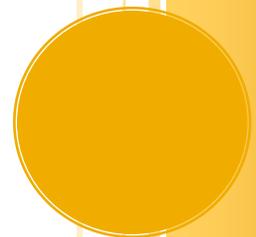


# OREGON ENERGY JUSTICE SNAPSHOT



National Association for the Advancement of Colored People,  
Environmental and Climate Justice Program

5/1/2017



# OREGON ENERGY JUSTICE SNAPSHOT

## SUMMARY

Access to clean energy is not just an environmental issue, but also a civil right. Communities of color bear a disproportionate share of the burdens of a fossil fuel based energy economy. This is why the NAACP Environmental and Climate Justice Program stands for just energy policies that will help protect our communities from harmful energy production processes and provide equitable access to the clean energy economy.

This Snapshot profiles Oregon's energy portfolio, evaluates key state energy policies, documents state utility disconnection policies, and outlines opportunities in the clean energy economy. Information is provided that will inform NAACP members on potential avenues for engagement and future action steps towards a clean, just energy future.

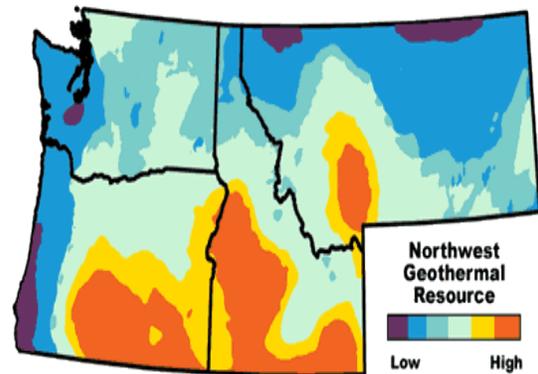


Figure 1: <http://www.rmp.org/node/geothermal-energy-technology>



## STATE ENERGY PROFILE

Oregon is a leader in the renewable energy sector. A majority of the state's energy is sourced from renewable energy sources, though the state still has work to do in advancing ambitious state clean energy policies, diversifying sources of renewable energy, and ensuring that the energy system upon which we all depend is just and equitable. This section outlines Oregon's current energy portfolio, highlighting key state energy policies and potential clean energy infrastructure and policy solutions.

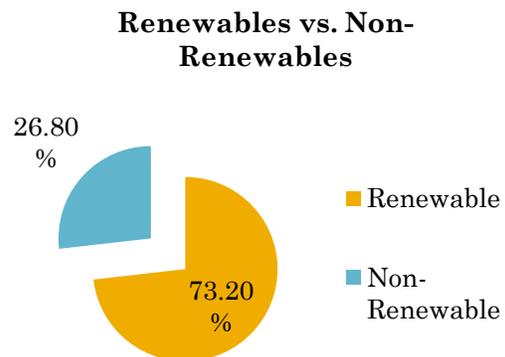
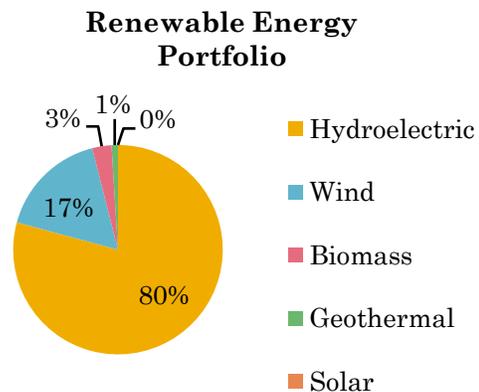
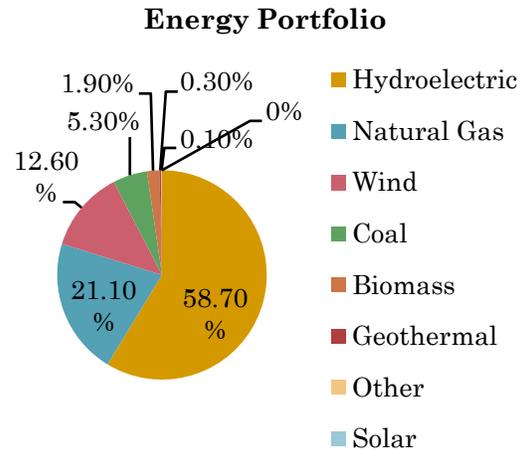
## Energy Portfolio

