

## Renewable Energy Advisory Council Meeting Notes

November 16, 2023

### Attending from the council:

Alexia Kelly, High Tide Foundation  
Amy Schlusser, Oregon Department of Energy  
Angela Crowley-Koch, Oregon Solar + Storage Industries Association  
April Snell, Oregon Water Resources Congress  
Brikky King, Fairway Independent Mortgage Corporation

Jaimes Valdez, Portland Clean Energy Fund  
Joe Abraham, Oregon Public Utility Commission  
Josh Peterson, Solar Monitoring Lab, University of Oregon  
Ryan Harvey, Pacific Power  
Stasia Brownell, Portland General Electric\*

*\*pending board approval*

### Attending from Energy Trust:

Alina Lambert  
Andi Nix  
Alyson McKay  
Betsy Kauffman  
Dave McClelland  
Dave Modal  
Elizabeth Fox  
Fred Gordon  
Hannah Cruz

Jake Kennedy  
Jay Robinson  
Jeni Hall  
Jess Siegel  
Kyle Petrocine  
Laura Schaefer  
Lori Lull  
Lidia Garcia  
Maddie Norman

Matt Getchell  
Natalia Ojeda  
Renita Lamberth  
Shelly Carlton  
Sletsy Dlamini  
Sue Fletcher  
Themba Mutepefa  
Tracy Scott  
Bayo Ware

### Others attending

Rob Del Mar, Oregon Department of Energy

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### Welcome and Announcements

Betsy Kauffman, Renewable Energy sector lead, convened the meeting at 9:30 a.m. on Zoom. Lidia Garcia, Renewable Energy and Communities and New Initiatives sector Roger Arliner Young (RAY) Diversity Fellow, facilitated the meeting. Notes were taken by Bayo Ware.

Staff announced dates for the first several meetings for the council in 2024. In March, there will be more information regarding Solar For All, after the grant awardees are announced. Work is expected to start in July. Meeting 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/>.

## 1. Remembrance of Frank Vignola

### *Topic summary*

Josh Peterson, council member, gave a remembrance of former and inaugural council member Frank Vignola, who passed in September. The founder of the University of Oregon Solar Radiation Laboratory, he contributed much to the development of the solar industry in Oregon and the nation. The lab that he sustained has collected 40 years of solar data. He coauthored multiple books, one of which is a seminal work in the field. He cofounded the American Solar Energy Society's Resource Assessment Division. In 2020, he earned the Charles Greeley Abbot Award. A man of many passions, he was an avid stamp collector and music aficionado, opening a record store in Eugene.

### *Discussion*

Staff remarked that Frank was instrumental in the development of Energy Trust's solar programs, helping the sector set a high bar for photovoltaic technology installations. He was a consistent thoughtful, independent-thinking member of the council. A council member added that the Oregon Solar and Storage Industries Association would not be where it is today if not for Frank (Angela Crowley-Koch).

## 2. Oregon's incentive and grant programs

### *Topic summary*

Rob Del Mar, senior policy analyst at Oregon Department of Energy (ODOE), presented on ODOE's solar program updates. The 2023-2025 Fiscal Year budget is \$10 million. The department worked with Energy Trust and Bonneville Environmental Foundation to submit a \$138 million Solar For All grant application for single-family, multifamily, Community Solar Program and low-income service provider solar projects. It is expected that ODOE's application will be successful. ODOE will coordinate with Oregon Housing and Community Services, community-based organizations and community action agencies to reach and prequalify individuals it has historically underserved.

Jess Siegel, renewables program manager, presented on Energy Trust's program developments. The sector continues its shift towards incentives that further equity, provide grid flexibility and offer resilience. This means increasing dollars for Solar Within Reach, Equitable Solar Initiative and the Community Solar Program. Additionally, the residential battery storage incentive was released this year. The sector is also focusing on providing upstream support to the market, such as increased business development funds for all solar contractors and especially Certification Office for Business Inclusion and Diversity (COBID) certified businesses. Renewables will put more focus on resilience planning, particularly for municipalities.

Jaimes Valdez, Portland Clean Energy Fund's (PCEF) organizational development & policy manager, presented on PCEF's programs. The organization uses funding secured through a tax of large corporate and retail sales to provide grants for climate-related projects that provide multiple benefits to Portland residents. Since its inception in 2018, it has distributed \$130 million to 110 recipients. The City Council approved PCEF's 5-year Community Investment Plan that directs funds to address specific needs in communities. There is a great opportunity for their Community Responsive Grants to couple with Renewables programs. The Request for Proposals will open this month and close at the beginning of February. There will be grants for planning and implementation. Information sessions and technical assistance opportunities will be available in December and January.

### *Discussion*

Staff asked if there would be a way to learn about the solar projects that receive funding. PCEF has an existing database of funded and unfunded projects. In the future, there will be a dashboard with metrics to track grant outcomes over time (Jaimes Valdez). Council members asked if there are sufficient contractors to meet equity and workforce requirements (Amy Schlusser). There are enough workers for wage requirements; the focus will be for workforce development practices, such as apprenticeships and training opportunities, and subcontracting (Jaimes Valdez). Staff asked for more information on the planning grants. There are two thresholds: one for a specific physical project and one for a general socially based project. Planning grants cannot be used for implementation. There are no funding match requirements (Jaimes Valdez). Staff asked how Energy Trust can better complement PCEF and ODOE programs. Energy Trust staff completed much of the work on the Solar For All application and ODOE looks forward to Energy Trust continuing to provide solar trade ally and program administrative support, such as with PowerClerk integration (Rob Del Mar). Energy Trust's customer navigation, protection, education and awareness will all be critical for PCEF (Jaimes Valdez). Council members discussed the difficulties of local cultural and institutional capacity and connections to ensure that climate and outage resilient projects are successful. A lack of funding and financing necessary for structural improvements is also an issue for moving forward on resilience projects and planning, especially in rural areas (Alexia Kelly).

*Next steps*

Staff will follow up with PCEF to present to the council on some of PCEF's previously funded projects, especially those co-funded with Energy Trust (Jaimes Valdez).

### **3. Strategic Planning, Multiyear Planning and Budget Development**

*Topic summary*

Greg Stokes, organizational development manager, presented on Energy Trust's planning and budget development strategies, stating that the upcoming strategic plan will be for the next 6 years to align with state and utility decarbonization goals. Energy Trust will also begin the transition to multiyear planning. To enable the organization to make these changes, the advisory councils and board can anticipate a lighter approach to budgeting for 2025. For example, there will not be the typical in-depth market intelligence discussions. There will be a joint advisory council meeting on January 10 and a board, advisory council and utility workshop on March 13. Staff will continue to bring relevant and timely topics to councils throughout the year.

*Discussion*

None.

*Next steps*

None.

### **4. Public Comment**

No public comment.

### **5. Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 11:07 a.m.