

House Committee on Energy and Environment

RE HB 2496

Chairman Helm and Committee Members,

Thank you for considering the passage of HB 2496 which has the potential to strengthen, expand and clarify existing 1.5% Green Energy Technology law.

I am Mark Anderson, Fire Chief and Emergency Manager for the City of Coos Bay

Coos Bays' Fire Station #1 was constructed in 2010 and is a LEED Gold building that includes energy efficiency and passive solar technology that exceed code requirement as well as both solar thermal and electric on site energy generation systems. The solar systems installed on our building were done so to achieve compliance with the 1.5% for solar law.

Since the installation, our solar water heating system has supplied over half of our water heating needs for showers and cooking in our firefighter's living quarters as well as our regular vehicle and equipment washing. During that time, our solar electric system has produced over 205 Mega Watt hours of electricity, exceeding our pre-installation design projections by 10%. Combined with Energy Trust of Oregon incentives and state tax credit sales, our system will pay for itself in 12 years.

In addition to exposure to tsunami, flood, fire, landslide and hurricane storm events, our fire station (that also serves as the city's Emergency Operations Center) resides in a region that is highly susceptible to a significant seismic event. Should we experience a 9.0 Cascadia event, Oregon coastal communities are predicted to be without electricity for 6 – 18 months. During and following catastrophic events we are tasked with supplying critical response and recovery services to our communities. Electricity at our facility is required for lighting, communications and basic operations. In the event of a prolonged utility outage, our backup generator is equipped with fuel storage to provide those basic operations for up to 96 hours. Any disruption in our fuel supply lines will limit our ability to supply basic response and recovery services. For this reason, the Oregon Resiliency Plan, Reducing the Risk and Improving Recovery for the Next Cascadia Earthquake and Tsunami Report to the 77th Legislative Assembly, recommends increasing the resiliency of our electricity grid and the communities they serve through distributed energy generation with energy storage.

HB 2496 expands the 1.5% Green Energy Technology law to include battery backup as an allowable cost when coupled with solar electricity generation. It also allows public contracting agencies to allocate future 1.5% compliance funds to offsite locations. In our case, this would allow either the City of Coos Bay or other local public contracting agencies to direct compliance expenditures to the installation of battery back up at our fire station. As such, I support this bill as a practical means of increasing the resiliency of our public safety and community shelter facilities.

Respectfully,

Mark R. Anderson, Fire Chief
City of Coos Bay

