

Renewable Energy Advisory Council Meeting Notes

July 28, 2021

Attending from the council:

Anna Kim, Oregon Public Utility
Commission
Erik Anderson, Pacific Power
Jaimes Valdez, Portland Clean Energy
Community Benefits Fund
John Cornwell, Oregon Department of
Energy

Josh Peterson, University of Oregon Solar
Radiation Monitoring Lab
Les Perkins, Farmers Irrigation District
Max Greene, Renewable NW
Raphaella Hsu-Flanders, Bonneville
Environmental Foundation
Suzanne Leta, SunPower

Attending from Energy Trust:

Adewale Adesanya
Albert Stanfield
Alina Lambert
Amber Cole
Bayo Ware
Betsy Kauffman
Cheryle Easton
Dave McClelland
Dave Moldal
Elaine Dado
Emily Estrada
Emma Clark
Frederick Gordon
Hannah Cruz
Ian Brysen Pagatpatan
Jay Ward

Jeni Hall
Kyle Petrocine
Lizzie Rubado
MacKenzie Kurtzner
Matt Getchell
Michael Colgrove
Peter West
Robert Wyllie
Shelly Carlton
Sue Fletcher
Susan Jowaiszas
Taylor Navesken
Tracy Scott

Others attending:

Alexia Kelly, Energy Trust Board
Angela Crowley-Koch, Oregon Solar +
Storage Industries Association
David Beaulieu, TRC
Elee Jen, Energy Trust Board
Jed Jorgensen, Farmers Conservation
Alliance

Kacia Brockman, Oregon Public Utility
Commission
Rachel Shimshak
Ryan Harvey, Pacific Corp.
Tess Jordan, Portland General Electric
Timothy Tutt
Warren Leon, Clean Energy States Alliance

1. Welcome, Introductions and Announcements

Betsy Kauffman, sector lead for renewables, convened the meeting at 9:02 a.m. on Zoom. The agenda, notes and presentation materials are available on Energy Trust's website at <https://www.energytrust.org/about/public-meetings/renewable-energy-advisory-council-meetings/>.

Betsy Kauffman announced the passing of House Bill 3141 that extends Energy Trust renewable energy funding through 2035. Tracy Scott, director of energy programs, Ian Brysen Pagatpatan, renewables intern, Taylor Navesken, renewables intern and Bayo Ware, solar project manager introduced themselves as new Energy Trust staff.

2. RAC input into 2022-23 Budget and Action Plan

Topic summary

Betsy Kauffman led a discussion on budget management for the renewables team. Staff is seeking information on Renewable Energy Advisory Council priorities regarding work generally, equity work, community partnerships, workforce development and resilience. There are competing demands for funding, particularly in Pacific Power territory. Council members were divided into breakout rooms to dive more deeply into their priorities for Energy Trust activities.

Discussion

Members asked for clarification on the organization's draft 2022 goal to: "*Advance development as a core function that enhances the value energy efficiency and renewable energy provide our customers and communities*" (Tess Jordan). Staff clarified that this means that the organization wants to improve its ability to obtain outside funding to stretch current dollars further and broaden Energy Trust's reach (Betsy Kauffman, Tracy Scott).

Members discussed that Energy Trust should focus on Community Solar Program, Equitable Solar Initiative, and Solar Within Reach projects (Raphaella Hsu-Flanders). Attendees commented that solar without storage doesn't help meet climate goals (Alexia Kelly) and that Energy Trust should continue to provide a broad perspective on the solar industry and focus on assisting customers in shaping load and using grid interactive technology (Kacia Brockman). Members supported focusing on making critical facilities resilient and supporting community hubs that will provide safety during extreme weather events (Jaimes Valdez).

Unsticking parts of the market that are currently stuck should be prioritized, such as the Community Solar Program (Jed Jorgensen, Jaimes Valdez) and irrigation modernization projects should continue to be funded (Jed Jorgensen). Attendees commented that small Community Solar Program projects that have multiple community benefits and have the opportunity to focus on low-income participation should be prioritized (Jaimes Valdez, Tess Jordan). Members stated that more dollars should be focused on resilience projects with solar and reduced incentives for single-family solar systems that aren't providing multiple benefits to the community (Max Greene).

