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An Address by Governor Victor Atiyeh  
To The Oregon Alternate Energy Development Commission  
October 26, 1979

In two speeches earlier this year -- my inaugural address and a special message to a joint session of the Oregon House and Senate, I stressed two points: citizen volunteers and the untapped potential in Oregon's renewable energy resources.

At first blush, there seems to be little direct relationship between the two.

But there is.

And the key word is "potential".

In January, I said I wanted to revitalize the spirit of voluntarism in Oregon...to rekindle the idea that we each owe a portion of our skills and our time to the common good.

In March, I asked the Legislature to approve landmark proposals for renewable energy resource development in Oregon. That package was approved virtually intact.

I also asked for authority to appoint the state's first Alternate Energy Development Commission. I received that authority.

And I contacted leaders in business and industry, labor and environmental groups, agriculture, education and local government, asking for volunteers.

The Commission and its task forces comprise about 80 members.

More than 400 Oregonians volunteered to serve!

I cannot think of more persuasive endorsements for active citizen involvement in important public affairs...and for my own sense of urgency about the need to push ahead with a bold plan for renewable energy resource programs in Oregon.

Not only has the response been stunning in terms of numbers, but also in quality.

The men and women I have appointed to the Commission and those named to the task forces by the Director of the Department of Energy are -- quite literally -- the best persons available at any price.

The challenge before Chairman John Gray and his colleagues has never been squarely addressed before in Oregon. It is an absolutely essential task and very likely the most important work to be undertaken by state government in this decade.

The Commission is to develop a comprehensive set of recommendations, both short and long range, to give Oregonians a diverse array of permanently sustainable energy resources:

- Energy from the sun...
- From the Earth's natural heat...
- From the wind...
- From wood waste and agricultural residues...
- From small-scale hydroelectric projects, and
- Energy from alcohol fuels.

I want -- and I expect -- a no-nonsense action plan to get us past the point of talking about energy self-reliance and doing something about it.

I want to know how much energy we realistically can expect from solar, wind, geothermal and the others.

I want to know when and how we can get it.

And, I want the Commission's report in eleven months.

John Gray says I'll get it. And I believe him.

My friends, it's my personal view -- and I sincerely believe you share it with me -- that the manner in which we choose to address critical energy questions today is by far the most crucial challenge of our times.

No other issue will so severely test the quality of our leadership...our imaginations...our technical skills... our will and our perserverance.

We can prevail. We must.

Because failure is not just unacceptable.

It is unthinkable.

Thank you.