



Senator Larry George

Oregon State Capitol
900 Court Street NE, S-307
Salem, Oregon 97301

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 22, 2009

CONTACT: Michael Gay
503.986.1955
503.781.8559

Potential conflicts of interests plague Energy Trust of Oregon board and council members

Salem, OR – According to public records, at least thirteen Energy Trust of Oregon board and council members work for companies and organizations that receive incentive and consultant payments from the trust. The Energy Trust of Oregon is also exempt from ethics and reporting requirements required of other public officials. Every two years the board and employees of the Energy Trust of Oregon are responsible for spending a fund that has exploded in size by 480% to over \$150 million of public money.

“How can some of the biggest beneficiaries of the Energy Trust of Oregon serve as watchdogs for ratepayer dollars?” said George. “It is a very bad appearance. There is too little transparency and oversight at the Energy Trust of Oregon. They are a publicly funded corporate-give-away machine, with a blank checkbook.”

Examples of potential conflicts of interest include:

Margie Harris, the Energy Trust of Oregon Executive Director, and Stan Price, an Energy Trust of Oregon council member, are on the board of directors and council for the Northwest Energy Efficiency Alliance. The NEEA, an energy efficiency consulting organization, has received \$19.5 million in consulting fees from the ETO.

Thor Hinckley is an ETO council member and works for PGE, which has received more than \$6.5 million from the ETO.

Alan Meyer is a board member for both the ETO and Weyerhaeuser, which has received more than \$1.2 million in incentives from the ETO.

Since 2001, the Energy Trust of Oregon has grown from an original budget of \$30 million to \$146 million today, a 480% increase. The Energy Trust of Oregon has paid over \$250 million to large corporations and expensive consultants, while Oregon schools have fallen further and further behind on school building energy conservation and alternative energy options.

Two bills have been introduced this session to refocus and bring accountability to the Public Purpose Charge. Senate Bill 476 would redirect \$100 million away from the corporate subsidies and out-of-state consultants at the Energy Trust of Oregon to pay for energy upgrades, renewable energy and conservation efforts for schools and local governments. SB 597 would subject the Energy Trust of Oregon and its employees and board members to the same ethics and reporting requirements required of other public officials.

###