

From the Desk of
Jessica Vega Pederson



Don't roll back clean fuels program (OPINION)

sequential.JPG

A Sequential biodiesel processing plant under construction in Salem in 2008. (Rob Finch/Staff)

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By Tyson Kever

Recently, our business — SeSequential — announced that we are ramping up operations in anticipation of growing demand for cleaner burning fuel. We upgraded equipment and added operators to enable our plant to produce more biodiesel each month. We aren't the only clean technology business growing in Oregon. Fuel and electric vehicle technology producers from across the region joined me for our announcement; they are also poised to grow.

These developments come on the heels of Gov. Kate Brown's signing of SB324, which finally implements the Oregon clean-fuels program. What for The Oregonian/OregonLive editorial board was an "**albatross**" was for us a signal that it was time to make sure we're ready to handle increased production when the program takes off next year.

The Oregonian is reporting that the governor and legislators have signaled that they are willing to negotiate this landmark law — putting our progress in danger. This is not how to support business.

It's a refrain I'm sure we've all heard before, but it's true: Businesses need certainty to invest and grow. As Senate Minority Leader Ted Ferrioli, R-John Day, once said, "Certainty is invaluable to a business of any size, but especially to small businesses who are trying to plan for the future and grow strategically."

We need to know that when our government vets a concept for six years, is supported by over 150 different business, health and consumer interests, spends hours in hearings on a bill and takes a decisive vote to turn a good program into law — well, that's it. You stick by your word. You enforce the laws you pass. You let us — the entrepreneurs of Oregon — do business.

Our company collects recycled cooking oil from all over the region. Our biodiesel blends are now available at nearly 80 different retailers across Oregon, and the West Coast, including the SeSequential branded stations in Eugene. Each part of that network represents jobs and economic activity, reaching across the region.

Oregon's current transportation portfolio is myopic. Oregon currently consumes approximately 2 billion gallons of gas and diesel annually. Of that 2 billion gallons of fuel, more than 90 percent of it comes from

the Olympic pipeline. That represents roughly \$4.5 billion leaving our state's economy and has all of our eggs largely in one basket.

The clean fuels program offers an Oregon solution. A comprehensive, well-thought-out approach that supports a multitude of options to reduce our reliance on carbon intensive fuels sources, while helping to diversify our transportation portfolio and strengthen Oregon's economy.

I've always believed that this kind of business — growing clean technology, growing jobs and reducing our impact on the planet — is what Oregon is all about.

Don't make us lose faith. Don't roll back clean fuels.

Tyson Kever is president of SeQuential.

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