HB 2940 and Proposed Amendments Are a Major Step Backward for Oregon's Economy and Environment

- HB 2940 and proposed amendments eviscerate the goal and spirit of the Renewable Energy Standard (RES) by allowing for significant amounts of old biomass, hydro and municipal solid waste facilities to qualify for the standard. The RES passed in 2007 (SB 838) requires large utilities to gradually increase the amount of new renewable resources in their supply serving Oregonians to achieve 25% by 2025. HB 2940 and its amendments would significantly cut back the amount of new renewable resources developed.

- HB 2940 and proposed amendments dramatically reduce Oregon's leadership position on clean energy and economic development. 1,224 MW (enough electricity to serve 300,000 households) of wind projects are currently operating in rural Oregon. These wind projects have produced approximately $225 million in rural property tax revenues and community service fees, $2 billion in capital investment, 1,650 construction and operations jobs and $4-8 million annually in landowner payments to ranchers and farmers. This does not include the hundreds of jobs and local property taxes associated with the boom of renewable energy companies establishing offices and manufacturing plants in urban areas. Over 2,300 MW of wind projects are in the pipeline, along with many proposals for new geothermal, solar, and biomass projects. HB 2940 and its amendments will significantly reduce the market for new renewable energy project development, which means fewer new green jobs, less property tax income and fewer landowner payments.

- HB 2940 and proposed amendments take away opportunities for clean, domestic, predictably priced energy resources. Renewable energy is increasingly the most cost-effective option for customers and businesses in Oregon and across the nation. Based on current construction, operation, transmission, integration and very conservative carbon costs, wind farms are the lowest cost new energy resource option currently available. New biomass and geothermal plants are also cost competitive. Renewable energy resources also have no fuel costs and consequently no fuel price volatility. Between 2000 and 2008, the price of natural gas experienced severe fluctuations. But with renewable energy, what you see is what you get over a 20-year contract period.

- HB 2940 and proposed amendments means less greenhouse gas emissions reductions for Oregon. The Renewable Energy Standard (RES) is the Oregon’s most significant step yet toward tackling climate change. Every 300 MW of wind serving Oregonians reduces emissions equivalent to 1% of the state’s 1990 emissions. For example, 4,000 MW of wind will reduce greenhouse gas emissions equivalent to 13.5% of the state’s emissions in 1990. This amount of reduction is more than Oregon’s greenhouse gas emissions growth between 1990 and 2000 (12%).