



## **SOUTH CENTRAL OREGON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT**

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Higher Education Coordinating Committee  
c/o Ben Cannon, Executive Director  
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Salem, OR 97301  
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Dear Members of the Higher Education Coordinating Committee,

We are writing to express support for Oregon Tech and the Oregon Renewable Energy Center (OREC) as they seek state support through a Policy Option Package to fulfill their mandate in ORS 352.221 to “engage in renewable energy system engineering and applied research.”

Oregon Tech and OREC are unique resources in Oregon. That is why the legislature asked them to fulfill this role as a public purpose applied research center in 2001 to expand the development of renewable energy, provide technical assistance on its use, and engage with companies and communities to grow jobs in the energy sector.

Oregon Tech is a leader in the development of university-based 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.

The South Central Oregon Economic Development District (SCOEDD) wholeheartedly supports Oregon Tech’s request for a Policy Option Package, as part of the Higher Education Coordinating Commission budget. Collaboration with OREC is a key component of this rural region’s economic development and talent development strategy on several fronts:

- Contributes to utilizing the rich renewable energy resources that are available to families and businesses in the region;
- Offers faculty-student teams to work with local and state companies on energy technologies;
- Encourages entrepreneurship and business formation in the region (many of the students are inventing clean tech devices with huge social impact that could be manufactured or distributed from Klamath Falls);
- Helps the community attract and retain students who will potentially become our civic and business leaders;

- Provides experiential learning to increase student completion and preparation for the workforce.

The Klamath Region needs more state investment to reduce unemployment and create jobs and opportunities for rural Oregonians. Please join us in supporting Oregon Tech's Policy Option Package request to fund OREC as a State Program.

Sincerely,



Betty Riley, Executive Director