

VOTE YES on SB 328 – WREGIS Registration Fix

History:

SB 1547 (2016) revised Oregon's renewable portfolio standard (RPS) and, among other things, removed a limitation on pre-1995 biomass renewable energy certificates (RECs) that required they be "banked" and not used until January 1, 2026 as originally adopted in HB 3674 (2010). HB 3674 required the generating facility register with the Western Renewable Energy Generation Information System (WREGIS) or other regional system or trading program designated by the State Department of Energy (ODOE) before January 1, 2011.

Problem:

ODOE interprets Section 5 of HB 3674 (2010) as including a deadline for registration in WREGIS for pre-1995 biomass facilities. ODOE interprets the law to state that the generating facility must be registered in WREGIS by January 1, 2011 to be eligible for renewable energy certificates. This interpretation unnecessarily penalizes pre-1995 biomass projects that otherwise qualify under Oregon's RPS.

The 2010 language did not intend for the owners or operators of any generation facility to need to register with WREGIS before January 1, 2011 or forever lose their ability to sell their RECs in Oregon. Instead, it is our belief that the date limitation in Section 5 of HB 3674 was to require ODOE to designate WREGIS or another system or program before January 1, 2011.

Solution:

A simple fix is needed to confirm that pre-1995 biomass did not need to register with WREGIS prior to January 1, 2011 for their renewable energy certificates to qualify under Oregon's RPS.

To remove the arbitrary registration deadline for pre-1995 biomass facilities and require registration with WREGIS.

Who is Impacted?

There are several potential facilities impacted, including the below Oregon plants:

Biomass One is one of the impacted biomass facilities. Located in White City, an unincorporated community in economically depressed Jackson County, Oregon, Biomass One is a 30 MW wood-fired power plant. The facility consumes 335,000 tons of wood debris annually, including 59,000 tons collected from public contribution. Biomass One provides a cost effective and feasible alternative to burning debris for the local timber industry. Current estimates indicate this service recovers 70% of the wood debris generated in Jackson County that would otherwise lie in piles, find its way into local landfills or be burned in open fields. In addition to generating electricity, Biomass One has 62 direct employees and supports hundreds of indirect jobs through its biomass collection and processing operations, all of which are vital contributors to the local economy.

Interfor Gilchrist is located in Gilchrist Oregon located south of Bend in Klamath County. The 1.5MW facility generates clean energy from biomass, reduces the threat of fires by removing dead or diseased trees from public forest lands, and invests in rural businesses and new energy markets. Gilchrist dries all of its lumber products in kilns fueled entirely by biomass. The biomass program is just one way Interfor is building value for central Oregon and supporting 150 local jobs.

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