Oregon is a national leader in terms of renewable electricity, with more than half of the state's net electricity generated from renewable sources. Non-hydroelectric energy accounts for a smaller, but not insignificant, portion of the state energy portfolio. In fact, Oregon has diversified renewable energy sources in recent years. **From 2007 through 2015, electricity generated from non-hydroelectric renewables increased about fourfold.**

The Columbia River Gorge area and Eastern Oregon hills, where some wind farms already exist, has **high wind potential**. Additionally, **Oregon is ranked third in the nation for geothermal potential**. Despite high potential, Oregon currently generates very small amounts of electricity from geothermal sources. A larger chunk of the state's non-fossil fuel energy is generated from biomass, primarily wood and wood waste but also several small landfill gas facilities.

The NAACP recommends pursuing solar, wind, geothermal, and small-scale hydroelectric projects as primary renewable energy sources. **Therefore, energy justice advocates should push for the diversification of Washington's renewable energy portfolio.**

Despite significant renewable energy potential, Oregon still relies heavily on fossil fuel resources to meet energy needs. **Natural gas is the most heavily used fossil fuel resource in Oregon**. Coal trails behind, although the state's only coal-fired power plant is scheduled to stop burning coal by the end of 2020.<sup>i</sup>



Figures 2-4: <http://spotforcleanenergy.org/state/oregon/>

For more detailed information and data on Oregon's energy portfolio visit the U.S. Energy Information Administration's webpage,

<http://www.eia.gov/state/?sid=OR>

## State Energy Policies<sup>ii</sup>

Policy	NAACP Recommended Policy Standards	Oregon Policy Details
<b>Net Metering</b>	<p>Net Metering Standards require utility companies to provide retail credit for new renewable energy produced by a consumer.</p> <p><b>Capacity Limit Recommendation:</b> 2,000 kW (minimally), per system</p> <p><b>Mandatory/Voluntary:</b> Mandatory</p>	<p><b>Oregon has mandatory net metering standards.</b> System capacity limits are up to 2,000 kW for non-residential and 25 kW for residential Pacific Gas &amp; Electric (PGE), People’s Utility District (PUD), and PacifiCorp customers, as well as for municipal utilities and co-op, customers. Policymakers should set a straightforward policy that establishes system capacity limits of least up to 2,000 kW.</p>
<b>Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS)</b>	<p>A RPS requires electric utility companies and other retail electric providers to supply a specific minimum amount of customer load with electricity from eligible renewable energy sources.</p> <p><b>Recommended Standard:</b> Minimally 25% renewable by 2025</p> <p><b>Mandatory/Voluntary:</b> Mandatory</p> <p><b>Allowable Sources:</b> Wind, solar, geothermal, ocean/wave energy</p>	<p><b>Oregon has mandatory renewable portfolio standard of 50% by 2040.</b> Different RPS targets apply depending on a utility’s size: 25% by 2025 for large utilities; 10% by 2025 for small utilities; and 5% by 2025 for the smallest utilities.</p>
<b>Energy Efficiency Resource Standard (EERS)</b>	<p>A EERS establish a requirement for utility companies to meet annual and cumulative energy savings targets through a portfolio of energy efficiency program.</p> <p><b>Recommended Standard:</b> Minimally 2% annual reduction of each previous year’s retail electricity sales.</p> <p><b>Mandatory/Voluntary:</b> Mandatory</p>	<p>Oregon has a limited energy efficiency resource standard. <b>Oregon’s EERS draft set voluntary targets at 1.4% annual reduction for electricity through 2019.</b> Natural gas targets for 2015-2019 are 0.7% of forecasted sales.</p>
<b>Local Hire Provision</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extra renewable energy credit multipliers for in-state installation and in-state manufactured content</li> <li>• Renewable energy credits for utility providing incentives to build a plant in-state</li> <li>• Renewable energy credit for utility that makes an investment in a plant located in-state</li> <li>• Quota for government assisted construction project employers to hire a percentage of workers locally</li> <li>• Bidding Preferences for companies that hire a percentage of their employees in-state for state-funded public works projects and service contracts</li> </ul>	<p>Oregon has a limited Local Hire Provision. Clean Energy Works Oregon has a pilot High Roads Standards agreement, which created over 1,000 “high quality, family supporting” jobs in Portland and its surrounding communities, with nearly half of the hours worked by people of color. Nevertheless, the state should expand and institutionalize such programs, creating local jobs in the energy sector statewide.</p>
<b>Minority Business Enterprise</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide training opportunities</li> <li>• Notify MBEs of state business opportunities</li> <li>• Set-aside funds for MBEs</li> </ul>	<p>Business Oregon certifies MBEs, including women-owned businesses, for opportunities within the state. To improve its MBE model, however, Oregon must offer 1 training opportunities to spur MBE effectiveness, establish a proactive notification system beyond a directory of MBEs, and set aside funds to ensure that the state’s MBEs have dedicated access to a share of the state’s procurements.</p>

