



Senate Committee on Energy and the Environment
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court St. NE
Salem Oregon 97301

May 28, 2025

Dear Chair Sollman, Vice-chair Brock-Smith and members of the committee,

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

OSSIA strongly supports HB 3609, a bill to scale up distributed power plants (DPP) in Oregon. A distributed power plant allows utilities to use energy devices that customers have installed when there is high demand on the power grid. For example, a town could have dozens of customers that have installed solar, battery back up, smart thermostats, smart water heaters, etc. When the utility needs extra help balancing energy demands on the grid, they pay those customers to use their devices and ensure there is enough power to meet the need.

Energy procured through virtual power plants is the cheapest energy on the market. This program would save ratepayers money over the years; instead of utilities building a power plant or transmission to bring power from far away, customers would invest in the “power plant” and save utilities that upfront investment.

Portland General Electric (PGE) and PacifiCorp already have pilot distributed power plant programs; PGE’s program is robust and includes many different devices; however, it has been in “pilot” phase for six years. PacifiCorp has recently started one program for batteries. Since these programs use existing technology, they can easily be scaled up and expanded. Other states have had success using third party aggregators to inject new capacity into the effort, allowing DPPs to come online more quickly.

Time is of the essence – as this committee has heard all session, our grid is constrained and electricity demand is growing exponentially. DPPs can come online faster than any other resource, saving both

PO Box 14927, Portland, OR 97293-0927
Email: angela@oseia.org
www.orssia.org



utilities and customers money. DPPs benefit all customers by having a smarter, more flexible grid, especially during peak times. While Oregon's utilities have made a good start, HB 3609 is needed to move utilities out of the pilot phase and speed up DPP creation.

Oregon small businesses are ready to get to work. Oregon solar companies and energy efficiency contractors install these technologies for customers now and are anxious to follow the example of other states. These contractors know that the pilots have been effective and are ready to scale up: customers love the programs and ratepayers at any income level can participate. With increasing rates, the time is now to expand these programs that save customers on their bills.

HB 3609 directs Oregon's utilities to create their own programs, resulting in the utilities having a high level of ownership over program details. In other states utilities work seamlessly with third party aggregators to manage DPPs to ensure that the grid operates even better than it does now.

OSSIA urges this committee to support HB 3609 to support the fastest and most cost-effective way to support Oregon's growing power needs.

Sincerely,

Angela Crowley-Koch
Executive Director