Attendees expressed that Energy Trust should continue to support early-stage feasibility and community support with a focus on resilience, obtaining grants and financial assistance to local communities, such as matching FEMA funding (Alexia Kelly). Assisting in obtaining grant funding to support resiliency in the community (Tess Jordan) is a priority and Energy Trust should ensure that its always leading with energy efficiency, packaging renewables and efficiency together in resilience programs (Alexia Kelly).

Members discussed pointed out that workforce development is extremely important to help with the development of job skills (Raphaella Hsu-Flanders) and supporting trade allies in increasing

BIPOC ownership of businesses and participation in the workforce can provide different wealth development opportunities (Jaimes Valdez).

Next steps

Energy Trust staff will examine how the Renewable Energy Advisory Council feedback and priorities can be incorporated into the 2022-23 budgets.

3. Priorities for Solar Program

Topic summary

Staff requested feedback on whether Energy Trust should have a continued, smaller role in funding residential solar projects that serve market-rate customers and are not capable of providing resilience or grid services or, if Energy Trust should only provide financial incentives for solar systems that provide additional values such as improved equity, resilience and/or grid services.

Discussion

Members asked about quality standards outside of projects that are reviewed by Energy Trust (Jaimes Valdez) and how integral providing customer leads to trade allies is in the market (Kacia Brockman). Staff mentioned that there is a surprisingly high volume of solar projects that don't receive Energy Trust incentives and the team has received feedback that the same standards are not implemented outside of the program. Staff also noted that contractors have mentioned that leads are more valuable than incentives (Dave McClelland). An attendee stated that direct incentives to projects that provide greater benefits to underserved communities should be prioritized over standard residential incentives (Alexia Kelly). Members mentioned that power incentives reach a point where there are diminishing returns for developers; identifying this threshold is critical before adjusting incentive offerings that may be based on assumptions (Suzanne Leta, Raphaela Hsu-Flanders).

Members strongly recommended doing a survey of stakeholders before staff makes a decision (Suzanne Leta, Angela Crowley-Koch, Jaimes Valdez). The Diversity Advisory Council (DAC) and individuals involved in HB 3141 should be involved in the survey, as well as community-based organizations and community leaders (Angela Crowley-Koch, Max Greene, Alexia Kelly). Utilities should also be involved in the conversation due to their sector expertise (Bayo Ware, Angela Crowley-Koch). One attendee noted there should be some quality control to ensure project standards do not diminish if Energy Trust incentives go away (Angela Crowley-Koch). Staff cited that Energy Trust still fills a gap in the market performing design review and verification that focuses on system performance and longevity as opposed the municipal life safety inspection (Jeni Hall).

Members discussed how keeping incentives the same for both utilities may not be needed, but if they are different, it would be difficult for installers who serve multiple territories (Angela Crowley-Koch, Suzanne Leta). A member stated that commercial is a separate market from residential due to the economics being different (Suzanne Leta).

Next steps

Staff is collecting feedback and will consult with solar trade allies before major changes in the program are made.

4. Renewable Energy Advisory Council thank you to now-retired Peter West

Topic summary

Members thanked Peter West, Energy Trust's former director of energy programs and former manager of the renewable energy sector, for his contributions to Energy Trust and to renewable energy development in Oregon.

Discussion

Attendees noted Peter West's previous work at Renewable Northwest as the Policy Director prior to Energy Trust, where he helped establish net metering and the first carbon standard in Oregon (Rachel Shimsak). Peter was at the founding meeting for the Clean Energy States alliance, served on its board for seven years and received its Clean Energy Champion Award (Warren Leon). Council members noted that Peter has left an indelible mark on how energy is produced and used in Oregon and across the Pacific Northwest by expanding energy efficient appliances in the state and supported irrigation modernization, biopower and municipal wastewater treatment plant projects (Jed Jorgensen).

5. Public Comment

None.

6. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 11:25 a.m. The next meeting will be Wednesday, September 15th.