



May 22, 2017

**House Committee on Energy and Environment**

**Attn:** Beth Reiley, LPRO Analyst; Maria Hernandez, Committee Assistant

**Subject:** Hearing testimony on Senate Bill 634

Dear Chair Helm, Vice-Chair Johnson and Vice-Chair Power,

Wisewood Energy is in strong support of Senate Bill 634, which would include biomass energy as an eligible technology to meet the State's 1.5% investment requirement for new public buildings and major renovations.

Wisewood Energy is a Portland-based company and demonstrated leader in the renewable energy industry. Our mission is to outfit communities, businesses, and industrial clients with state-of-the-art biomass energy systems that strengthen local economies, lower heating costs, and promote environmental stewardship. We work across the Western US to develop community-scale biomass heating and combined heat-and-power systems, including in Oregon, California, Washington, Idaho, Colorado, and Alaska.

In our view, the paramount benefit of SB 634 is that it empowers local communities to choose the renewable energy technology that best suits their needs and environment. As the law currently stands, only solar and geothermal technologies are eligible. However, these technologies simply don't meet the needs of all Oregonians, particularly those in rural communities. Most of Oregon's rural areas do not have access to natural gas, which means they rely primarily on fuel oil, propane, and electricity for heating. This contributes to high and unpredictable heating costs. However, these same areas often do have access to rich biomass resources, and are frequently in forested landscapes that would benefit from creating a modest market demand for biomass material. Biomass fuel offers real energy savings on a dollar per MMBtu basis when compared to alternative fossil fuels, and this translates to substantial and meaningful energy cost reductions for schools, municipalities, and even whole communities.



## WISEWOOD ENERGY

Modern biomass heating systems employ state-of-the-art technology that ensures highly efficient operations and low emissions. Wisewood Energy has worked with the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality and its counterparts in other states on many occasions, and our biomass projects and have met or exceeded even the strictest emission thresholds. We are confident that this will continue to be the case for future biomass projects, and we welcome the opportunity to continue to engage with the applicable agencies as needed to ensure biomass systems maintain high operation standards.

Oregonians should have the freedom to make an informed decision about their renewable energy choices, and SB 634 will help to do so. In some areas, biomass technologies simply make more sense than alternatives, and are able to generate energy savings, utilize available local resources, support forest health objectives, and support local economies. We thank you for your efforts on this bill to date, and we urge you to pass it into law.

Please contact me if you would like to discuss any element of SB 634 in more detail; I'm happy to be of assistance where possible.

Thank you and best regards,

Meagan Nuss

Project Development Manager  
Wisewood Energy