



June 21, 2016

Higher Education Coordinating Committee  
c/o Ben Cannon, Executive Director  
775 Court St. NE  
Salem, OR 97301  
ben.cannon@state.or.us

Dear Members of the Higher Education Coordinating Committee:

I am writing to express support for Oregon Tech and the Oregon Renewable Energy Center (OREC) as they seek funding to fulfill their mandate in ORS 352.221 to “engage in renewable energy system engineering and applied research,” and also to clarify their role relative to the work of Oregon BEST.

As a university partner of Oregon BEST, Oregon Tech has been a leader in the development of renewable energy generation and in the design of high-quality bachelor’s and master’s degrees in renewable energy engineering. Oregon Tech is the first university in North America to reach the goal of generating almost all of the electrical power for its campus in Klamath Falls with geothermal and solar energy, and it was the first university to develop an innovative, ABET-accredited bachelor’s degree in Renewable Energy Engineering. It is also the home of the Geo-Heat Center, an internationally renowned repository of information and technical advice on geothermal energy development.

Oregon BEST views funding for OREC as an essential element of Oregon Tech’s ability to build the capacity to support technology development for Oregon companies and to fulfill its teaching mission tied to applied degrees. Unlike the large research universities, Oregon Tech and OREC play a unique role in the applied research environment. They do not focus on basic research, but rather focus on responding to the needs of Oregon’s small and medium-sized companies by utilizing faculty and students to develop prototypes, validate and test products, analyze manufacturability, and select appropriate product materials. The Oregon legislature authorized this public purpose center in 2001 but has never directly appropriated funds to support its mission.

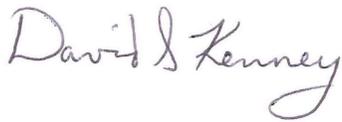
Also, I’d like to highlight that OREC does not compete with Oregon BEST. While Oregon BEST supports very early stage clean technology companies and provides significant business coaching and mentoring, we rely on university partners to deliver the technical assistance that is at the heart of our value. We vet companies and provide targeted funding,

but having capabilities like those scoped in OREC's mission and the management infrastructure to be able to structure and coordinate Oregon Tech's resources are critical for our funds to be deployed effectively.

OREC will also expand Oregon Tech's ability to offer applied research opportunities and real-world experiential learning to its undergraduate and graduate students, an essential element of its academic program model. As the companies we support secure private investment and market traction, they need talented employees, and degree programs like Oregon Tech's and the experiential learning offered through OREC offer a terrific source of that talent.

Oregon BEST is providing this letter to offer our support for Oregon Tech and OREC, and also to clarify that the work of OREC complements the work of Oregon BEST.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "David Kenney". The signature is written in a dark ink and is positioned below the "Regards," text.

David Kenney  
President & Executive Director