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## QuickPoint! – Portland’s 100% Renewable Energy Claim Is “Greenwashing”

By Allison Coleman

In 2001, the Portland City Council declared that by 2010, all electricity used by city agencies would come from renewable energy. However, by 2010, only 9 percent of Portland’s power was renewable.

Undeterred, in 2012 Portland leaders again declared that city agencies would achieve 100 percent renewable energy. This time around, the city managed to get up to 14 percent.

Today, Portland has magically declared victory, claiming that municipal electricity use is 100% renewable. However, this is a blatant case of greenwashing. Portland is currently generating only 9 percent of its electricity from city-owned biogas and solar facilities. Another 15 percent is claimed from “green power” sold by Portland General Electric.

The remaining 76 percent of city use comes from a conventional mix of coal, gas, nuclear, and hydro. Portland then pretends to offset this by purchasing so-called “Renewable Energy Certificates” (RECs).

Unfortunately for consumers, an individual REC is not a unit of electricity; it is simply is a certificate claiming to represent the “environmental amenities” associated with one megawatt-hour of electricity generated by sources such as wind and solar. You cannot charge your phone or cook dinner with a pile of RECs because they don’t actually exist.

Last year, Portland spent \$104,539 purchasing 74,671 RECs to create the image of 100 percent green power consumption. Every dollar spent buying those RECs was wasted money. Portland taxpayers should demand an end to this green power charade.

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*Allison Coleman is a Research Associate at Cascade Policy Institute, Oregon’s free market public policy research organization.*

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