

Renewable Energy Advisory Council Meeting Notes

February 22, 2024

Attending from the council:

Angela Crowley-Koch, Oregon Solar + Storage Industries Association
Jaimes Valdez, Portland Clean Energy Fund
Joe Abraham, Oregon Public Utility Commission
Josh Peterson, Solar Monitoring Lab, University of Oregon
Stasia Brownell, Portland General Electric

Attending from Energy Trust:

Abby Spegman	Janelle St. Pierre
Abi Sloan	Jay Robinson
Alanna Hoyman-Browe	Jeni Hall
Alicia Li	Jess Siegel
Alina Lambert	Josh Reed
Bayo Ware	Kyle Petrocine
Chris Lyons	Laura Schaefer
Dave McClelland	Lidia Garcia
Dave Moldal	Lori Lull
Eduardo Beltran	Maddie Norman
Elaine Dado	Matt Getchell
Elisa Simko	Melanie Bissonnette
Elizabeth Fox	Natalia Ojeda
Frank Bellinger	Renita Lamberth
Hannah Cruz	Ryan Cook
Helen Rabold	Themba Mutepfa
Jake Kennedy	Tracy Scott

Others attending:

Dylan DSouza, Northwest Power and Conservation Council

1. Welcome and announcements

Matt Getchell, renewable energy program manager, convened the meeting at 1:31 p.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/>.

Stasia Brownell was introduced as a new Renewable Energy Advisory Council member; Eduardo Beltran and Alicia Li were introduced as new project managers in the Renewable Energy Sector at Energy Trust. Staff posted a position for a [Community Solar Project Manager](#). Congratulations to long-serving RAC member Les Perkins upon his appointment to the Oregon Public Utility Commission.

2. 2023 preliminary annual results

Topic summary

Tracy Scott, director of energy programs, provided an overview of the preliminary annual results on generation and efficiency across all sectors. The official savings and generation, performance measures, program and organization accomplishments, and Diversity Equity and Inclusion results will be available in the Oregon Public Utility Commission Annual Report on April 15. The preliminary generation results show goals were met for both Portland General Electric and Pacific Power.

Discussion

Members asked why Integrated Resource Planning targets were higher than utility goals (Stasia Brownell). Gas targets were established before program goals were set for service areas and staff set more conservative goals based on the Q3 forecast. Staff confirmed the 25% low- and moderate-income spending metric applies only to the Renewable sector, not energy efficiency programs.

Next steps

Members can see the official results in the public report posted in April.

3. 2024 plans*Topic summary*

Jess Siegel, Dave McClelland and Dave Moldal from the Renewables team presented three-year goals, key tactics and internal visions for the sector. Major themes include: continue to broaden access to affordable renewable energy technologies through incentives and upstream market support; increase equitable access to renewable energy by serving underserved and low-income communities; support communities and customers in adopting renewable energy technologies for resilience; and work with utilities to enable renewables and storage to provide grid flexibility and other grid benefits.

Discussion

Council members were glad to see that Solarize campaigns are still included as an Energy Trust program and asked about the link between community-based organization engagement and prescriptive battery storage incentives, and whether nonprofits or community-based organizations are eligible for those incentives (Jaimes Valdez). Staff is working to launch commercial battery incentives up to \$10,000 per customer to continue to develop the solar + storage market in Oregon and will include nonprofits, affordable multifamily housing projects and tribes (Matt Getchell, Dave McClelland). The sector is also exploring higher, custom project development assistance and installation incentives for energy resilience projects. Community Renewable Energy Grant Program (C-REP) money is available for projects from Oregon Department of Energy; staff recognized that there is a gap in C-REP funding for projects that Energy Trust can support (Dave Moldal).

Members asked if the 2024 goals are based on net-metering policy as the foundation (Jaimes Valdez). Net-metering is the foundation that the programs have been built upon, which may change in the future. A concern for Energy Trust staff is how this change may impact bill savings for households with low or moderate incomes (Dave McClelland).

Members asked about the possibility of key tactics not being achievable because of limitations in budget, and in that case, if key tactics would be cut (Josh Peterson). Staff responded that these are larger visions on what the team is working toward, and there will be a multi-year planning process that will help guide the team to the ideal future (Jess Siegel). In addition, the key tactics and vision will assist the team to decide on what external funding to pursue (Dave McClelland).

Some key tactics focus on a diverse Trade Ally Network and working with low- and moderate-income households but there is a concern that there aren't a lot of controls around education to customers or controls on disclosures (Stasia Brownell). The sector will focus on consumer protection while developing programs for low-income customers. This will be discussed more in the development process (Dave McClelland). Members expressed there needs to be more incentives toward updating electrical capacity on properties, especially multifamily properties, in addition to the key tactics presented (Stasia Brownell). Members asked if community solar expansion is seen as a necessary piece of implementing these visions (Jaimes Valdez). There is no indication the program is going to increase in its capacity in terms of megawatts and the OPUC indicated in 2021 that it would require a program redesign because of the cost to ratepayers that is incorporated into the program (Joe Abraham).

Next steps

Staff will continue to keep members engaged in these topics throughout the year.

4. Update on the 2024 legislative session

Topic summary

Natalie Ojeda, Chris Lyons and Hannah Cruz on Energy Trust's policy services team provided an update on energy-related legislation moving through the short legislative session in Salem. Energy items are not top priorities but still present, and the state is operating with a positive revenue forecast. Bills mentioned include SB 1525 A, HB 4015, HB 4080A, HB 4090 A, SB 1581 A, SB 1596 A, HB 4112, SB 1537 A, and SB 1530 A. The session is expected to end March 10.

Discussion

Members noted Oregon Department of Energy will be out of funding in June for the Solar + Storage Rebate program and there is a push to add an additional \$10 million in funding. HB 4112 incentivizes clean energy manufacturing in Oregon and members asked if this would include funding for software development (Josh Peterson). Staff confirmed the bill is around hard equipment, including components that produce or store energy from sun, water or other renewable resources (Hannah Cruz, Natalia Ojeda).

Next steps

None.

5. Multiyear planning and 2025 budgeting changes

Topic summary

Melanie Bissonnette and Alanna Hoyman-Browe from the multiyear planning team presented on upcoming changes as the organization shifts to a multiyear planning framework over the next two years. The transition will include a multiyear savings assessment and multiyear plan process design that will allow the organization to use big picture thinking and outline an approach to maximize acquisition of cost-effective savings by 2030. There will be multiple engagements with council members this year that will leverage strategic planning engagements; however, there will not be deep dive sessions with council members, like in previous years. Instead, 2024 Action Plans will be extended to 2025. There will still be a Joint Advisory Council Budget Workshop.

Discussion

Council members asked if the 2025 budget is segmented with Public Purpose Charge funds and precludes other funders (Jaimes Valdez). Staff responded that the budget hasn't been defined, but the organization will continue to pursue other funding opportunities (Alanna Hoyman-Browe). Council members asked how the plan will account for dynamic changes in the market, like the Inflation Reduction Act funding (Josh Peterson). Staff noted there will be check points along the way within the plan management scoping. There will be opportunities to identify key shifts in the market or in the economy that may have an impact on the ability to achieve equity or savings goals. The goal is the plan is not updated constantly but allows for course corrections (Melanie Bissonnette).

Next steps

There will be an opportunity for council members to provide feedback on the multiyear plan in June.

6. Public comment

No public comment.

7. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 3:25 p.m. The council is invited to take part in an in-person only board workshop on strategic planning on March 13. The next regular meeting of the council will be Thursday, April 18 at 1:30. This will be a hybrid meeting.