

CUB Is Changing Oregon's Energy and Environmental Future

By Pamela White on January 06, 2016 in [Climate and Conservation](#) [Legislative & Political](#) [Utility Regulation](#) (3) [Comments](#)

Update - 11:00am, 1/7/2016:

A two-page document has been made available summarizing the following information. [Read it here.](#)

Recently, leaders from around the world met in Paris to address the challenges of climate change. Meanwhile, back here in Oregon an equally important summit has been happening. In fact, CUB staff have been working diligently with a diverse group of utility, energy, and environmental stakeholders* to craft legislation that will transition Oregon away from coal-fire generated energy, increase Oregon's renewables, and affirm Oregon's commitment to energy efficiency. We've done all this while also making sure to protect ratepayers from arbitrary costs and unaffordable rate increases.

Often, when stakeholders like investor-owned utilities and environmental groups come together, there is nothing but posturing and stalemate. Fortunately, because CUB has years of experience finding workable solutions for utility ratepayers, we were able to guide conversations and facilitate agreements. Believe it or not, the utilities and the environmentalists have agreed on legislation that everyone can support and that will avoid an expensive and time consuming ballot measure battle.

Given the delicate nature of this agreement, we are appreciative of the genuine effort that each group of stakeholders brings to the table. Their commitment to finding common ground to attain joint purposes, rather than creating winners and losers, is commendable. CUB is now leading this strong coalition in conversations with policy makers and we hope that this legislation will become law before the end of Oregon's 2016 short session. Stay tuned for exciting updates!

Here are some of the highlights of this agreement:

- The agreement ends Oregon's use of investor-owned coal-fired generation with all but one plant being phased out by 2030 and the remaining plant by 2035 at the latest.
- It builds on Oregon's 2007 Renewable Energy Standard (RES) – which says that large utilities must generate 25% of their energy through renewables by 2025 – by extending a sustained, orderly development of new, renewable resources with predictable stair-steps to attain a 50% RES by 2040 for PGE and Pacific Power, the utilities most affected by a transition away from coal.
- The agreement offers certainty, both in terms of how PGE and Pacific Power handle their coal plants and how those coal plants will be replaced. With this agreement, we know that coal will be largely replaced with energy efficiency (which is acknowledged as the priority) and renewable energy.
- Like the original RES, consumers are protected in a number of ways to ensure that costs associated with these changes are kept under control.
- The agreement enacts a Community Solar program to allow residential and small commercial customers of investor-owned utilities to participate in the ownership of solar projects and receive the benefits as if they had solar on their own roof.
- It puts into state policy the importance of transitioning transportation vehicles to electricity, laying out requirements for the building of both public and private infrastructure to sustain this change.

- Several other important rules are included that define how the new renewable resources are treated by regulators.

*Stakeholders in addition to CUB include: Climate Solutions, NW Energy Coalition, Oregon Environmental Council, Oregon League of Conservation Voters, Natural Resources Defense Council, Pacific Power, Portland General Electric, Renewable Northwest, and Sierra Club.

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