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RE: Support HB 2618

Dear House Committees on Energy and Environment,

My name is James Reismiller. I'm a Journeyman Electrician and owner of Abundant Solar in Corvallis Oregon. I'm here to ask for your support for HB 2618.

I started Abundant Solar 14 years ago and have been on the "solar coaster" of rising and falling incentives, changing technologies, manufacturer bankruptcies, tariffs, trade cases, and general growing pains of an emerging technology business. While our small business has been able to maneuver the twists and turns of the last 14 years, no one event has had a more drastic effect on our business than the loss of the state residential tax credit. Almost overnight we went from 7 employees to 3. Two of those employees left Oregon for other states to find solar work.

Since 2005 I've seen the price of solar systems decrease by 70-80% and programs like leasing, low interest loans and non-profit funding models have made solar more accessible for low and middle income people. In Corvallis, high school teacher Julie Williams started "Seeds for the Sol" which allowed local residents to make person-to-person loans to fund solar for low and moderate income people. The program was set to ramp up and the model exported to other towns when the state solar incentives were allowed to sunset in 2017. She has provided testimony about the Seeds for the Sol program to this committee which I would like to refer you to for details.

Another huge change I've witnessed since 2005 is the development of new battery technologies and battery-less back-up features on inverters. In fact, I can remember getting a call from one of our customers with battery back-up on Thanksgiving Day a few years back. Of course my first thought was "Oh no, there's a problem." When I answered my client said "Guess what? We have a house full of guests and we are the only ones in the neighborhood with power!" As he explained they saw the lights flicker but didn't notice that all utility power had been cut until trying to turn on the heat lamp in the bathroom which was not part of the back-up circuit. He thanked me and said that the system had saved Thanksgiving for his family. They continued to watch the game, eat dinner, and play video games.

We get a lot of calls these days about battery back-up systems from customers trying to prepare for the potential of the Cascadia Subduction Zone earthquake. Most of them skip the batteries due to the high cost, but some are willing to overlook the costs for peace of mind. While battery systems are just starting to become more affordable, the cost to add batteries to a grid-tied solar system still doubles the cost of the system in most cases. All is

not lost though, if customers can't afford batteries. There is one inverter manufacturer (SMA) who makes a grid-tied inverter with a single 120 V outlet that can be used for daytime power for a freezer, refrigerator or other small appliance during grid outages. With a small amount of power, cell phones can stay charged, freezers can be cooled, and flashlight batteries can be charged.

If one reads ["The Oregon Resiliency Plan - Cascadia: Oregon 's Greatest Natural Threat"](#) it estimates the time to restore power after a Cascadia Subduction zone earthquake event at:

- One to three months in the valley zone.
- Three to six months in the coastal zone.

Solar with storage (battery back-up) is included in this bill to increase citizens' resiliency and survival chances. With the addition of Smart meters and Smart Inverter technology, batteries will soon also become a tool for utilities to call up when peak power is needed instead of spooling up the coal or natural gas plant. In a sense, affordable storage has the potential to make solar energy available 24 hours a day.

Lastly, I want to encourage you to support this bill because Oregon has built a solar industry and workforce over the last 20 years that is full of skilled workers, visionaries and entrepreneurs, most who are working in solar for a greater purpose than earning a living. Losing solar businesses and workers to other states is the wrong direction. The federal tax credit expires in 2021 which means we have less than three years to bring those federal tax credit dollars to Oregon to support our solar economy. Thank you for your time and your service to Oregonians.

Sincerely,  
James Reismiller

Owner, Electrician  
Abundant Solar LLC