Subject: FW: Merkley, Wyden Announce Nearly $2.5 Million in Recovery Act Funds to Strengthen Development of Renewable Energy Technology in Oregon

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Merkley, Wyden Announce Nearly $2.5 Million in Recovery Act Funds to Strengthen Development of Renewable Energy Technology in Oregon

Washington D.C. – U.S. Senators Jeff Merkley and Ron Wyden announced Thursday that the U.S. Department of Energy has awarded the Oregon Institute of Technology (OIT) nearly $2.5 million in Recovery Act funds to strengthen the Bachelor of Science of Renewable Energy Engineering program, create a Master’s degree program, and hire additional staff in Klamath Falls and the Portland Metro area.

“The work being done at the Oregon Institute of Technology has helped put our state on the map as the hub of renewable energy development,” Merkley said. “By training to become the next generation of clean energy engineers, the students of OIT are leading the way in the next big job growth industry.”

“For Oregon to compete in the next generation of energy technology, it has to train a highly technical workforce that is ready for the jobs the new technologies will bring,” Wyden said. “This funding will help OIT in Klamath Falls build on its already strong engineering program – training Oregonians to compete for jobs building and operating the new energy systems that will power Oregon and the nation.”

The Recovery Act funds will go towards supporting and enhancing OIT’s Bachelor of Science of Renewable Energy Engineering program. The Renewable Energy Engineering program was created in 2005 and was the first of its kind in the nation to offer degrees in the development of renewable energy to budding engineers. OIT is a cutting-edge institution that also provides bachelor degree programs in electrical and mechanical engineering, information technology, and manufacturing.

Nearly $100 million in Recovery Act funds were awarded by the Department of Energy to programs across the country dedicated to training workers in the development of Smart Grid technologies and electric power. The programs will train approximately 30,000 Americans at community colleges, universities, utilities, and manufacturers.

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act invests billions in upgrading our nation’s transportation infrastructure, promoting the development and production of clean energy, and repairing public buildings to immediately create or save jobs. The legislation cuts taxes for 95 percent of workers and their families, including tax credits of $400 per worker or $800 per family. Finally, a third component of the bill provides vital funding for states to prevent state layoffs and ensure the continuation of important health, education and housing services.

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