

Re: HB 2618- Oregon Solar Rebate Bill Testimony February 28, 2019

Newt Loken, of Eugene, Oregon. I have a business called Solar Assist. And we're a member of the Oregon Solar Energy Industry Association since 1995. I'd like to support HB 2618.

Greetings,

I've worked in the solar energy and energy efficiency field for 40 years in Michigan, Colorado, California and Oregon.

Solar Assist was started in 1994 to provide my community consistent solar installation & design services, as well as to service these systems over time.

We've installed over 300 solar hot water systems in the 90s & the early 2000s and over 300 solar electric systems more recently & we've been able to continue to maintain our own as well as many installed by other companies. This was all possible because of previous Oregon incentives. That's a lot of energy saved by our customers, which has a multiplying effect in the economy.

Over 24 years we've averaged about 5-6 employees, with as many as 10 during busy times. Currently we employ 5 dedicated part time staff, which is as low as we've been for many years. Recently we've also engaged the use of the Work Share program to make up for shorter work weeks.

We were somewhat diversified already due to the 2 technologies and continue to seek options along those lines but the lack of currently affordable solar electric systems has decreased demand by the public significantly.

I've got a lot of favorite customers, many of whom have had us install solar hot water one decade and a decade later a solar electric system to help tighten up their bills & progress sustainability in their lives. Some that come to mind are the Jones. Mari Jones inspires kids by teaching & decided to do everything they could in the early '2000s'; Efficient construction, ground source heat pump and solar hot water heating. 10 years later we installed a solar electric system for them. She appreciates that 'solar' is kid friendly & creates a better future for them.

An Oregon solar rebate or grant for rooftop solar can;

-Help Citizens gain some control over utility cost escalation & grid instability which can help the utilities also (Storage for outage & Grid interface for management purposes for the utilities)

- Help financially less fortunate citizens could have access to affordable clean energy (egalitarian)

-Help create quality jobs and training opportunities for a wide spectrum of people (equal opportunity)

-Be a pointer towards future proofing our energy infrastructure during times of climate change, long-term potential drought, more Air Conditioning & summertime load growth, to say nothing of growth in population & electric car use.

In closing-^{*}Solar is a common area of interest and supported by people of a very diverse age, income and political spectrum. Shared common interests can be hard to find these days, & solar energy seems to be one of them. (democratic) With solar there are less Hidden costs & more Hidden Benefits ...

In closing I'd like to say, I've been very impressed with the high quality of young people choosing to work in this field in Oregon. I hope we can keep the momentum going so they have a chance to deliver.

Thank you for your time.... Questions?

Newt Loken

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