

March 30, 2011

REACH Code Advisory Committee  
Testimony by Renee Loveland, Gerding Edlen

Dear Reach Code Advisory Committee:

Gerding Edlen is a devout proponent of energy efficiency and sustainability in the built environment. For the past 15 years, we have focused on developing urban, transit-oriented green buildings, many of which have included innovative energy systems such displacement ventilation, heat recovery, district cooling, co-generation and renewable energy systems. These projects also included an array of other green building attributes such as green roofs, abundant bicycle parking, on-site stormwater treatment, rainwater harvesting and reuse and operable windows. We have consistently used the LEED green building rating system to certify our buildings as a means to keep ourselves accountable and also to ensure we pursue *a comprehensive and balanced* approach in green building design and construction. Oregon has emerged as the national leader in green building movement due to the efforts of many firms like ours who have championed sustainability over the past decade.

Gerding Edlen supports the work of the BCD and the Reach Code Advisory Committee in developing an alternative energy code or "Reach Code" for Oregon. That said, I share the concern that others have expressed about the current version of the Reach Code. The result appears to be a strong energy code section with additional alternatives that go even beyond these initial requirements as well as provisions for other green building related components that are weaker than either what was included in the original IGCC document or what you would find in a third-party verified green building rating system such as LEED or Earth Advantage.

During my testimony last year, I emphasized to the committee the importance of a global perspective to green building and our desire to see Oregon's codes be modified to address higher standards and less cumbersome approval pathways for our projects that includes innovative and cutting-edge technologies. While this code is certainly welcome in many respects, my concern is that it may be misinterpreted in the design and construction community as one that fully addresses green building rather than one that fulfills its original mandate of providing a strong, alternative energy code. It is commendable that BCD and the Reach Code Advisory Committee are seeking to include other provisions that have tangible environmental benefits, but doing so as part of this effort creates the impression that the Reach Code is in fact a comprehensive green building code. This may unintentionally undermine the progress we've made over the past decade in the design community and general public's understanding about what it means to design and build a green building.

We need to consider the fact that Oregon, as the national leader in sustainable design and construction, may be doing itself a disservice by not addressing green building elements more strongly and more holistically within a separate effort, one where the appropriate mandate is given to BCD. We would support this effort and are hopeful with regard to HJR 31.

Thank you for your time and for all of your efforts in creating a strong alternative energy code pathway for Oregon.

**Gerding Edlen**

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