



Oregon House of Representatives
Energy and Environment Committee

HB 2893 Public Comments
February 19, 2013

Dear Chair Bailey and members of the House Energy and Environment Committee:

Oregon Solar Energy Industries Association (OSEIA) is a non-profit trade group established in 1981 that represents a diverse constituency from small, residential solar installers to global manufacturers of panels and equipment, such as SolarWorld in Hillsboro and Advanced Energy in Bend.

OSEIA has been working with a broad coalition of stakeholders including Sierra Club, Environment Oregon, Oregonians for Renewable Energy Policy, Solar Oregon, and Citizens Utility Board to support “CLEAN* contracts” between utilities and renewable energy producers in Oregon. The concept is simple: establish an effective and efficient means to enable local, renewable energy development from small, residential rooftop solar PV to large-scale, commercial PV systems. Oregon’s “feed-in tariff” pilot program, which commenced in 2010, is essentially Oregon’s first attempt at CLEAN contracts. In just the first two years, this pilot program was responsible for over 5MW of installed capacity, or nearly 50% of the newly installed solar capacity within PGE and PacifiCorp’s service territories. That’s enough energy to power 1000 homes in Oregon.

The intent of our present legislative effort is to take what we’ve learned from the feed-in tariff pilot program and improve upon it with the next-generation CLEAN contract program before the pilot sunsets in 2014. In its current form, HB 2893 is very similar to a concept proposed several months ago by Portland General Electric to members of the coalition. PGE deserves credit for seeking a long-term solution, and certain elements of its proposal are worthy of merit, but it lacks the fundamental simplicity of a CLEAN contracts program and instead relies on a combination of tax credits and rebates with an energy payment from the utility. These added variables introduce uncertainty and will likely reduce program participation and make it more difficult to finance projects. Moreover, where the current pilot program is a proven alternative to the conventional net-metering program, OSEIA is not convinced HB 2893 will produce a similar impact. In fact, we fear it may inhibit the growth of solar energy development in Oregon, resulting in fewer systems and a loss of jobs.

OSEIA is not prepared to endorse HB 2893 at this time. We are, however, committed to working with this committee and all stakeholders to craft smart policy that promotes solar energy – a carbon-free resource – to help Oregonians achieve greater energy independence, enhance the resilience of the electrical grid, and support a stronger innovation economy in this great state.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Glenn Montgomery", written in a cursive style.

Glenn Montgomery, Executive Director, OSEIA

* CLEAN is often used as an acronym for “Clean Local Energy Accessible Now.”