



Testimony before the House Energy and Environment Committee on HB  
2018 February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2019 - Tom Kelly

Chair Helm, Members of the Committee:

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. I am here today representing my family business, Neil Kelly. We have been in business for 72 years and have three locations in Oregon; Portland, Bend, and Eugene. Our main business is residential remodeling and we employ about 195 people.

About thirteen years ago we opened an energy retrofit business and after receiving many requests for solar, we acquired Mr. Sun Solar from John Patterson. Mr. Sun is the oldest solar contracting company in Oregon.

Over the first several years we grew the business and by 2017 we had 24 employees. After the previous incentive program expired, our solar business dropped dramatically, by 56% just from 2017 to 2018. We were able to move some of the employees to other jobs in the company, but many left or were laid off. Some left the industry altogether.

We closed our solar divisions in Bend and Eugene. Today, we have a team of seven selling, managing and installing solar in Portland. These are well paid family wage plus jobs. These people are dedicated to the industry because they believe we are making a difference, just as I believe that.

I am here today because I believe that HB 2618 can accomplish the following:

- Help get the solar industry back on its feet.
- Create and/or save jobs.



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**Neil Kelly**

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- Help middle and lower income homeowners do solar, the very people who can most benefit from lower utility costs. Previous programs did not do that.
- New battery technology will provide resiliency for home owners and can benefit the entire state in the face of a natural disaster.

I am in the solar business because I am passionate about what it can contribute to the fight against climate change and at the same time help families earn good wages, save on energy, and thrive.

If Oregon is going to meet its climate goals this bill needs to be passed and funded.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tom Kelly', with a large, stylized flourish extending to the right.

Tom Kelly  
President, Neil Kelly Co.