

ANALYSIS

Item 59: Department of Energy Solar for All

Analyst: Katie Bannikov

Request: Increase Federal Funds expenditure limitation for the Department of Energy by \$5,500,000 and authorize the establishment of two limited duration positions (0.66 FTE) to provide and administer incentives for the expansion of solar technology to low-income communities.

Analysis: The Oregon Department of Energy (ODOE) received approval to apply for a federal grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in September 2023 for rebates, subgrants, and workforce development activities relating to the Solar for All initiative. According to the EPA, the aim of the grant is to expand the number of low-income and disadvantaged communities primed for residential solar investment and enable access to affordable, resilient, and clean energy for millions of households. ODOE applied as the primary applicant on behalf of the Solar for All coalition, which also includes the Energy Trust of Oregon (ETO) and the Bonneville Environmental Foundation (BEF).

ODOE was awarded \$86.6 million for this grant program over a five-year period of performance on April 22, 2024. There is no state match requirement for these grant funds. The first year of grant funding will be used to plan and develop the grant programs, including leveraging existing solar technology incentive and support platforms already in use, in the following areas: rebates for single family residences, multi-family housing, subgrants to coalition partners for community solar projects, and related workforce development activities.

Two full-time limited duration positions (0.66 FTE), an Operations Policy Analyst 3 and Program Analyst 3, will assist in program development and design, coordination of the scope of work with coalition partners and interested parties and preparing the launch of workforce development opportunities.

In addition to position costs, ODOE anticipates incurring expenditures to conduct outreach and engagement activities, program development and design, software development, and working with ETO and BEF to implement community solar in investor-owned utility and consumer owned utility service areas.

Recommendation: The Legislative Fiscal Office recommends that the Emergency Board increase the Federal Funds expenditure limitation for the Department of Energy by \$5,500,000 and authorize the establishment of two limited duration positions (0.66 FTE) to provide and administer incentives for the expansion of solar technology to low-income communities through the Solar for All program.

Request: Increase Federal Funds expenditure limitation by \$5.5 million for a Solar For All grant awarded by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and establish two positions (0.66 full-time equivalent).

Recommendation: Approve the request.

Discussion: The Oregon Department of Energy (ODOE) appeared before the Joint Interim Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Natural Resources on September 28, 2023, to receive authorization to apply for the Solar for All grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Since the submission of the grant application in October of 2023, ODOE has been awarded \$86.6 million to fund the program over the five-year performance period of the grant. ODOE has partnered with the Energy Trust of Oregon and the Bonneville Environmental Foundation to form the Oregon Solar for All Coalition (Coalition) to implement the grant. The grant is focused on making benefits of solar technologies available to low-income households and disadvantaged communities. The Coalition will work to provide rebates for private homes as well as support for Oregon Community Solar projects. ODOE is requesting the establishment of one permanent full-time Operations and Policy Analyst 3 position (0.33 FTE) and one permanent full-time Program Analyst 3 position (0.33 FTE) in the 2023-25 biennium to begin administration. The grant requires no state match.

Legal Reference: Increase Federal Funds expenditure limitation established by chapter 451, section 4, Oregon Laws 2023, for the Department of Energy by \$5,500,000 for the 2023-25 biennium.



Oregon

Tina Kotek, Governor



August 26, 2024

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The Honorable Senator Rob Wagner, Co-Chair
The Honorable Representative Julie Fahey, Co-Chair
State Emergency Board
900 Court Street NE
H-178 State Capitol
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Dear Co-Chairs:

Nature of the Request

The Oregon Department of Energy (ODOE) requests a federal fund limitation increase of \$5.5 million to begin implementation of the Solar for All grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. ODOE is the primary applicant of the Oregon Solar for All Coalition which includes Energy Trust of Oregon and Bonneville Environmental Foundation as coalition partners. ODOE also requests authority to establish a 0.33 FTE full time Operations Policy Analyst 3 and 0.33 FTE full time Program Analyst 3 position to assist with program development and roll out.

Agency Action

The federal grant opportunity was released on June 28, 2023. The Oregon Department of Energy received permission to apply for the grant from the September Interim Joint Committee on Ways and Means and submitted the coalition application on October 10, 2023, requesting \$138 million. On April 22, 2024, U.S. EPA announced the Oregon Solar for All coalition was awarded \$86.6 million. The grant has a five-year performance period. The Oregon Solar for All Coalition will use the first year of the five-year grant to plan and develop the grant-funded programs, including leveraging existing solar technology incentives and support platforms already in use. The grant does not require a state match but there is an opportunity to increase the number of Oregonians served if existing state programs continue.

There are five major scopes of work that will be undertaken with these funds – all centered on making the benefits of solar technology accessible for low-income households and disadvantaged communities. These distinct scopes of work include rebates for single family residences; rebates for multi-family housing; funding and support for Oregon Community Solar projects within Investor-Owned Utility territory through a subgrant to Energy Trust of Oregon¹; funding and support for community solar projects within Consumer-Owned Utility territory

¹ Oregon Community Solar denotes a specific program operated by the Oregon Public Utilities Commission (OPUC), whereas community solar is similar in scope but outside OPUC regulation.

through a subgrant to Bonneville Environmental Foundation; and related workforce development activities.

ODOE anticipates expending up to \$5.5 million in the current biennium to conduct activities including outreach and engagement with Community Based Organizations, industry, environmental justice organizations and Tribes; program development and design; software development; and working with ETO and BEF to implement community solar in investor-owned utility and consumer owned utility service areas. We also hope to begin providing incentives by late 2025.

Action Requested

ODOE requests a federal fund limitation increase of \$5,500,000 to expend Solar for All funds and authority to establish a 0.33 FTE full time Operations Policy Analyst 3 and 0.33 full time Program Analyst 3 to assist in program development and design, provide coordination on the five scopes of work with coalition partners and interested parties, and work on preparing the launch of workforce development opportunities.

Legislation Affected

Chapter 451 Section 2

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Janine Benner".

Janine Benner
Director

cc: Sione Filimoehala, CFO
Katie Bannikov, LFO

Link to the solicitation: [Solar for All | US EPA](#)