

Representative Brock Smith

Member, House Committee on Energy and Environment

Representative Helm

Chair, House Committee on Energy and Environment

RE: Hearing Testimony for HB 2618

I regret that I cannot attend today's hearing in person and thank you for your time and service on this critical bill that supports our state's energy, environmental and public safety goals. Distributed solar electricity plus storage is a readily available technology with the capacity to:

- increase electric grid resiliency,
- bolster public safety and
- reduce wasteful transmission losses while simultaneously
- mitigating and adapting to climate change.

Passage of this bill will enable our state to leverage tax payer investments with federal income tax credits, utility incentives and grant funds prior to the sunset of the Federal ITC resulting in net financial benefits for the communities, homes and businesses participating in the program.

As a consultant in sustainable built environments residing on the Oregon Coast for over 20 years, I am painfully aware of the susceptibility of our energy systems. The entire Oregon coast energy matrix, and those of most other rural communities, are 100% reliant on imported energy through storm event and catastrophe exposed supply lines. Given the accessibility of solar plus storage, this need not be the case. Investments in distributed, clean energy with battery storage should be a priority as a viable, reliable tool to strengthen our resiliency infrastructure and recovery capacity. With our knowledge of anticipated seismic events and exposure to the increasingly frequent catastrophic events related to climate change, it would be negligent to ignore this opportunity for fostering private investments in clean distributed energy systems.

This bill also extends access to renewable energy generation to those most in need – the marginalized communities of low income and rural residents in areas not served by utilities offering solar incentives. This bill levels the solar return on investment across the state by providing increased funding for projects residing in areas lacking utility incentives. The 15% set aside and enhanced funding ratios for benefits to low income households will result in improving the daily standard of living for Oregonians currently faced with the regular decision of paying for food or for warmth.

Your support of this bill will result in stronger communities, a stabilization of Oregon's emerging solar workforce and measurable progress toward our climate mitigation and adaptation goals.

Respectfully,

Shannon Souza, PE

Policy Chair, OSEIA; Board Director, Professional Engineers of Oregon; Principal, Sol Coast Companies

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