March 6, 2014

Dear Supporters and Staff of the Renewable Northwest Project,

Congratulations on 20 years of service and success in the Pacific Northwest. Your efforts have helped place our region on the leading edge of renewable energy production and utilization.

The success of your organization is inspiring. Your collaborations with diverse coalitions of local, state and federal governments, environmental groups, and businesses have had significant positive impacts on the quality of life and economy in Oregon and throughout the Northwest.

Before the founding of the Renewable Northwest Project (RNP), the Northwest had little significant investment in wind and solar energy. By 2011, Sherman County alone had one gigawatt of installed wind energy capacity, and millions of dollars in added revenue. At a time when many schools were cutting funding in education programs, Sherman County was able to purchase new computers and musical instruments. Similar experiences have been seen in rural counties across Oregon and the Northwest.

I have been honored to work with your organization going back to 2007, when, as Speaker of the Oregon House of Representatives, I partnered with RNP and the broad coalition you built to pass Oregon’s landmark renewable energy standard. I am pleased that our partnership has continued during my time in the U.S. Senate, where I have been proud to support RNP’s push for the extension of the production and investment tax credits for renewable energy and for a national renewable energy standard based on Oregon’s successful law, as well as on other priorities to help Oregon’s renewable energy sector keep growing.

The alarming rate at which we have been burning fossil fuels and releasing carbon into the atmosphere for decades is not sustainable. The work you do and the policies you promote are absolutely imperative if we are to solve the environmental challenges facing our planet, and reap the economic benefits that your work demonstrates are available. I greatly appreciate your work and the positive effects will be felt for many generations to come. I wish you many more successful years and never stop working for a better world.

All my best,

Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator