

Testimony of Anneliese Koehler, Legislative Affairs Manager

On SB 92

Senate Committee on Energy and Environment

February 26, 2025



Metro

Metro is the elected regional government that serves nearly 1.7 million people in the 24 cities and three counties of the Portland metropolitan area. We provide a broad range of public services that includes land use and transportation planning, solid waste and recycling operations, management of parks and natural areas, and operation of major visitor facilities like the Oregon Convention Center and the Oregon Zoo.

SB 92 proposes a multitude of changes to Oregon's Community Solar Program. Metro is supportive of efforts to increase Community Solar programs in Oregon overall and is not weighing in on the technical particulars of SB 92.

Metro's Legislative Principles call for supporting, "efforts to combat and adapt to climate change, to meet the state's goals for reducing greenhouse gas emissions, to avoid and mitigate climate impacts on our most vulnerable community members, and to promote climate resiliency". Community solar projects help meet these goals by providing decentralized, local renewable energy that benefits communities, adds clean energy to the grid, and supports historically disadvantaged households with energy credits on their monthly electricity bill.

Metro is currently a subscriber to four different community solar projects in the Willamette Valley area. These projects are a major win-win for Metro: allowing Metro to save taxpayer dollars by reducing our electricity bills for a guaranteed twenty years while also supporting local renewable energy generation. In addition, Metro is working with Bonneville Environmental Foundation to build and host a community solar project on the Portland Expo Center. The project plans to retain 40 percent of the energy for Metro operations and provide 60 percent to over 200 low-income households with an energy credit on their bill. We are excited about this project and its nexus with both our climate and equity goals.

Oregon's Community Solar Program supports communities through climate mitigation, provides equitable access to renewable energy, and boosts green energy workforce and development. Oregon is significantly behind community solar allocations compared to many other states and we are losing clean energy business development and opportunities due to this program's current capacity. There are many planned community solar projects in the pipeline, like that at the Expo Center, that need to move forward and there is an increasing need for new community solar projects across the state.

We urge the Legislature to increase Community Solar opportunities in Oregon by expanding the capacity of this valuable program. Expansion of this program will also help Oregon meet our state's renewable energy demand and 100% clean energy for all legislative requirements.