

March 26, 2019

House Committee on Energy and Environment  
900 Court St.  
Salem, Oregon 97301

Subject: House Bill 2857

Chair Helm and Members of the Committee,

My name is David Brown, my company is Obsidian Renewables and I am testifying in favor of House Bill 2857. Obsidian is an experienced Oregon-based solar developer. We developed the first utility scale solar projects for PGE and PacifiCorp in 2012 following an Oregon legislative mandate (now expired) known as the feed in tariff.

Obsidian has also developed solar PURPA projects for sale of electricity to PacifiCorp and to PGE.

Solar's success in Oregon to date has been the result of Oregon legislative mandates favoring renewable energy over coal and natural gas. PURPA is often described as a federal law mandating renewable energy, but that is only half correct. The Oregon legislature years ago also adopted a state-level PURPA law that supplements and supports the federal policy of renewable energy. These laws have resulted in a small amount of competition with the utility monopolies in energy generation.

PURPA is administered in Oregon by the Public Utility Commission. Many of us feel some policy tweaks are necessary to return Oregon's law as envisioned to its core principles of supporting Oregon-based small-scale competitive renewable energy development. Oregon PUC policy was effective to promote PURPA development for a brief time. Unfortunately, OPUC policy changed to effectively halt new PURPA development in PacifiCorp service territory almost three years ago. Several PacifiCorp solar PURPA projects signed up before the freeze have been completed, but nothing new has been signed up since.

The Oregon PUC just last month debated a similar freeze for PURPA projects the PGE service territory, but postponed its decision to gather more information. But all signs are that an effective freeze in new PURPA contracts selling power to PGE is coming very soon.

HB 2587 reaffirms Oregon's long-standing policy on independent, generally rural, small-scale renewable energy development opportunities.

Thank you for your consideration today of House Bill 2857.



David W. Brown  
Senior Principal and Founder