Briefing Paper
Legislation Update

March 30, 2011

Summary

The paper brings you developments in the 2011 legislature since our last report.

Background

- The legislative session began in January and is expected to adjourn in June.
- We last reported on legislation at the February 9 strategic utility roundtable.
- Pursuant to our grant agreement with the OPUC, Energy Trust does not take positions on legislation or engage in political issues. We do provide information to legislators on request, in coordination with the OPUC.

Discussion

Two bills affecting the public-purpose charge have been introduced since the last time we reported:

- SB 673, introduced by Senator Beyer, would allow utilities to collect public purpose charges from large users (over 1 aMW).
- HB 3587 would sunset the 3% public purpose charge in October of this year. This bill is sponsored by Representative Witt, Senator Johnson; Representative Krieger, Senators Telfer, Verger and Whitsett at the request of John Charles, Cascade Policy Institute.

Other developments:

- SB 57 would authorize the Oregon Business Development Commission to use revenue bonds to finance economic electric energy projects, primarily on-site renewable projects. The Senate Committee on Business, Transportation, and Economic Development unanimously recommended passage (Feb. 22).
- HB 3582 would extend the sunset date for the business energy tax credit to 2022. The bill is sponsored by Rep. Schaufler, and has been referred to the committee process dealing with tax credits. SB 688 would extend RETC to 2018.
- HB 3535, introduced by Representatives Witt and Holvey, would: require an energy-performance rating system and disclosure at time of sale; abate taxes for high-performance buildings; require utilities to prioritize efficiency in planning; and provide innovative financing for energy conservation in schools.