

## POWER OF COMMUNITY UPDATE

THANK YOU! THANK YOU! THANK YOU!

Many thanks to those Power of Community (POC) members who participated in our most recent action alert about Senate Bill (SB) 838, the Renewable Portfolio Standard. We recorded 317 emails from POC members to legislators in Salem. Thanks to your efforts, the Governor's office has agreed to exempt all electric cooperatives (co-ops) from this bill. A lot could happen between now and the end of session, and we will be in touch if things should change. In the meantime, please know how much we appreciated your support on this important issue!

Sandy Flicker, Executive Director and chief lobbyist of the Oregon Rural Electric Cooperative Association (ORECA), spent the first week of May in Washington, DC. More than a dozen electric co-op leaders joined her for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's annual legislative conference.

Top agenda items for discussion with members of Congress included the proposal by the Bush Administration to use excess revenue from the Bonneville Power Administration to reduce debt; provide adequate funding for Rural Utilities Service (an important federal agency for co-ops); federal legislation on climate change; and, reauthorization of the Clean Renewable Energy Bonds to encourage the development of new energy sources. Keep reading to learn about other bills of interest at the state level ORECA currently is following.



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# WHAT'S HAPPENING AT THE STATE CAPITOL?

The Oregon State Legislature is just two months from its scheduled adjournment date of June 30<sup>th</sup>. Without exception, co-op legislators have been working hard to protect our interests. ORECA wants to send a collective thank you to these hard working men and women who represent you in Salem.

## Metals Theft

**House Bill (HB) 3026** continues to be a priority bill for ORECA. The goal of the bill is to deter thieves from stealing metals from utility distribution systems and work yards, which is usually then sold to scrap dealers for drug money. The bill soared out of its committee of origin late last month, and passed with a vote of 55-0 on the floor of the State House early in May. As there is no known opposition to the bill, ORECA anticipates it easily passing Senate before session ends. Kudos to State Representative Andy Olson (R-Albany) for his heavy lifting on this important piece of legislation.

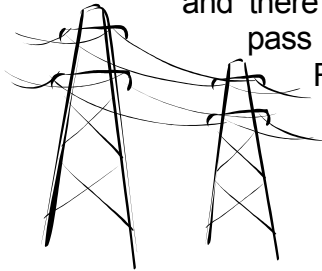
## Dead for Session

**HB 3080** required electric co-ops to collect a mandatory low-income billing assistance tax of 30 cents per meter per month. ORECA opposed this bill because it would have put co-ops in the roll of tax collector for the state.

**HB 2062** mandated helmet usage for all terrain vehicles (ATV). ORECA opposed this bill applying to electric utilities because co-op employees already wear OSHA approved hard hats.

## AC Intertie Update

**HB 2793** would exempt co-ops both in-state and out-of-state from paying an intangible tax on the 3<sup>rd</sup> AC intertie transmission line through Oregon, just like Washington utilities. This is an ORECA requested bill, and there is strong support to pass it out of the House Revenue Committee and move it to the House Floor for a vote.



## Climate Change

Four bills to reduce green house gas (GHG) emissions have been introduced this session. The only one that looks like it will pass is **HB 3543**, which would set state goals for reductions in GHG and establish the Oregon Global Warming Commission, among other things. Oregon has the third lowest emissions in the country because of its hydro system. ORECA is concerned that these bills will unfairly tax Oregon electricity consumers to solve an issue that is a bigger problem in other states.

## More Thank You's

Many thanks to those rural electric leaders from your co-op, who took time to attend the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's annual legislative conference in Washington, DC this month.

Representing your electric co-op was:

Columbia Basin Electric Cooperative  
*Lori Anderson, President*

Douglas Electric Cooperative  
*Shirley Cairns, Director*

Lane Electric Cooperative  
*Rick Crinklaw, Manager*  
*Jeri Nelson, President*  
*Chris Seubert, Director*

Midstate Electric Cooperative  
*Diana Cox, Director*

Oregon Trail Electric Cooperative  
*Ralph Ward, Director*

Salem Electric Cooperative  
*Paul Ennor, President*

West Oregon Electric Cooperative  
*Robert VanNatta, President*

Umatilla Electric Cooperative  
*Bryan Wolfe, Director*  
*Bob Macpherson, Director*