

March 26, 2019
House Committee on Energy and the Environment
Chair Ken Helm
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301

RE HB 2496

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

Thank you for investing the time and resources in consideration of HB 2496.

I am the principal of Sol Coast Companies, a sustainability consulting and contracting firm based in Coos Bay Oregon with a mission to support strategic growth, responsible development and sustainable living. I was recently a candidate for our state senate seat for district 1 with a vision of a thriving resilient Oregon – in which I recognize the critical role that distributed energy plays in strengthening our electric grid resilience. I currently serve as a board director for the Professional Engineers of Oregon and Oregon Solar Energy Industry Association, and it is in my capacity as the Policy chair for OSEIA's board that I submit these comments in support of HB 2496.

Included in our company's scope of services is solar design consultation, for which we are a trade ally with the Energy Trust of Oregon. In this capacity we have provided design consultation services on numerous public construction projects that fall under the 1.5% Green Energy Technology law. This personal experience, combined with the experiences of other OSEIA member companies, compelled us to draft a legislative concept intent upon strengthening and streamlining this valuable law in two ways: 1) including battery storage with solar as an allowed Green Energy Technology and 2) defining a clear, and consistent compliance mechanism.

Since the original legislation was passed in 2007, battery storage technology enjoyed significant advances resulting in readily available solar plus storage solutions designed to meet basic human needs during even prolonged utility outages. As many of our communities are 100% reliant on imported energy, solar plus storage technology offers us an invaluable resource for meeting basic human needs through our medical, public safety, sheltering and recovery facilities. In the case of communities currently experiencing frequent, non-catastrophe related, utility outages these systems can provide a seamless continuation of lighting, communication and refrigeration services without increasing our reliance on fossil fuels imported through susceptible supply lines.

The existing 1.5% GET law has not enjoyed consistent compliance and, at present, there is no defined enforcement mechanism. With this in mind we have worked with the bill sponsor and other stake holders to identify an efficient mechanism for compliance determination in an existing regulatory framework. One such as that provided in the original bill language, in which compliance review and enforcement would reside with building codes as is the case with every other energy related construction code. Alternately, in our HB 2496-2 amendment we have identified a prequalification path contracting agencies acknowledging compliance with the 1.5% requirement.

While HB 2496-3 does not include a compliance mechanism, we have enjoyed the good faith spirit of our workgroups with Rep. Holvey and other stakeholders and support other bill elements that define pathways for redirection of funds to energy efficiency and/or consolidation of multi project off site energy generation and trust that through our continued discussions we can identify a mutually agreeable compliance mechanism for this worthy law.

Respectfully,

Shannon Souza, PE

Principal

Sol Coast Companies

Policy Chair

OSEIA