

Dear Representative Jessica Vega Pederson,

March 3, 2015

Re: HB 2833

The legislation requiring 1.5% of new public construction be dedicated to solar technologies is important to the solar industry. Not only does it show that Oregon is forward looking and want to take a lead in environmental stewardship, it also demonstrates Oregon's commitment to building a solar industry in the state. The legislation has made Oregon attractive for the solar manufacturing industry but has also supported the local solar industry as it grows and put Oregonians to work while keeping more of our energy dollars in state.

The goal of the solar industry is to continue to reduce cost of installed solar systems while at the same time providing a durable product that will still be providing power for the next generation. As hard costs continue to decrease, such as solar panel costs, soft costs still provide barriers as the public, utilities, regulators, and inspectors learn to appropriately adapt to this new technology. The 1.5% is providing the bridge that allows the solar industry and user to gain the experience and acceptance that is needed for solar system to provide sound contributions to the regions energy mix.

There are now many new public building that have incorporated solar into their building and this has the added benefit of bringing the energy considerations to the forefront in building decisions. In the long-term, the energy needed to operate the building is reduce and the public health is improved by providing cleaner air than would exist of coal and natural gas were used to produce the power. The day will come when other uses of fossil fuels will make burning them look foolish. The 1.5% for solar in public building is the logic way to make the gradual transition without spiking the cost of energy.

Inclusion of woody biomass does not seem to fit with the original intensions of the legislation. Partially the idea was that it is easier to get funds for initial construction than to get continuing funds for purchasing fuel and electricity. Woody biomass does add to the continuing cost of operating the building and this cost is likely to increase with time as nearby supplies of the cheap biomass are utilities and one must go further afield to obtain new supplies.

Burning woody biomass is not a new technology although the technology is advancing as the need for clear burning systems are increasing. It is uncertain if there is a significant cost to burning woody biomass to produce heat and/or electricity. As has been shown with the BETC, once biomass facilities were allowed to compete for limited funds, solar systems were not able to compete. On the environmental side, emissions from burning woody biomass, especially small particulates, can affect the air shed and compete with other industries that need to utilize the air shed to keep in business.

Please let me know what you are doing to maintain the status of the 1.5% for solar legislation.

Respectfully yours,

Frank Vignola

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