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you know what they are, and you can do something about preventing them?

That's one of the big ideas we talked a lot about: reinvesting in the front end to save in the long run. These are taxpayer dollars and it's people's money and you want it to be put to good use. You can't go out and be a corporate machine here; you need to be thinking you are a representative of the people and trying to use their money wisely.

The other piece is just about getting Oregonians back to work. And my own commitment to coming back to Portland and seeing that in Oregon and Eugene and in southern Oregon and in rural Oregon in particular, we just need to get jobs back in the state and high-paying jobs. We have gaps in both the number of jobs and in the types of jobs. Those two pieces just seemed to be a great opportunity and good alignment with my own beliefs.

Can you talk a little about what some of the legislative priorities are for the governor's office, particularly in terms of the environment and energy policy?

The real focus has been and will be for the next six months, probably for the next two years, one, the

economy and getting people back to work, and two, restructuring some of these big, big programs.

It's not that natural resources aren't a priority and don't continue to be a sort of personal passion and interest for the governor and for myself, but the real focus in the next six months at least has got to be on the budget and crises we are facing in the state.

Where we do have energy and natural resource priorities in this session, they have a lot more to with job creation and essentially putting our force to use in a productive way. It's about energy efficiency in schools and some hope for regional biomass where you can put people to work in these rural communities.

The governor keeps saying 15 jobs in Coos Bay is like 500 jobs in Portland. There's really a discrepancy in the scale of these sort of issues. If you can go out to Burns and can put 10 or so people to work it's a major impact in that community so the biomass piece is really important.

Can you talk a little more about biomass? Is this primarily biomass burning?

So it's primarily trying to find sources for biomass, both agricultural and forest biomass, and using

it for regional power generation or cogeneration opportunities.

The attraction here is you deal with some of the grid constraints and the power generation constraints in these areas, but you also have a workforce intensive process to deliver to the woody biomass or the ag biomass to these smaller generators.

Thirdly, you're in an ecological loop with biomass that fortunately the EPA also just recognized is not the same as coal-fired generation or natural gas generation. It's actually a sustainable process if you do it right.

What the governor's really pushing for is in part a workforce strategy but in part a rural development strategy.

What we've been talking about primarily is thermogeneration, so burning, but obviously once you have infrastructure in place to manage biomass you can do lots of things with it. I'd say the fuels story is still in development after a big boom several years ago and the biofuels story is yet to be written.

In the shorter term we're looking at biomass for power generation just because of the state of play of our forests and the opportunity to a put people to work in our forests.

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