



Commercial/Industrial Electrical - Limited Energy - BE SOLAR

Joint Committee on Ways and Means subcommittee on Natural Resources
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court St. NE
Salem Oregon 97301

February 7, 2025

Dear Co-chairs Frederick and Levy, and members of the committee,

My name is Jerry Samaniego. I'm the Solar Sales Manager at Benton Electric Inc. We are a family owned (now woman owned) full service electrical contractor. We work all over the state mainly serving the Willamette Valley and central coast for three generations. Benton Electric started in 1967 and has been doing solar since 2006. We have been bigger and smaller over the years, but we currently have seven employees. We have worked on all types of solar and storage projects from basic grid tied PV systems, to some off-grid battery based systems all the way up to commercial systems larger than one MegaWatt. The Oregon Solar Plus Storage Rebate Program has been a big boost for our business. Before funding ran out last year, this Rebate Program allowed us to make solar a reality for over 100 customers. This number includes approximately 10 low-income families and one low income service provider who would otherwise not have been able to afford to go solar. This rebate program also allowed Energy Storage to be added to about a dozen homes. These projects would not have been feasible without the assistance of the Oregon Solar and Storage Rebate Program.

Please refund the Solar + Storage rebate program by including \$20 million for this program in ODOE's base budget. It was difficult for our customers and our business, when funds ran out last year. In fact, we've had to lay off some staff since that funding ran out. I ask you to allow the solar industry to help Oregon families who can't afford the recent utility rate hikes to have an alternative solution.

Lastly, from a business standpoint, the lack of funding made budgeting difficult to be able to sustain the backbone of our company, the employees. Please support robust funding for the Solar and Storage Rebate program.

Sincerely,

Jerry Samaniego
Solar Sales Manager, Benton Electric Inc.