

Presentation to the Oregon House Energy and Environment Committee

January 19, 2013 on HB 2795 & HB 2796

By John R. Cogar, Lake County, (Oregon's Most Renewable Energy County).

I am a lifelong resident of Lake County. I was a real estate broker for 25 years, owned manufactured home dealerships in Lake and Klamath Counties, built subdivisions and have won awards for historical restoration work. I oversaw the installation of two ten kw solar systems under the Solar Pilot program. One system is at the Lake County Fair Grounds and the other at the Lake County Road Department. My home is basically off-grid with both solar electric and a solar thermal/biomass hot water heating system.

I have advocated for renewable energy and community power systems since the 1970's when I proposed a community owned geothermal heating system for the Town of Lakeview. My Town Council said that community ownership of energy resources was a bad idea. They pointed out that a geothermal system might put "Ol' AL Ramsey", (the Shell Oil Dealer)," out of business".

Klamath Falls City Planner, Eliot Allen, heard about my presentation, got my information and presented the concept to the Klamath Falls City Council who embraced the idea, applied to the US DOE and got grant money to build their downtown system.

Al Ramsey went out of business anyway and Lakeview still does not have a downtown heating system because the good ol' boys protected the "utility" by refusing to allow competition.

Since that time I have served on numerous boards and committees for Lake County, the Town of Lakeview and our Chamber of Commerce working on both economic development and renewable energy. This fall was ask to join the Lake County Renewable Energy Task Force by Solar Oregon to execute a Oregon DOE grant to promote RE in Lake County. I am also a Solar Ambassador for Solar Oregon.

I urge this committee to consider several points. The first is, Renewable Energy puts people to work in our communities doing weatherization and conservation work, (which always should be the first step), then installing renewable energy equipment. When we buy Oregon made products like Solar World panels made in Oregon, we put more people to work and keep that money at home.

Second, Community RE is a form of distributed generation owned by the consumer and created very close to the point of utilization. Community Renewable Energy does not require huge investments in new grid infrastructure. Because the facilities are owned by the consumer, the money that has heretofore been funneled away into corporate coffers to pay for coal mining, natural gas fracking and power plants in Utah and Nevada now stays in the community. Economists tell us that dollar circulates seven times.

The last point is, Community Solar is a mechanism of democracy. By that I mean that under current regulations only a privileged few have what it takes to utilize this technology. As it stands now, in order to be able to net meter, the consumer must have both the space on their house or property to install a

renewable energy system, they must have a clear access to the sun and they must get their neighbors blessing through the zoning process each time someone wants to install solar. The regulations require that the solar panel be put on the same property where the use takes place as well. This usually eliminates anyone who rents or leases property from installing a system.

Another case is my Historical Building in down town Lakeview. It is three stories tall, brick construction and built in 1912. I've looked into it. It would cost me \$10,000 up front to have a structural engineer certify the roof as sturdy enough to mount the panels on. Then I would have to put a new roof on the building because the one that is there is not going to last the life cycle of the solar system. Even if I did all that, the costs of installing the systems on my roof, (once I got permission from the SHPO folks) is almost double the cost of a ground mount system.

What this means is that by allowing community generation (which says that the place the power is generated no longer has to be at the place power is used), then we can simplify permitting and zoning issues. People who are unable, (or don't want to), install systems at their home or business can now have a system installed in a cost efficient manner and reap the benefits of investing in clean energy.

Do I think Net Metering is the way to go? It absolutely is not. It is a stop gap, throw the dog a bone, and get in the back of the bus, Jim Crow approach. Sorry Did I sound a little "harsh" there?? But if this is the best we can get, then it is a step forward.

Where we should really be going which is toward clean energy contracts....

The Feed in Tariff has proven itself around the world from Germany to Canada. Germany now owns over 50 % of the solar in the ENTIRE world in about five years using the Feed in Tariff... Do you know that the very worst place to generate solar in Oregon is better than the best place in Germany? Do you know that the vast majority of solar, wind and bio-gas renewable energy systems in Germany are mom and pop type systems receiving a fair return on investment they made in the future? The cost to the average meter holder was an increase of ONLY about Ten Dollars per month, \$0.33 cents per day....

There are those who wring their hands and wail about how the poor people can't afford any increase what so ever, no way, no how. They need to "get a grip" as the saying goes and see how investing in renewable energy puts people to work and helps break the cycle of poverty by keeping our money at home in our communities using the Feed in Tariff. If we do not invest in the future, we die in the past.

The utilities will scream that the sky is falling too, but the reality is renewable energy nuts like me are but a mosquito on the rhino's hind-parts in the huge scheme of things, but think of the tens of thousands, and hundreds of thousands of dollars Klamath Falls has kept in its community and the huge amount of money that was sucked out of Lakeview for large oil companies and foreign billionaire sheiks because Lakeview protected poor Ol' Al Ramsey, the Shell Oil utility....

I urge you to allow open competition. Please quit protecting the poor Ol' Al Ramsey's of the utility world.

I urge you to allow citizens, people like me and thousands of other Oregonians to invest in the future with all the different kinds of renewable energy resources (like HB 2796 and SB 562) with wind, bio-mass, bio-gas, fuel cells, geothermal, and small hydro, not just solar.

I would urge you to add this point of use language to HB 2796 to allow off-premises power production to apply to the net metering law. I have eight accounts with my main utility and they have no problem adding all those accounts up when they send me a bill. Surly they could figure out how to add eight accounts together then subtract energy being produced by one more meter.

I urge you to learn about Clean Energy Contracts. See further information from Paul Gipe, one of Americas FIT experts at <http://www.wind-works.org/cms/index.php?id=497> Please contact me at eco-oregon@hotmail.com or 541-417-1143 if I may provide you with any more information.

Thank you,

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