



House Committee on Veterans and Emergency Management  
Oregon State Capitol  
900 Court St. NE  
Salem Oregon 97301

March 10, 2021

Dear Chair Evans, Vice-Chair Lewis, Vice-Chair Meek, and members of the committee,

The Oregon Solar + Storage Industries Association (OSSIA) is a trade association founded in 1981 to promote clean, renewable, solar technologies. OSSIA 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 and storage projects on the local, state and regional level.

OSSIA strongly supports HB 2304 to create the Oregon Disaster Recovery Authority. As Oregonians witnessed last fall during the forest fires and last month during the snow and ice storm, we are unprepared for power outages during emergencies. Last month, PGE had their largest outage in history and it took over a week for thousands of customers to have power restored. With forest fire seasons becoming longer and hotter, there will be more public safety power shut-offs every year. Not to mention the impending Big One earthquake. Oregon is in desperate need of a state-wide plan for emergency power generation.

During these times of power outages, relying only on diesel generators for back-up power is not sustainable. Diesel can only be stored for six to twelve months and during emergencies it may be difficult to find more diesel. In addition, burning diesel has serious health effects, especially with long-term exposure.

There is technology that will provide power without the need to purchase fuel in an emergency: solar + storage. When solar is connected to battery back-up, it can keep homes, businesses and public buildings running during emergencies, without the need to secure fuel. Critical facilities need to have reliable back-up power. A fire station in Portland has installed solar + storage to create its own microgrid that keeps things running when the grid is down. The Beaverton Public Safety Center also has a solar + storage microgrid.

While this is good progress, one public safety facility in Portland and one in Beaverton are not enough. Oregon needs a plan to have microgrids fueled by renewable energy throughout the state, especially at critical facilities in high-risk areas.

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We worry that without a centralized office and plan on emergency preparedness, the effort to have a reliable source of back-up power generation will continue to be ad hoc and left up to local communities to figure out. If we can be strategic about preparedness and recovery, we should and we should start now.

An Oregon Disaster Recovery Authority could start right away to plan for the critical facilities that need back-up power first, and plan for ways to work with communities and get those projects started. OSSIA urges this committee to support HB 2304 and get Oregon started down the path of being prepared and able to make a quick recovery from disasters.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Angela Crowley-Koch". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Angela Crowley-Koch  
Executive Director