

## STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN WYDEN

### HEARING ON S. 1273

#### THE "FAIR ACT"

I am pleased to welcome everyone to the Committee's hearing on S. 1273, the "FAIR Act," legislation authored two very valuable members of this committee and personal friends, Senator Murkowski and Senator Landrieu. Their bill would provide for the sharing of revenues generated by energy development on the Federal Outer Continental Shelf with coastal states and counties that are located close to that development.

Virtually everywhere in America where there are Federal lands and Federal waters there are practical community leaders working together to find ways for their citizens to have good-paying jobs while they enjoy and preserve their scenic treasures. For example, in visiting Louisiana and Alaska to meet with the constituents of Senator Landrieu and Senator Murkowski, I came away convinced that but for the wonderful Cajun accents of Senator Landrieu's constituents, the meeting resembled those we have in Southern Oregon where timber industry leaders seek a sustainable harvest on Federal lands and environmentalists work constructively to preserve old growth. Of course, it takes revenue to pay for the roads, parks and schools that spark private investment and job-creation in their communities -- and of course, additional revenue is needed for programs that conserve treasured land and waters.

Bumping up against these good causes is a constrained -- actually make that sequestered -- federal budget. So there are taxpayer issues as well as economic development and environmental protection issues. For example, the Secure Rural Schools program that is so critical for timber-dependent communities in Oregon and 39 other states expired last year. Finding funding offsets for existing programs like Secure Rural Schools and the Payment in Lieu of Taxes program has been difficult, let alone finding funding for new and unifying policies that help all communities with federal lands and federal waters. Senator Landrieu and Senator Murkowski have asked for this hearing on a matter with longstanding interest for them. I'm anxious to learn more about the substance of the bill, and the economic and environmental benefits, how it would be financed, and to start a discussion on expanding support for the communities that provide resources that in many particulars enrich our whole country.

Finally, I am pleased to see that the bill would provide incentives for local governments and states to facilitate the development of renewable energy. Providing for the sharing of renewable energy receipts makes sense in my view. Of course, I have long been a strong advocate of renewable energy, which must, and will, play an increasing role in our energy mix.

We welcome and thank our witnesses.