

Submitter: Paul Atkinson

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Climate, Energy, and Environment

Measure: HB2700

Testimony for HB2700 House Committee On Climate, Energy, and Environment  
Hearing date: 2/20/2023 3:00 PM

I am Paul Atkinson, a 71-year-old life long farmer from the Crow-Lorane area southwest of Eugene. I'm here to encourage the legislature to add electric tractors and possibly other farm equipment (such as 4-wheelers) to the Oregon Clean Vehicle Rebate Program. I encourage you to also consider rebates for on- farm solar charging stations for charging electric tractors and other electric farm equipment. We have a 50-acre livestock and poultry farm. We feel it is our moral obligation to work toward a truly sustainable farm and community. In large part that means weaning ourselves of burning fossil fuels. To that end we retrofitted an electric Taylor-Dunn maintenance vehicle with solar panels in 2011 to allow us to haul feed and tools around the flat part of the farm and to mostly charge it with solar panels added to the roof of the cart.

In 2013 we leased a Nissan Leaf for our off-farm vehicle needs, then purchased a different Leaf three years later, and now own an all-electric Chevy Bolt. Thus our domestic travel and farm delivery vehicles are electric. With our personal experience of economy, low maintenance and the dependability of our zero- emission cars, we have set a goal to own an electric farm truck. This past September we purchased a 25 HP Solectrac electric tractor, which I use (so far) to haul feed and water, clean barns, move poultry pens, subsoil, and expect to mow with it this summer. I am happy with its performance so far.

Along with the vehicles we purchased, we began building solar arrays for the home and farm with a 3 kw system in 2014, adding an 8.6 kw array in 2020, and an additional 9.5 kw in 2022. We now believe we will produce as much power on an annual basis as we use for home and farm, allowing the electric tractor and a future electric farm truck to be powered with 100% clean and renewable energy.

I believe that particularly for farmers and ranchers, who need to be convinced and incentivised toward renewables, home and farm solar or wind-powered chargers for on-farm and off-farm electric vehicle use will be of great benefit. Farmers and ranchers want to be independent and yet often resist change. They drive many types of vehicles to operate their businesses. A 4-wheeler or farm utility vehicle that is electric and rechargeable with on-site generated power is a great gateway to the promise of reliable, affordable, and dependable electric vehicles for farms and ranches. A state rebate for electric tractors, including the Charge Ahead Rebate for low to moderate income farmers, is also a good place to start.

Paul Atkinson

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