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Economic Development

NEWS RELEASE

April 29, 2013

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Legislation gives communities more influence in wave energy projects

SB 606A ensures that wave energy projects remain accountable to local communities

SALEM—Today the Oregon Senate advanced a proposal that will provide accountability measures for Oregon Coast communities over wave energy projects. SB 606A, which passed on a unanimous vote, requires owners and operators of wave energy facilities to provide assurances for the costs and potential removal of wave energy devices located in Oregon's Territorial Sea, giving counties and local governments more authority.

"We need to have a clear process for local governments, the state, and wave energy companies to build and maintain this new infrastructure along the coast," said Senator Arnie Roblan (D-Coos Bay), chief sponsor of SB 606A. "Wave energy technology has the potential to provide new opportunities and good-paying jobs to the coast, but it is critically important that we have a standard process to deal with contingencies."

Senate Bill 606A adopts requirements outlined in the Oregon Territorial Sea Plan, including a decision-making process concerning the development of renewable energy facilities zero to three nautical miles from shore. SB 606A requires wave energy facility owners to provide decommissioning and finance plans, which help ensure new facilities remain accountable to their local communities. These provisions ensure that ocean energy will be developed and decommissioned responsibly, while avoiding unnecessary burdens and costs for local governments.

"Creating sideboards around wave energy development will ultimately make it easier for communities to bring this renewable resource to their area," said Roblan. "New technology can mean new economic opportunity for coastal Oregonians, but only if we safeguard that opportunity with a process that makes it sustainable for our communities in the long-term. This bill holds energy producers accountable for what they do along our coast."

Provisions in the bill also direct the Oregon Department of Energy to study electricity transmission from wave energy facilities and devices in order to efficiently provide power to adjacent communities.

"I appreciate the Senator's hard work and dedication to making this bill a collaborative effort that involved stakeholders from the coast," said Lincoln County Commissioner Terry Thompson in response to passage of SB 606A.

"This is an excellent bill that is the result of hard work between all of the stakeholders," said Jason Busch, executive director of Oregon Wave Energy Trust.

SB 606A will now go to the Oregon House of Representatives for consideration.

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