EnergyTrust of Oregon, Inc.

Board Decision
Authorizing New Staff Positions

October 3, 2007

Summary

Authorize the executive director to establish and fill four new staff positions.

Background

- The Energy Trust 2007-2012 strategic plan and operations plan place a high priority emphasis and focus on streamlining information technology (IT) systems, budget processes and program management to enhance flexibility and customer service to staff, system users and program participants.
- In 2007, Energy Trust retained Moss Adams to review its core Energy Trust IT and budget functions. Moss Adams recommended a number of specific improvements, including changes to the organization and structure of the IT department. Moss Adams findings specified that:
    - The IT department requires more strategic planning and direction than is possible in the current structure, in which the existing IT manager position is needed to respond to a large variety of day-to-day operations and data analysis requirements;
    - Energy Trust's practice of performing ongoing and essential IT operating functions with contractors instead of permanent staff has resulted in predictable and excessive turnover, disrupting work flow, efficiency, effectiveness and service capabilities of key IT functions. This practice has also required the IT manager to devote important time to recruitment, hiring and training of new consultants at the expense of effective and stable IT department planning, management and consistent service.
    - Minimum wage, overtime, workers compensation, employee tax, and employment civil rights laws and regulations, among other types of employee laws and regulations, do not apply to independent contractors. Agencies that enforce employment laws recognize that some employers seek to avoid the costs and responsibilities associated with employees by calling some workers "independent contractors." In enforcing these areas of the law, governmental agencies do not rely on the label "independent contractor" but are required to take a close look at the realities of the relationships. If examined, there is a risk that individuals who perform ongoing and essential IT operating functions would be considered "employees" rather than "independent contractors," thereby subjecting Energy Trust to possible enforcement actions.
- In addition to the proposed two IT position recommendations, Energy Trust has identified two other areas where new staff would significantly improve program management and service to program trade allies and participants, described as follows:
    - Trade Ally/Allied Technical Assistance Contractors (ATACs) Coordination - Energy Trust has attracted approximately 840 trade allies and over a dozen ATACs who

geographically represent the state and a diversity of trades. Energy Trust relies upon these individuals to market programs and incentives and to deliver services to customers. To be optimally effective, trade allies and ATACs depend upon Energy Trust to provide accurate and timely program and marketing information, training and support. Along with the growth in the number of trade allies, Energy Trust is moving toward a registration system for trade allies to demonstrate certification as a participating Energy Trust contractor. This new trade ally/ATAC coordinator will regularly enroll trade allies and ATACS in this new system, verify insurance certificates and licenses, and support trade ally event planning and logistics. In addition, the individual would assist in the development and implementation of ATAC contracts to serve the growing number of program participants.

- Solar account program management - Both the solar electric and solar water heating programs are delivered in-house by Energy Trust staff. The increased volume and level of program activity in 2007 has exceeded current staff capacity. This has resulted in delays in the launch of program initiatives and slow response time to participant and trade ally questions and service requests. As interest in and demand for solar energy solutions continues to dramatically grow among utilities, solar project developers and individual business and residential customers, more staff help is warranted to serve the increased volume of activity. This is true now and especially true in light of Renewable Energy Act implementation of solar projects of 20 MW or less.

Discussion

Staff recommends approval of four staff positions: Business Systems Analyst, IT Administrative Assistant, Trade Ally Coordinator and Solar Program Coordinator. A brief description of the role and responsibilities for each of these positions follows:

1. As recommended by Moss Adams and endorsed by Energy Trust staff, a new **Business Systems Analyst** to:
   - Analyze program, savings, generation and financial data essential to planning, evaluation, program and contract management, finance, marketing, and administration
   - Develop and maintain program and other reports, especially for program managers and program management contractors to readily access the project status and budgetary information essential for effective and responsible management
   - Assist staff in extracting data and automating data services for both ad hoc and scheduled tasks such as quarterly report automation, annual report automation, annual true-up calculations
   - Strengthen data quality and integrity and assist auditing efforts with the tracing and analysis of confusing or anomalous data entries
   - Perform application testing and deployment tasks in support of FastTrack enhancements and new, upgraded or replacement software for contacts, contracts, or finance applications
   - Perform a number of functions now addressed by the IT manager, thereby freeing her to place appropriate emphasis on strategic activities such as planning, identifying system needs, and replacing or enhancing existing systems

- Timing: Immediate recruitment and hiring to have the capability needed for data analyses related to programs, new cost-effectiveness efficiency measure analyses and form changes especially needed for the peak activity period of December through March.