## Utility Disconnection Policies<sup>iii</sup>



Access to electricity is not a luxury; it can make the difference of life and death. Folks should not be forced to choose between paying for medications or their energy bill. Public officials have implemented some policies that protect consumers from the life-threatening practice of utility disconnection. However, energy justice advocates must continue to hold utility companies and regulators accountable to human rights and basic but life-saving protections.

### Action step:

Energy justice advocates must continue to hold utility companies and regulators accountable to human rights and basic but life-saving protections:

- Implement temperature and date-based protections
- Remove reconnection fees
- Expand protections for vulnerable populations

Know your rights! More details about disconnection policies are available through the Oregon Public Utility Commission: <http://www.puc.state.or.us/consumer/Consumer%20Rights%20and%20Responsibilities.pdf>

<b>Notice</b>	Written notice must be personally delivered or mailed 15 days before the scheduled disconnection. Second notice must be mailed or delivered five days before the scheduled disconnection. Personal notice must be attempted immediately before the disconnection, and if no personal contact is made, notice must be posted on the premises. If customer is remotely disconnected without personal contact on the day of the scheduled disconnections, the utility must call the customer at least twice a day for three consecutive days before proceeding with the disconnection. At least one call must be made between 8:00am-5:00pm and 6:00-8:00pm.
<b>Date Based Protection</b>	None
<b>Temp Based Protection</b>	None
<b>Payment Plan</b>	Yes; Customers at risk of disconnection may enter into a “time-payment agreement.” Customers under time-payment agreements must be given the choice between a levelized plan or an equal-pay plan. Under a levelized plan, the customer will pay 1/12 of the yearly bill and the arrearages every month for twelve months. Under an equal-pay time-payment agreement, the customer will pay 1/12 of the arrearages and the normal monthly bill.
<b>Reconnection Fee</b>	Yes. Reconnection fee and “after hours reconnection fee” for reconnection after utility business hours. May charge more for same-day, after hours reconnection.
<b>Disconnection Limitations</b>	Postponement of disconnection for up to six months for a certified illness, or up to twelve months for a certified chronic illness. Certifications may be renewed. Certified customers with arrearages are required to enter a payment plan.
<b>Other Protections</b>	When utility believes—based on phone or in person contact—that the customer does not understand the consequences of the scheduled disconnection, the disconnection is postponed for five business days, and the utility must notify both the Department of Human Services and the Commission.

## DEVELOPING THE BLACK-GREEN PIPELINE

African Americans are inadequately represented in the clean energy sector. It is the goal of the NAACP Black-Green Pipeline Initiative that African Americans will have increased representation across all sectors of the clean energy economy. The Black-Green Pipeline Initiative promotes the equitable inclusion of communities of color into the green economy in order to address unemployment in our communities and to increase the voices and influence of our communities in the green economy.

