



Rep. Ken Helm, Chair  
House Energy and Environment Committee  
900 Court St. NE, H-490  
Salem, Oregon 97301  
Email: rep.kenhelm@oregonlegislature.gov  
RE: EASE Supports 8%/PURPA Bill - HB 2857

Chair Helm:

This letter is to urge the House Energy and Environment Committee to pass House Bill 2857, to protect and promote renewable energy development, particularly in central Oregon. In places like Wasco, Harney, Lake and Deschutes County solar development offers a critical opportunity to have infrastructure investment that is hard to come by – and resultant property tax opportunities to help fund school, roads, and other critical services that face substantial budget constraints. Business development opportunities are gained for companies like EASE LLC that support solar projects operations and maintenance activities. EASE has invested capital resources and time into supporting the success of present QF contracts in jeopardy of un-anticipated rate changes that HB 2857 addresses. These facilities are long term solutions that will provide business growth for years to come.

PURPA standard contracts and rates being restored to at least 10 MW is critical to having viable scale for east-side, high-desert, high-sun projects to be able to sell power to Portland area load, as well as locally, given interconnection and transmission cost burdens that increase financial viability hurdles for smaller projects. PURPA development has been the primary source of Oregon solar. Indeed, EASE and other small companies in central OR support the standard contract size being increased to 20 MW or higher, in order to ensure critical scale and support maximal development opportunity.

The OPUC unwisely has been steadily clipping the wings of PURPA in Oregon, threatening all of the good PURPA QF development brings to rural Oregon. Business development opportunities should be encouraged, rather than stifled, especially in central Oregon. HB 2857 is a solution to that issue.

### **Solar and PURPA are good for rural Oregon, especially Central and Eastern.**

- **PURPA is the source of almost all the utility-scale solar construction in Oregon**, resulting in hundreds of millions of dollars of solar investment in central and eastern Oregon.
- **PURPA is a very efficient market tool to rally entrepreneurial and capital resources** to develop green energy -- all set based on utility's own wholesale costs. Better than monopoly-owned bureaucratic utility rate-based projects, that tend to bloat costs.
- **Hundred of millions of dollars of PURPA-driven solar economic development in rural Eastern & Central Oregon Counties in past 3 years** -- Washington, Crook, Deschutes, Lake, Klamath, Malheur, and Harney County.
- **Financial benefits – current and potential:**
  - *County depending on solar project tax revenue and economic development.*
  - *Biggest injection of development in Harney County since the Mill.*



- *Property Tax Revenue*: \$420,000 per year for 20 years (from PURPA QF projects currently planned in Harney County!)
- *Economic Development*: to land owners, construction costs, and on-going maintenance with local contractors and employees.
- *Opportunity to attract data centers* requiring clean energy solutions.
- *Revenue to electric cooperatives* through transmission services.
- *Revenue to BPA for wheeling*, which helps coop and public power costs.
- **Concerns & Requests – why HB 2857 is needed:**
  - **PURPA should be strengthened, not weakened.** Commission hasn't done this, attacking PURPA, which is why legislature needs to act. Concerned about hasty Commission actions without proper evidence or consideration.
  - **Concerned that utilities are abusing** their roles in the PURPA contracting process, litigation, interconnection process, and ratepayer money to evade their PURPA obligations, by creating delay, risk, and cost. (And to decrease competition.) HB 2857 addresses this with better access to courts for QFs.
  - **Should be increasing standard contracts and rates sizes** to 10 or even 20 MW or 40 MW, especially given higher interconnection costs in sunny parts of state, need for bigger projects to be viable (higher voltage power lines).
  - **Also need a more reliable process for PURPA projects above standard contract threshold:** 20-40 MW needed. This would improve HB 2857 further.
- **PURPA is good, creates competitive pressures to reduce rates for ratepayers.** Coops do things cheaper than investor-owned-utilities because they *don't* have investor-owned utilities' rate-basing incentives to bloat costs. PURPA developers similarly look for ways to do things cheaper – which is a good thing for Oregon to support and encourage

Respectfully,

Mark Boissevain, owner

Energy Automation Solutions Engineering – EASE LLC