



May 7, 2019
Senate Committee on Business and General Government
Chair Senator Chuck Riley
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301

RE HB 2496

Chair Riley, Vice-Chair Girod, and members of the committee,

Thank you for investing the time and resources in consideration of HB 2496.

My name is Shannon Souza. I am a licensed engineer and contractor and the principal of Sol Coast Companies, a sustainability consulting and contracting firm based in Coos Bay Oregon. Our mission is to support strategic growth, responsible development and sustainable living. For over twenty years this mission has engaged my firm in public water supply development, stormwater management, net zero energy design, energy efficiency and renewable energy systems for tribal centers, schools, emergency response facilities and other public spaces. This experience has resulted in my advocacy for investments in resiliency infrastructure, particularly for our coastal communities which are 100% reliant on imported energy while lacking access to state investments in energy security which are focused on the metropolitan population base and central Oregon recovery centers.

I currently serve as a board director for the Professional Engineers of Oregon and Oregon Solar Energy Industry Association, and it is in my capacity as the Policy chair for OSEIA's board as well as of an Oregon small business owner and resident of coastal Oregon that I submit these comments in support of HB 2496.

Included in our company's scope of services is solar design consultation as well as solar contracting, both for which we are a trade ally with the Energy Trust of Oregon. In this capacity we have provided both design consultation as well as solar contracting for public construction projects that fall under the 1.5% Green Energy Technology law. Not only have these projects contributed to our capacity to stabilize living wages jobs during our recent recession and maintain the viability of electrical supply chains they have also, perhaps more importantly, presented a rare opportunity for public investment in rural energy security through distributed energy generation.

Since September, we have worked with other stakeholders to strengthen and improve the flexibility this invaluable law. As a result HB 2496A expands opportunities for investment in public energy security through the inclusion of battery storage as an allowable Green Energy Technology. Many Oregon communities are 100% reliant on imported energy for meeting basic human needs such as communication, clean water, food and medicine storage. These energy supply lines are susceptible to increasing frequencies of storm events, landslides, fires and forecasted significant seismic events. HB 2496A fosters public investment in solar plus storage at our public safety, sheltering and educational facilities which will contribute to more resilient communities with increased capacities for recovery.



HB 2496A also creates a direct pathway for investments in energy efficiency measures which exceed building codes and carry us closer to state wide Net Zero Energy construction and reduced Green House Gas emission goals.

Since its passage in 2007, the 1.5% GET law has not enjoyed consistent compliance. This has been reflected in the Oregon Department of Energy reports to Legislators and their resulting efforts to increase public awareness of the law through email outreach. Consistent with my own professional experience, testimony submitted to the House Committee of Energy and Environment by the League of Oregon Cities observed that public contracting agencies are too often not aware of the requirement at the onset of projects when it can be most efficiently and effectively integrated into early design and budget stages.

Accordingly, we support the passage of HB 2496A with the inclusion of proposed amendment which would:

- Prequalify contractors (both design and construction) to bid on 1.5% GET projects and/or
- direct public contracting agencies to include compliance with this law as a component in the scope for design services on public construction projects, thus insuring that design teams and project managers are aware of the requirement at the onset of the project.

We look forward to continued collaboration with stakeholders toward passage of a bill that strengthens and diversifies this invaluable resource for public distributed energy security.

Respectfully,

Shannon Souza, PE

Principal

Sol Coast Companies

Policy Chair

OSEIA