



House Committee on Energy and the Environment  
Chair Pam Marsh  
900 Court St. NE  
Salem, OR 97301

February 15, 2021

Dear Chair Marsh, Vice-Chairs Helm and Brock Smith, and members of the committee,

The Oregon Solar Energy Industries Association (OSEIA) is a trade association founded in 1981 to promote clean, renewable, solar technologies. OSEIA members include businesses, non-profit groups, and other solar industry stakeholders. We provide a unified voice of the solar industry and focus exclusively on the solar value chain; from workforce development to permitting, advocacy, policy, and regulation for manufacturing, residential, commercial, community, and utility scale solar projects on the local, state and regional level.

OSEIA supports HB 3141 which extends the public purpose charge until 2036 and makes important updates to the eligibility of the use of funds. The public purpose charge has made a difference in the lives of Oregonians across the state and it should continue through 2036.

There are a few technical language changes that OSEIA would like to see – we hope to see an amendment drafted which addresses our technical concerns - but overall we are very supportive of the bill.

The creation of the public purpose charge has allowed the Energy Trust of Oregon (ETO) to help home and building owners save billions of dollars on their utility bills over the last 17 years on energy efficiency projects, solar and other renewable energy systems, and irrigation efficiency. The programs the public purpose charge funds put Oregonians to work and create savings for a variety of ratepayers.

In addition, programs funded by the public purpose charge play a large role in consumer protection. ETO's Trade Ally system of reviewing contractors gives more assurance to customers that the contractor will do an excellent job. Trade ally partners find it helpful to have that distinction even in non-Energy Trust work, to show that their work has been vetted. The Trade Ally system has raised the bar for installation, benefiting both the customer and the solar industry as a whole.

Lastly, public purpose charge funds provide valuable technical training to solar installers. Solar technology is rapidly improving and it is critical that the industry is trained on the most recent technology and best practices to provide excellent service to customers. These technical trainings, some of which are conducted by OSEIA, are held across the state to ensure that solar companies have the most up-to-date information.

HB 3141 updates the public purpose charge eligibility to include important resiliency measures. With wildfire seasons becoming more frequent and severe there will be an increase in Public Safety Power Shut-offs, creating more demand for an energy source that can keep communities going until the power turns back on. The changes



to the public purpose charge allow incentives to be used for battery storage and other technologies that support renewables and storage.

The changes also include a 25% set aside for renewables projects for low- and moderate-income ratepayers. These ratepayers need solar savings more than most and this set-aside helps the solar industry to reach targeted populations. This works well with the Energy Trust's Solar Within Reach program which provides increased incentives for low- and moderate-income ratepayers. The program has been a big success for these populations and we look forward to seeing it expand. OSEIA also supports the creation of equity metrics to ensure that funds are distributed equitably and are reaching those in need.

After a global pandemic that greatly slowed solar projects on businesses, extending the public purpose charge is critical to ensure that Oregon solar small businesses can continue to employ Oregonians across the state. OSEIA members in every corner of the state install systems with public purpose charge incentive; an end or reduction in these funds would mean job losses across the state.

Public purpose charge funds provide valuable services to ratepayers. Not only is ETO a one-stop shop for customers looking to improve the efficiency of their homes and install solar, but they also support the energy efficiency and renewable energy industries by setting industry standards and developing a fully trained workforce to meet the growing demand for weatherization and renewables installation. OSEIA urges this committee to pass HB 3141.

Angela Crowley-Koch  
Executive Director  
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