To subscribe to the Black-Green Pipeline Initiative Weekly Digest send a blank email to:  
naacp-bgp-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

### The Green Labor Market and Communities of Color

Renewable electricity is driving economic growth and creating jobs in communities across Oregon. In 2016 Oregon ranked fourth in the nation for clean energy job creation, according to [a study](#) conducted by *Environmental Entrepreneurs*. This study included jobs announced in the areas of energy efficiency, renewable energy, the smart grid, electric vehicles and alternative transportation.<sup>iv</sup>



### Unemployment

In 2015 the gap between the U.S. unemployment rate and the rate for African Americans was 4.3 percentage points. In Oregon the unemployment rate for African Americans was 1.8 points higher than the overall state unemployment rate.

**2015 National Unemployment Rate: 5.3%**

**2015 Oregon Unemployment Rate: 5.6%**

**2015 National African American Unemployment Rate: 9.6%**

**2015 Oregon African American Unemployment Rate: 7.4%**



Although Oregon has a relatively low concentration of [energy employment](#) (with 1.5% of total state employment compared for 2.4% national employment average), the clean energy economy demonstrates considerable growth.<sup>vi</sup> According to a recently published [report](#) authored by *Environmental Entrepreneurs*, the job growth rate for clean economy jobs in Oregon is more than twice that of other jobs sectors.<sup>vii</sup>

**Action step:** Host a *Bridge the Gap: Connecting Black Communities to the Green Economy* Program to establish working groups with existing organizations to increase African American engagement with local green economy. More details are listed on the following page.

## TAKE ACTION

A state already in the lead in terms of clean energy, Oregon NAACP can be a leader in ensuring that state energy policies are just and equitable. Remember: a transition to reliance on clean energy is inevitable, but justice is not! The Oregon NAACP must ensure that the communities it represents not only have a seat at the table, but also are positioned as leaders in the energy policies and practices that affect our communities. Below are action steps branches can take:

### Host a Bridging the Gap: Connecting Black Communities to the Green Economy Roundtable

- The NAACP ECJ Program is committed to advancing a meaningful dialogue and concerted action on engagement of communities of color in the green economy.
- To start taking action, organize a multi-stakeholder roundtable with socially responsible energy business leaders, historically black colleges and universities, environmental groups, civil rights organizations, labor unions, and others to discuss developing and implementing a strategy to ensure that policies/laws/regulation, research initiatives, community level practices, corporate social responsibility measures, etc. are in place to ensure greater engagement of communities of color in the green economy.

### Implement a demonstration project such as a community solar garden or rooftop solar project

- Interested in taking a direct role in implementing clean energy practices in your community? Install rooftop solar or community solar.
- There are several rebates and incentives available to Oregonians interested in pursuing renewable energy projects. Visit [energy.gov](http://energy.gov) for a list of renewable energy incentive program available on the state and federal levels.
- You can also check out funding opportunities offered through the Department of Energy SunShot Initiative, which aims to support solar energy adoption by making solar energy accessible to all Americans.

### Launch a Just Energy Policies Campaign

- Identify one or more of the focal policies outlined in this snapshot and documented more extensively in the Just Energy Policies to champion.
- Build a coalition with likeminded energy justice advocates and other local and state allies to build power and momentum.
- Host a town-hall to educate the community about the policy and get input from members on their needs, priorities, and perspectives.
- Launch an intentional campaign to advocate that Oregon adopts the recommended policy standard.
- Set up lobby trainings and coordinate a lobby-day with elected officials.

### Make public the NAACP energy justice platform and engage the public through media

- Develop and place an op-ed by NAACP Unit President or ECJ Chair in a local newspaper
- Participate in a radio interview, TV interview, podcast
- Be quoted in a local newspaper
- Post an article or blog to an online platform

**Climate Justice Alliance:** A coalition of organizations united for a just transition to a clean energy economy.

**OPAL:** Founded in 2006 by and for people of color and low-income communities, OPAL is a grassroots organization that organizes to advance environmental justice.

**Oregon Environmental Council:** Oregon Environmental Council advances innovative, collaborative and equitable solutions to Oregon's environmental challenges for today and future generations.

**350 PDX:** Portland chapter of 350.org. Working to build a diverse grassroots movement to address the causes of climate disruption through justice-based solutions by inspiring, training, and mobilizing people to act.

