Oregon Department of Energy
Annual Report to the Environmental Justice Task Force - 2011

Through its low-interest energy loans, Business and Residential Energy Tax Credit pass-through programs, rental and home oil weatherization programs, incentives for energy efficiency, improvements to building codes, and work with rural communities to develop renewable energy resources, ODOE programs provide assistance to minority and low income communities, tribal communities, and other communities typically underrepresented in public processes.

American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Funds

Funds awarded to ODOE through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) was provided across the state with the intent of impacting communities within all of Oregon's 36 counties. These projects, under the State Energy Program (SEP) and Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant Program (EECBG) were directed primarily at public and private building energy retrofit projects including K-12 schools. Renewable energy projects for buildings, including biomass and industrial sectors were included in the awards.

The State Energy Program awarded the Department of Environmental Quality to fund woodstove replacements in Oregon's most severe air quality containment areas. Other awards of note under the SEP grant includes funds to the City of Portland to accomplish residential weatherization which impacts entire residential/commercial sectors and a partnership with the Department of Agriculture to cost-share irrigation system upgrades for private irrigators.

ODOE partnered with Oregon Housing and Community Services (OHCS) to provide ARRA funds for rebates on Energy Star appliances for qualifying low-income Oregonians across the state as part of the low-income energy assistance and weatherization programs. While the original plan intended to replace 1800 non-functioning and low-efficiency heating systems, the program added appliances (refrigerators, water heaters, clothes washers and dishwashers) to the program in July 2010. Qualified low-income homeowners may be eligible for the rebate voucher (used for 70 percent of the cost of the equipment up to $2,000) and in some cases the installation costs. The remaining cost of the new heating equipment would be paid for by the Community Action Program (CAP). There will be no out-of-pocket charges for the homeowner. CAPs will give priority service to qualifying homeowners with non-functioning heating equipment. As an alternative, qualifying homeowners may use the rebate, but pay for their own installation rather than wait for OHCS to install. This is considered the "stand-alone" portion of the program.

ODOE also received ARRA funds to improve energy assurance and resiliency in Oregon. ODOE partnered with the Oregon Public Utility Commission to revise and update the Oregon State Energy Assurance Plan. Additionally, the Oregon Department of Geology and Mineral Industries conducted a Seismic Vulnerability Study on Oregon's Critical Energy Infrastructure.

Programs, Energy Policy, and Energy Efficiency Assistance

Cool Schools: The Oregon Department of Energy conducted energy audits at 100 Oregon school districts that receive their electricity from Oregon's Consumer Owned Utilities and Idaho Power. Recovery Act (stimulus) funds paid for the audits that were part of the Governor's School Energy Audit Initiative. ODOE staff presented a webinar for school districts involved on Dec. 15. ODOE's Cool Schools team will continue to work with schools to implement energy efficiency measures recommended by the audits.

Corbett School District was one of eight school districts in the state that signed up in the fall of 2011 for Phase I of Cool Schools, a program designed to achieve three goals: improve energy efficiency and save money in the schools, and create jobs. Five district buildings in Corbett will benefit from a new boiler and a new control system. The old school in the small town 20 miles east of Portland sits on a wind-swept ridge high above the Columbia River Gorge. Students and teachers in the middle and high schools used to have to endure temperature fluctuations between 40 and 90 degrees year round. But the students and staff of the schools won't be the only one's benefiting from the upgrades. Many of the unincorporated city's 4,000 people use the buildings for a variety of activities all year long.

The Pine Eagle School District in the eastern Oregon town of Halfway has a long history of trying to keep its students warm. The climate in Halfway is one of the most extreme in Oregon. The average low temperature for the coldest month (January) is minus 16 degrees. The average high temperature for the hottest month (August) is 100 degrees. In 2010, the school district was awarded $86,693 in federal stimulus funds for a major lighting upgrade. Less than a year later, Pine Eagle officials heard about Oregon's new Cool Schools program that encourages schools to take on energy upgrades at below-market interest rates. Pine Eagle, realizing an opportunity to increase the insulation in the school's attic, jumped in with both feet.

