

MULTIYEAR PLANNING INDUSTRIAL & AGRICULTURE STAKEHOLDERS WORKSHOP SUMMARY

Energy Trust held a virtual workshop February 27, 2025, for stakeholders interested in learning about and providing input on Energy Trust's energy efficiency programs and services for industrial and agriculture customers for the next five years. Staff presented information on the organization's background and services, 2025-2030 Strategic Plan and the transition to multiyear planning, replacing its current annual budgeting process. The workshop content also included high-level draft energy savings targets. Staff that manage industry and agriculture programs and services presented information on the sector's structure and offers and key strategies they plan to pursue:

- Increasing delivery capacity through outreach and account management
- Boosting incentives to enable additional and larger projects
- Proactive project development through relationship-building and technical support
- Evolving program design to include new lighting, midstream and small business offers

Participants could ask questions and respond to information presented during full group question and answer breaks, in the Zoom chat, in a short poll, in small group discussions and in a follow-up survey after the workshop. Energy Trust and other attendees answered questions throughout the presentation and those responses are not included here. The following are themes that emerged from participants, including specific comments and questions:

A high-touch approach emphasizing one-on-one work and program accessibility is key.

Energy Trust's high-touch work with customers was affirmed to be effective with all customers and especially priority customers. To increase accessibility of programs, streamlining should be considered. The learning curve can be steep, particularly at the initiation of projects. Additionally, growing midstream options was encouraged as they are easiest to use.

- *Underscore midstream options – easy entry and less paperwork for new customers.*
- *Beginning projects can be intimidating for new customers... The more we can help upfront to build momentum and funding the less strings and paperwork attached, that increases customer engagement.*

Storytelling and client spokespeople are promising strategies to attract new customers.

Past participants, long-term customers and trade representatives all make great spokespeople for Energy Trust. Use case studies as a promotion and outreach tool. To raise awareness of program offers and incentives, Energy Trust could consider identifying customers who are key community members to act as spokespeople and more broadly sharing customer success stories to attract new customers.

- *The agricultural community in Oregon is small. Energy Trust has published articles on different projects and it has had a big impact and builds trust for folks who have not already participated in the program.*
- *There is an example of a nursery owner that received incentives and now promotes Energy Trust's offers. Who are those key influencers that can then spread the word? Let them be the salespeople of their sector.*

When it comes to equity work, refine key targets and metrics for success.

Suggestions were offered on how to refine Energy Trust's equity metrics and targets with a particular focus on strategic data collection. Success could mean reaching more customers and engaging in more projects, and reaching those who are eligible but haven't yet participated. Data strategies around tracking priority customers in outreach and outcomes metrics will be key in this work.

- *How are you ensuring that you're prioritizing women-owned or minority-owned businesses? Do you have checklist or point scale, anything of that sort, to prioritize these communities?*
- *If you can standardize what you're looking for, and capture it at the close of a project, it would be helpful in developing your equity plan further. For example, if you get feedback that someone is having a hard time getting someone on the phone, then you know that's a gap.*

POLL RESULTS

What market factors do you think are most important to pay attention to? Select all that apply.

(Respondents = 20)

Labor shortages: 65%
Federal policy: 45%
Future legislation: 35%
Continued strong high-tech participation: 30%
Supply chain issues: 30%
Unanticipated change (e.g. pandemic): 10%
Potential for large, unexpected projects: 15%

What market factors are we missing?

- Given the magnitude and uncertainty of forecasted industrial electric savings it would be helpful to ground the proposed target and levelized cost of electricity to regional conservation potential studies.
- Need based assessment for projects/participants (i.e., what support do small or struggling businesses/industries need?).
- State level (Oregon) economic and climate policy. There is currently quite a bit of turbulence at the national/federal level. Oregon continues with clean energy and climate focused goals & policies.
- Curtailment or decreased federal funding for conservation projects. Implied by a couple of the items above is higher equipment prices and higher labor prices.
- Reduced funding sources (or impact).
- Related to high tech (and other subsectors) - relative competitiveness of (perceived) business climate in Oregon vs other states (less regulatory burden, lower labor and land costs...) AI data centers.
- The penetration rate for custom energy efficiency projects.
- AI - how that can help streamline programs / used to increase participation / ease.
- Industrial factors which lean away from incentives or energy efficiency investments.
- To expand on "Federal policy," I would note that this includes policy far beyond energy policy; for example, policy related to immigration, environmental protections, etc., will all impinge.
- Changes in energy costs.
- Economic recession.