**APANO:** A statewide, grassroots organization, uniting Asians and Pacific Islanders to achieve social justice.

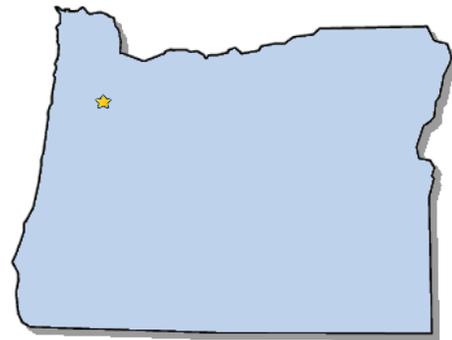
**Just Transition Alliance:** Oregon's Just Transition Alliance is a group of people of color grassroots organizers leading the cause for climate justice.

***Need additional support, resources, or other assistance?***

Contact: [ecjp@naacpnet.org](mailto:ecjp@naacpnet.org)

## CLOSING

Today there is unprecedented urgency for climate action and a just transition to clean renewable energy. Washington State is a national leader in clean energy. In order to achieve energy justice, though, state energy policies and practices must not only be clean, but also equitable. Justice must be centered in our energy transition.



Embracing a transition to clean, renewable energy sources will not only will not only provide significant environmental and health benefits for Oregonians, but it will also diversify and strengthen the state's renewable energy economy. NAACP just energy leaders should advocate on behalf of a strong Renewable Portfolio Standard, Energy Efficiency Resource Standard, and Net Metering standards as well as economic empowerment provisions such as local hire policies and minority business programs. As a key and important voice in energy policy arena, NAACP leaders can play a key role in advancing strong net metering policies that will bring environmental and economic benefits to Oregon.



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### Created by the NAACP Environmental and Climate Justice Program

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<sup>i</sup> "Oregon State Profile and Energy Estimates," *United State Energy Information Administration*, last modified on 17 November 2016, <https://www.eia.gov/state/analysis.php?sid=OR>.

<sup>ii</sup> "Programs," *DSIRE*, accessed 11 July 2017, <http://programs.dsireusa.org/system/program?fromSir=0&state=OR>.

<sup>iii</sup> Jacqueline Patterson, Marcus Franklin, Caroline Kurtz, Mike Alksnis, Lorah Steichen, Chiquita Younger, "Lights Out In the Cold: Reforming Shut-Off Policies as if Human Rights Matter," *NAACP Environmental and Climate Justice Program*, March 2017, [http://www.naacp.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Lights-Out-in-the-Cold\\_NAACP-ECJP-4.pdf](http://www.naacp.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Lights-Out-in-the-Cold_NAACP-ECJP-4.pdf).

<sup>iv</sup> "Oregon: Changing Climate, Economic Impacts, & Policies for our Future," *Environmental Entrepreneurs*, June 2016, [https://www.e2.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Oregon\\_Business\\_Climate\\_Report.pdf](https://www.e2.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Oregon_Business_Climate_Report.pdf).

<sup>v</sup> "Unemployment rates for African Americans by state in 2015," *Bureau of Labor Statistics*, last modified 4 March 2016, <https://www.bls.gov/opub/ted/2016/unemployment-rates-for-african-americans-by-state-in-2015.htm>.

<sup>vi</sup> "2017 US Energy and Jobs Report State Charts," *United States Department of Energy*, accessed 11 July 2017, [https://energy.gov/sites/prod/files/2017/01/f34/2017%20US%20Energy%20and%20Jobs%20Report%20State%20Charts%20\\_0.pdf](https://energy.gov/sites/prod/files/2017/01/f34/2017%20US%20Energy%20and%20Jobs%20Report%20State%20Charts%20_0.pdf).

<sup>vii</sup> "Oregon: Changing Climate, Economic Impacts, & Policies for our Future," *Environmental Entrepreneurs*, June 2016, [https://www.e2.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Oregon\\_Business\\_Climate\\_Report.pdf](https://www.e2.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Oregon_Business_Climate_Report.pdf).