpose, and generate the grants and industry sponsorships needed for specific research projects, talent development, and ultimately jobs.

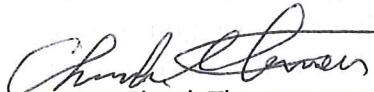
We urge you to add Oregon Tech's Oregon Renewable Energy Center request for \$985,000 per biennium to the list of University State Programs in the Legislative Budget. This request is supported by all seven university presidents, was included in the HECC's Agency Request Budget as a Policy Option Package, and has the support of all members of the Education Subcommittee.

Sincerely,

Senator Rod Monroe
Co-Chair, Education Subcommittee



Senator Arnie Roblan



Senator Chuck Thomsen

Representative Barbara Smith-Warner
Co-Chair, Education Subcommittee



Representative Diego Hernandez



Representative John Lively



Representative Julie Parrish



Representative Gene Whisnant

CC:

Senator Dennis Linthicum

Senator Kim Thatcher

Senator Betsy Johnson

Senator Alan DeBoer

Representative Warner Reschke

Representative Rich Vial