

Reagan mulls repeal of energy tax credits

By KATHERINE MERRILL
Of the Emerald

Suggestions by Pres. Ronald Reagan to unplug alternative energy tax credits are disturbing two Oregon congressmen and several state energy officials.

One of them is Sen. Bob Packwood, R-Ore. Last year, Packwood worked on the tax credit portion of the Windfall Profits Tax Bill, enacted under the Carter administration.

Under that bill, residential users of wind, solar or geothermal equipment receive a 40-percent tax credit, and businesses get a 25-percent savings.

"We are not a hundred percent sure the administration

Packwood is not sure what Reagan is planning Weaver 'strongly opposed' to repeal of tax credits

means to repeal the tax credits enacted last year," Packwood says, "but President Reagan did refer to a repeal of energy tax credits during a televised address."

Etta Fielek, an aide to Packwood, says the finance committee may hold hearings on the issue but "the concept would originate in the White House."

Pres. Reagan is considering repealing the tax credits to make up for a shortage in revenue, Fielek says. "It's a way of collecting more taxes."

Packwood pushed for the tax

credits to reduce the United States' dependency on foreign oil, she says. "They serve as an incentive for people to explore alternative energy."

Rep. Jim Weaver, D-Ore, also is "strongly opposed to the repeals," according to one of Weaver's press aides, David Jory.

Weaver doesn't want government funds going to support nuclear power, synthetic fuels, or to the military to make up the shortfall, Jory says. Instead, Weaver would like to see that money go toward alternative energy, Jory says.

Pres. Reagan's proposal aims at across-the-board cuts to alternative energy, especially residential weatherization and energy efficiency projects, he says.

Allen Brown, of the Solar Energy Center in Eugene, says the federal tax credit repeal would have a "devastating effect" on people installing solar systems. But in the long run the high cost of imported oil and other synthetic fuels might drive people back to solar energy, he adds.

Brown is concerned that state

credits also may be repealed, but John Kauffman of the Oregon Department of Energy says state repeals probably won't happen because the last legislature upheld the credits.

"I would say they're safe," Kauffman says. "They've been a significant stimulus to residential users of solar energy."

While the federal credits apply only to active systems (those that use pumps), passive systems are less expensive, he adds. The repeal of the credits would encourage the installation of passive equipment.

According to Kauffman, tax credits have aided the expansion of alternative energy in Oregon.

Emergency loan limit rises

By BRIAN BUBAK
Of the Emerald

University students can now secure short-term loans — commonly known as emergency loans — for up to \$250, a \$100 increase from last year's limit.

However, the maximum number of loans a student may take has been limited to two per year, said Edmond Vignoul, University financial aid director. This ceiling was established partially because financial aid expects an increase in the total number of loans students will request this

year, he explained.

More than 9,000 loans totaling over \$1.6 million were granted last year, according to Larry Tergesen, administrative loan officer. And with the economic outlook, the possibility of exhausting the loan fund is becoming an increasing threat, he stressed.

"There is the potential to run out of money" for a short period of time this year, Tergesen said. But loans are repaid regularly and the resulting cash flow can supply the \$910,000 fund — which is funded through private donations — with enough money to keep the program alive, he said.

Money is still available and the process is still "very, very simple," Vignoul said. Students merely fill out the one-page short-term loan application at the financial aid office and pick up their money at the cashiers window in Oregon Hall the next day.

No interviews. No questions. No credit checks — except to verify a student isn't behind on any payments to the University.

Terms of the loan, Vignoul says, are also simple: \$250 maximum loan, 90-day maximum loan period, and the applicant must be at least a half-time student who has paid tuition and fees.

Emergency loans are not designed to solve long term problems, but to take care of student's immediate cash flow needs, Vignoul says. Students use the loans for a variety of reasons — many of which are quite serious — but the purpose of the loan is not a qualification for getting it, he explains. The use of the loan is "up to the student ... they can use it for what ever they choose."

"It's unique that a state school has such a large loan fund," Tergesen said, adding that other state institutions do not have nearly as active a program.

Studies Center opens doors

The Environmental Studies Center is planning an open house for Thursday, from 1 to 5 p.m. in Condon 104.

By hosting the open house, Manager Jan Marshall says the center is trying to familiarize students with its services.

The studies center has been on campus for five years "and we want to let the students know that we are here," Marshall says. The center functions as a library and resource center for students, faculty and community members. It maintains a collection of books, resource papers and environmental impact statements in what the staff calls "a congenial atmosphere."

"We get some students papers and a few articles that profs hold for reserve," says Marshall.

The center is open Monday through Friday from 8:30 am to 5 p.m.



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