



KATE BROWN
Governor

November 9, 2022

The Honorable Jason Beebe
Mayor, City of Prineville
387 NE 3rd Street
Prineville, OR 97754

Dear Mayor Beebe,

I am writing to voice support for the Prineville Renewable Energy Project (PREP) and Prineville's efforts to secure a U.S. Forest Service Community Wood Grant. The project is a key piece of infrastructure that will support local power needs and resilience as well as the economic use of forest biomass from forest restoration projects. There is little question that this project will provide numerous environmental, economic and community benefits.

As you know, the City of Prineville has seen a sharp increase in demand for electricity largely driven by the siting of data centers. This large increase in demand has significantly reduced available grid capacity. As a result, the Bonneville Power Administration conducted a study of how best to meet future power needs in Crook County. This study concluded that increasing local, baseload power generation is the least costly option to meeting these local power needs. The PREP would generate baseload, 24/7 energy and increase community resiliency with the potential to supply power to critical services in an extreme event.

Oregon has recognized woody biomass as a renewable energy source for many years. Biomass is included in the state's Renewable Portfolio Standard and, in 2020, the Oregon Legislature invested \$50 million for community energy and resilience projects. This investment also acknowledged the potential of woody biomass.

A biomass renewable energy facility in Prineville would be centrally located to maximize the economic utilization of biomass. The facility will provide market opportunities for small diameter trees, low value species, and logging debris that would otherwise not be processed. Utilizing this material, rather than burning it in the forest, will minimize smoke incursions and support the local economy and forest products industry.

Increasing the number of acres treated for fuels reduction is a key recommendation from the Governor's Wildfire Task Force. This recommendation was supported by the Legislature with the passage of SB 762. This bill created a multi-pronged approach to reducing wildfire risk, including investing in increasing the number of acres treated for fuels reduction. Reducing fuel loads in Oregon's forests and investing in renewable energy are critical to reducing the number of catastrophic wildfires in the face of a warming planet. The PREP would help achieve the

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objectives of SB 762 and the Governor's Wildfire Task Force for treatment or restoration of up to 300,000 acres per year.

Thank you for the opportunity to support this important project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kate Brown" with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Governor Kate Brown

MG:jlc

cc: Caroline Ervin