



February 22, 2019

House Committee on Energy and the Environment
Chair Ken Helm
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Chair Helm, Vice-Chairs Schouten and Reschke, and members of the committee,

The Oregon Solar Energy Industries Association (OSEIA) is a trade association founded in 1981 to promote clean, renewable, solar technologies. OSEIA members include businesses, non-profit groups, and other solar industry stakeholders. We provide a unified voice of the solar industry and focus exclusively on the solar value chain; from workforce development to permitting, advocacy, policy, and regulation for manufacturing, residential, commercial, community, and utility scale solar projects on the local, state and regional level.

OSEIA urges your support of HB 2329. Solar energy is home-grown, low-risk, is noise, air and carbon pollution-free, and an industry with the potential for hundreds more Oregon living-wage jobs. Solar is modular – the same panel on your roof can be installed in a major solar array, thousands of acres large. It is a clean, flexible, and reliable source of Oregon generated power.

However, instead of looking for ways to increase solar in Oregon and streamline processes, our industry finds many hurdles, including the existing Energy Facility Siting Council (EFSC) process. The solar industry values our pioneering land-use system and wants to see our special Oregon places protected. Unfortunately, the EFSC process tries to force a round peg into a square hole. EFSC was created to site nuclear plants; the differences between solar and nuclear are too many to count. Yet solar projects going through EFSC still have to conduct noise studies, volcano studies and earthquake studies. These unnecessary studies waste valuable time and money, forcing project costs up during a time when technology is bringing solar costs down. Unfortunately, even during conversations to update the EFSC process for solar, Department of Energy staff have been unwilling to reexamine current rules with an eye for common sense. These increased costs hurt ratepayers and cause projects to stall, sometimes killing projects all together.

On the other hand, many Oregon counties have a process that is flexible, reasonable and timely. Many developers would prefer to work with counties, rather than the burdensome EFSC process, even if that means increased county requirements. Solar developers are happy to conduct studies where they make sense – wildlife studies, historical artifact studies – these make sense and OSEIA's members are used to these kinds of requirements. When the requirements are clear, as they are with counties, the process can be expeditious, which is vital when securing capital for large projects. The longer a siting process



continues, the more likely it is that the capital will go elsewhere, to an easier project. We fear that the EFSC process is costing Oregon counties and cities money in mothballed projects. OSEIA has lost several members that have decided to stop doing business in Oregon because of the various hurdles in siting projects.

In many ways, Oregon is set up to have a robust renewable energy market. The Legislature has passed a Renewable Portfolio Standard that requires 50% of our energy be renewable. OSEIA hopes to see the Clean Energy Jobs bill pass and pave the way for more renewables. The Legislature approved a community solar program. There is so much potential for solar development and the jobs that come with it, but only if Oregon doesn't hamstring itself with a siting process that is not appropriate for solar and is so expensive and long that projects don't pencil or lose investment funding.

OSEIA is happy to work with ODOE, with counties, and with the Legislature to improve the process. Something must change in order for Oregon to remain relevant for projects that take advantage of economies of scale and fulfill the legislative intent of the clean energy policies this body has passed into law.

OSEIA urges your support of HB 2329 to decrease red tape for a growing industry and we look forward to working with you on ways to improve the process.

Angela Crowley-Koch
Executive Director
Oregon Solar Energy Industries Association (OSEIA)