

Kulongoski supports renewable energy standard through SB 373

by Bend_Weekly_News_Sources

25 percent of electricity will come from new renewable sources by 2025 under Senate Bill 373 Salem

“Today Governor Ted Kulongoski urged the Legislature to support Senate Bill 373, which establishes a Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) that ensures 25 percent of Oregon’s electricity comes from new renewable sources by 2025. “This bill” Senate Bill 373 “is at the heart of my energy agenda this session,” the Governor told legislators. “It is the centerpiece of a five-bill package that will help Oregon accomplish what we know we need to do, and scientists tell us the whole world must do: Shift from using carbon-based sources of energy to cleaner, renewable sources of energy.” Testifying before the Senate Environment and Natural Resources Committee, the Governor explained that the new standard would cover 90 percent of Oregon’s electricity load by focusing on utilities that serve at least 1 percent of Oregon’s electric load—including Oregon’s three investor-owned electric utilities and nine of Oregon’s largest consumer-owned utilities. Before reaching the goal of achieving 25 percent by 2025, the plan also sets interim targets starting at five percent by 2010, 15 percent by 2015 and 20 percent by 2020. “This proposal will make Oregon a leader in supporting renewable energy,” the Governor continued. “While 23 other states have enacted Renewable Energy Standards, Oregon will join only one other state that requires 25 percent of their energy supply be met with new renewable energy sources.” To comply with the standard, utilities can build and operate a renewable energy facility, purchase power from a renewable energy facility or acquire renewable energy certificates. New renewable energy sources must be built after January 1, 1995 and include wind, solar, tidal, geothermal, biomass or hydro. Efficiency upgrades at existing hydro facilities would also count toward the targets. To protect customers from unanticipated rate increases, a four percent cost cap will also be included to prevent significant rate increases for consumers. Under the cost cap, if a utility experiences a rate increase of more than four percent in a 12 month period, it would not have to comply with the standard. The bill contains several additional provisions that minimize cost risks for utility customers. Last week three of the Governor’s energy bills passed the House with overwhelming bipartisan support. When included with the Renewable Portfolio Standard, Oregon will secure a leadership role in supporting renewable and alternative energy. “This package is an aggressive”yet attainable“combination of renewable energy targets and incentives that will help build a stronger, more competitive economy,” Governor Kulongoski told legislators. “We will be able to reduce our dependence on foreign oil, create sustainable living-wage jobs and enhance our quality of life.” Click on the following links for more information:

SB 373; Governor’s testimony; Governor’s energy agenda.

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