Homeowners using heating oil, who may be underserved by utility incentive programs, have continued to benefit from the State Home Oil Weatherization (SHOW) program. ODOE administers funds to provide cash rebates towards the cost of energy efficiency and money saving measures. ODOE provides information on its website in English and Spanish and to people with disabilities to access information.

Agency programs provide technical assistance and funding for energy efficiency improvements in public buildings, including schools. Actions include identifying and evaluating energy saving opportunities coupled with use of the Business Energy Tax Credit and Energy Loan programs to help implement the improvements. Improvements to the schools program have increased the availability of energy data to schools, enabling targeted action to be taken to reduce energy spending and increase funds available in the classroom. Government and business entities in economically depressed or disadvantaged areas have used our programs, which result in improved facilities for business, community meeting space, or education.

ODOE has worked with United States Department of Energy's EV Project, which is deploying Level 2 and DC Fast Electric Vehicle Chargers along the Interstate 5 corridor to identify viable electric vehicle (EV) charging station host sites. ODOE has also partnered with Oregon Department

of Transportation (ODOT) and the Washington State Department of Transportation to create the West Coast Electric Highway which provides EV charging stations every 40 to 60 miles along 1-5. The availability of these charging stations will make long-range EV travel in Oregon's most population dense areas feasible thereby reducing transportation carbon dioxide emissions.

Assistance to Tribal Governments

ODOE works quite closely with a number of Oregon's Native American tribes. The agency has provided information, presentations, and technical assistance to numerous tribes on the development of renewable energy, such as wind, wave and geothermal, on proposed biomass facilities and forest biomass development, and on climate change and greenhouse gas emission issues. In addition, ODOE works closely at a regional and a national level with the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, the Nez Perce Tribe, the Yakama Indian Nation, and seven other tribes from around the nation on nuclear weapons cleanup, and most often on cleanup of the Hanford nuclear site. In 2010, ODOE staff served as co-convener (co-chair) of this national group of state and tribal representatives that addresses nuclear waste issues.

The Oregon Department of Energy works with tribes regarding the proposed siting of new energy facilities, pipelines, electric transmission lines and wind farms. With the proposed siting of large transmission lines in the state, the Department anticipates greater involvement and communication with the effected tribes and tribal lands, including coordination of decision processes between Tribal Nations, federal land managers and the Energy Facility Siting Council (EFSC). The transmission line projects under review include Idaho Power's Boardman to Hemingway line and PGE's Cascade Crossing transmission line.

Public Outreach in Developing Energy Facilities

ODOE provides staff support for the Oregon Energy Facility Siting Council (EFSC), a seven member citizen board that decides whether large energy facilities may be built in Oregon and regulates their construction, operation, and decommissioning. The siting of large energy facilities is based on objective and consistent state standards. All EFSC meetings are open to the public, and the meetings are held throughout the state, often with meetings held near where a proposed action is occurring. With many of these located east of the Cascades, the Oregon Department of Energy opened a small field office in Hermiston in 2010 to better serve the public in that area.

Public Involvement in Energy Policy Development

ODOE relies on numerous citizen-based advisory boards, task forces, and committees to solicit input in developing policies, budget priorities, and regulations. Some are mandated by statute, some in rules, and others are less formal. Meetings involving these boards and committees are also open to the public and conducted throughout the state.

Some of the groups include:

- Global Warming Commission
- Oregon Energy Planning Council

- Energy Efficiency and Sustainable Technology Rule Advisory Committee
- Biomass Producer or Collector Tax Credit Advisory Committee
- Biomass Coordinating Group
- Oregon Hanford Cleanup Board – Including a representative of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation
- State Home Oil Weatherization Advisory Committee