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## **Legislative Concept Outline: Oregon Green Jobs Initiative**

### **Description of Concept**

This Oregon Green Jobs Initiative will establish a comprehensive program to create well-paid jobs in the clean energy industry and in the process establish strategies that can be used to promote job growth in other clean tech sectors.

This initiative will build upon the success of the National Governors' Association Policy Academy Oregon Clean Tech initiative and the Oregon Sustainable Oregon Workforce initiative. The elements outlined in the Green Jobs Initiative were identified by clean tech industries as priorities.

Green jobs are defined as:

*Green-collar jobs are jobs that contribute directly to preserving or enhancing environmental quality while providing family wages and career track opportunities. They include a range from low-skill, entry-level positions to high-skill, higher-paid jobs, and include opportunities for advancement in both skill and wages. Green collar jobs include manual, management and intellectual labor positions in businesses whose products and services directly improve environmental quality.*

Clean energy jobs will be the focus of this initiative. These include positions in the solar, wind, geothermal, fuel cell, biomass, biofuel, energy efficiency, and some components of the green building and transportation sectors.

### **Steps in implementing this Initiative will include:**

- 1) Identify the top clean energy jobs / positions to focus on during phase 1 of this initiative.
- 2) Establish a baseline assessment of those key positions and opportunities in Oregon.
- 3) Develop programs to increase the number of trained workers in those key positions.  
Options may include:
  - a. Imbed clean energy components into existing, conventional manufacturing programs.
  - b. Build capacity of registered apprenticeship programs within the manufacturing sector.
  - c. Establish replicable pilot projects:
    - i. Pre-college bridge course for low-skilled adults.
    - ii. Industry internships and mentoring programs
    - iii. Programs to train low-income and challenged populations for clean tech jobs
- 4) Identify career ladders for key sectors (solar, green building, biofuels, biomass)
- 5) Establish green jobs certificate of readiness

### **Purpose of this Concept**

The purpose of the Oregon Green Jobs Initiative is to create a strong workforce for Oregon's clean tech industries, through measures that promote creation of family wage jobs, career advancement opportunities and avenues for low-income and challenged populations to gain employment.

This initiative is timely because clean tech industries are growing in Oregon, and across the nation, despite the overall economic recession. Projections suggest clean tech industries will continue to experience rapid growth over the next several decades. However, these industries are already facing workforce shortages. Recent studies show that Oregon currently has an acute shortage of wind technicians, solar manufacturing workers and energy engineers. At this time there is no coordinated effort to address the workforce needs of the clean tech sectors.

Simultaneously, many traditional industries are seeing downturns in employment either due to the current recession and/or trends in Oregon's overall economy. These job losses are most acute in rural communities with a history of natural resource based industry such as farming, fishing and forestry. Fortunately, many of the clean energy resources are based near these rural communities and offer solid career transition opportunities.

Finally, there is great interest in the clean tech sector on the part of younger people who are preparing to enter the workforce. It is possible that developing solid training programs for clean tech manufacturing, engineering and trades positions will result in greater participation in other trade, engineering and manufacturing sectors.

### **Policy Implications**

This concept fits in with the Governor's Vision for Oregon's Work Force. It also serves to inform the reorganization work of the OECDD and the funding and curricula for Oregon's community colleges and universities.

### **Partners or Other Agencies Affected:**

ODOE, Diana Enright  
OECDD, Amanda Lothian  
Community College and Workforce Development, Cam Preus  
OUS  
Governor's Office on Education and Work Force Development

### **Potential Support:**

Renewable Energy Working Group  
Energy Efficiency Working Group  
AFL-CIO  
IBEW  
3Estrategies / Business Alliance for Sustainable Energy  
NEBC  
Oregon Apollo

### **Known Opposition:**

None

### **Fiscal Impact Estimate:**

To be determined