



## CITY ADMINISTRATION

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To: Chair Helm, Vice-Chair Owens, Vice Chair Reardon, and Members of the House Committee on Water  
RE: Testimony in Support of HB 3221, the Oregon Renewable Options Program

Dear Chair Helm, Vice-Chair Owens, Vice Chair Reardon, and Members of the Committee:

The City of Prineville is writing in support of HB 3221, a bill that would help our city, our residents, and our businesses achieve important clean energy goals.

Over the past decade, the City of Prineville has gained recognition as a national leader in its innovative approaches to environmental protection and conservation. With an eye on the future, city leaders are focused on developing a renewable energy facility with significant environmental, community, and economic benefits. The city will be able to diversify energy supplies, reduce CO2 emissions, reduce the risk of severe fires, reinvent jobs in the natural resources/forest products industries, and reinvigorate the community and local economy, all while offering a clean, renewable energy source.

The City of Prineville and Crook County have plans to build and operate a 20-megawatt biomass power plant – the Prineville Renewable Energy Project (PREP). Biomass power is carbon neutral electricity generated from renewable organic material that would otherwise be left as a fuel hazard. Sustainable forest biomass utilization can provide environmental, economic, and social benefits. Forest restoration, thinning and fuel hazard reduction activities, which generate biomass for energy use, create more resilient forest stand conditions. These actions can reduce the amount and severity of wildfires, damages to life, property and natural resources, air quality and public health impacts from wildfire smoke, and fire suppression costs. The City and County are committed to working with a broad range of stakeholders to restore healthy forest conditions while creating a reliable, renewable source of energy.

There are many barriers to the development of local renewable energy projects, including low available rates for electricity sold on the wholesale markets and high costs to interconnecting to the utility grid. HB 3221 would create pathway for our city to move forward with the PREP project – one that recognizes both the energy and non-energy benefits the project can provide to our city and our region.

PREP would generate biomass for energy use and provide significant benefit to watersheds by improving the quantity of water available and enhancing ecosystems with improved soil and water quality. We greatly value the co-benefits that PREP can provide and which HB 3221 supports, including local energy and economic development, increased resilience of electricity service to extreme events, and investments in healthy forest ecosystems, all while retaining our existing relationship with our current electricity provider, Pacific Power.

We respectfully request your support of HB 3221.

Sincerely,

Steve Forrester