2. As recommended by Moss Adams and endorsed by Energy Trust staff, a permanent FTE **IT Administrative Assistant** to:

- Design, modify, update and maintain forms used for programs, contracts, finance and IT, supporting timely program delivery
- Assist with data quality projects
- Procure hardware and software
- Ensure software compliance tracking and documentation
- Coordinate user training
- Other administrative duties for the IT department including:
  - Software and hardware inventory data maintenance
  - Measure binder creation and maintenance
  - Setup, notes and minutes for IT Advisory Committee meetings

- Timing: Immediate. For three years, this ongoing function has been fulfilled by three different contractors. The current contractor is highly competent and has served in this capacity for nearly six months. At six months, Energy Trust has the option to convert the contractor to employee status without paying fees to the contracting agency. Should this outcome not occur, turnover is again expected.

3. An FTE **Trade Ally/ATAC Coordinator** to:

- Support and maintain a highly informed and functional network of trade allies and allied technical assistance contractors (ATACs) unique to the efficiency and solar programs
- Create and maintain umbrella trade ally and ATAC agreements for those participating in multiple Energy Trust programs
- Prepare new agreements to correspond to changes in program management contractors
- Update and maintain trade ally and ATAC license and certification information and insurance certification records
- Centralize and track customer correspondence and customer service matters, reinforcing customer service standards
- Oversee and facilitate communications with trade allies and ATACs, answering questions, listening to and acting upon suggestions received, organizing training and other outreach meetings, and helping with forms
- Coordinate with PMCs who will continue to provide program-specific outreach and support, deliver field training, and provide information and forms to trade allies/ATACs for their specific programs

- Timing: Immediate. Hiring for this position now is critical because 1) current ATAC agreements lapse in January and new agreements must be in place to ensure continuity of project studies and 2) trade allies need to enroll and be registered with

Energy Trust and have new agreements in place. Hiring a new coordinator will allow this process to go forward without program disruptions.

(Note: The Conservation Advisory Council notes in this packet provide additional comments and public input on this subject.)

4. An FTE **Solar Account Project Manager** to:
    - Help manage the growing volume of solar program activity and enhance service to utilities, solar developers and program participants
    - Provide comprehensive renewable and efficiency program offerings to potential participants, tailoring the marketing, program delivery and incentive application process for commercial solar electric and solar water heating measures with Energy Trust's commercial/industrial energy efficiency programs
    - Support municipalities pursuing solar electric system installations using Energy Trust's new nonprofit/government incentives and third party ownership ("flip") financing model
    - Quickly respond to commercial participant and project developer inquiries, supporting electric and solar water heating projects moving forward to completion

- Timing: Immediate. Staff has fallen behind on solar program initiatives. The launch of two major solar electric incentive changes intended to boost program activity to meet 2007 goals were delayed by over 2 months because staff capacity is already overtaxed. Specific reasons for capacity issues correspond to the dramatic increase in commercial solar inquiries stemming from the passage of SB 2211 during the 2007 Oregon Legislative session. This bill raised the Business Energy Tax Credit from 35% to 50% for renewable energy systems. Responsiveness to these inquiries is needed now to serve the public and fulfill project demand and potential and meet generation goals for 2008-2009 and beyond. Current staff is moving forward on the implementation of the Oregon Renewable Energy Act by participating in Oregon Department of Energy and Oregon Public Utility Commission rule-making while also pursuing large-scale solar electric projects already identified.

RESOLUTION #452

APPROVING FOUR STAFF POSITIONS

WHEREAS:

1. **The Energy Trust 2007-2012 strategic plan and operations plan puts a high priority emphasis and focus on streamlining information technology (IT) systems, budget processes and program management to enhance flexibility and customer service to staff, system users and program participants.**
2. **In 2007, Energy Trust retained Moss Adams to review Energy Trust's IT systems and functions. Moss Adams recommended a number of specific improvements, including modifications in the IT department organization and structure. The board concurs that two key recommendations would be addressed by adding a new Business Systems Analyst and a permanent FTE Administrative Assistant.**
3. **Energy Trust has identified two other critical areas where additional staffing would substantially improve service to and reliance upon trade allies and program delivery to solar program participants: a Trade Ally/ATAC Coordinator, and a Solar Account Project Manager.**

It is therefore RESOLVED:

1. **The board of directors of Energy Trust of Oregon, Inc., authorizes the Executive Director to immediately recruit and hire four new permanent staff positions: a Business Systems Analyst, an IT Administrative Assistant, a Trade Ally/ATAC Coordinator and a Solar Account Project Manager.**

Moved by: Seconded by:

Vote: In favor: Abstained:

Opposed: [list name(s) and, if requested, reason for "no" vote]