

Renewable Energy Advisory Council Meeting Notes

November 18, 2020

Attending from the council:

April Snell, Oregon Water Resources
Congress
Brikky King, All Pacific Mortgage
Erik Anderson, Pacific Power
Jaimes Valdez, Portland Clean Energy
Community Benefits Fund
John Cornwell, Oregon Department of
Energy

Josh Halley, Portland General Electric
Josh Peterson, University of Oregon
Les Perkins, Farmers Irrigation District
Raphaella Hsu-Flanders, Bonneville
Environmental Foundation
Suzanne Leta, SunPower

Attending from Energy Trust:

Betsy Kauffman
Dave McClelland
Lizzie Rubado
Matt Getchell
Jeni Hall
Kyle Petrocine
Sue Fletcher
Julianne Thacher
Joshua Reed
Mark Wyman
Chris Holloway
Jay Ward
Tyrone Henry
Derek Olson
Michael Colgrove
Peter West
Quinn Cherf

Hawii Boriyo
Shayna Choulet
Caryn Appler
Hannah Cruz
Mackenzie Kurtzner
Debbie Menashe
Alina Lambert
Fred Gordon
Robert Wyllie
Gayle Roughton
Shelly Carlton
Dave Moldal
Cheryle Easton
Melanie Bissonnette
Samuel Birru

Others attending:

Alexia Kelly, Energy Trust board member
Susan Brodahl, Energy Trust board member
Cathy Chappell, TRC
Diane Henkels, Small Business Advocates
Heather Moline, NW Energy Coalition

Kari Greer, Pacific Power
Katie Hawley, TRC
Matt Christie, TRC
Starlinda Morris, Pence Construction
Tess Jordan, Portland General Electric

1. Welcome, Introductions and Announcements

Betsy Kauffman, sector lead for renewables, convened the meeting at 9:31 a.m. on Zoom. The agenda, notes and presentation materials are available on Energy Trust's website at

<https://www.energytrust.org/about/public-meetings/renewable-energy-advisory-council-meetings/>.

Peter West, director of energy programs, is retiring in Spring 2021. The hiring process will be a national search and the new director will likely start in May 2021. A survey will be circulated to the council to gather thoughts on the role.

Josh Halley with Portland General Electric announced that PGE has a new companywide goal of achieving net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2040. PGE also announced a new goal to meet customer expectations for clean energy, pledging to reduce greenhouse gas emissions associated with the power to customers by 80% by 2030 and an aspirational goal for zero greenhouse gas emission associated with the power served to customers by 2040.

2. Update on Equitable Solar Initiative

Topic summary

Matt Getchell, solar project manager, provided an update on the successful October 26 launch of the Equitable Solar Initiative program that received a dozen applications for new projects, equating to 1 MW of capacity and \$1.1 million in incentives. Applicants are weighted in the qualifying non-profit category, with some in affordable multifamily housing. Additional outreach to build relationships with tribes is necessary to provide equitable solutions.

Discussion

Members asked about the geographical location of these projects and to clarify the amount of funding available to tribal, affordable multi-family housing and eligible nonprofits for this incentive (Jaimes Valdez, Suzanne Leta). Many projects reside in South Willamette Valley, Pacific Power territory, some in Southern Oregon, and some in Portland General Electric territory. Funding is still available for applicants and if there are unused funds from 2020, they will be carried over to 2021. Members suggest reevaluating the project size cap of 360 kW-AC to not add any additional barriers that would hinder the ability for communities to develop larger-scale projects and allow for commercial viability in Oregon. Production-based incentives may be a more valuable use of funds if the commercial size cap is increased (Jaimes Valdez, Suzanne Leta, Raphaela Hsu-Flanders).

Since the public meeting, 2020 Equitable Solar Initiative funding for Pacific Power has been fully subscribed. Additional funding will be made available January 4, 2021.

Next steps

None.

3. Budget Update

Topic summary

Betsy Kauffman presented a budget update and announced the final proposed budget will go to the board on December 11. Energy Trust strives to meet savings and generation targets with offers and services designed to support customers during the economic and social recovery related to the COVID-19 pandemic, invest in relationships and collaborations with other entities to meet common needs and future objectives, and enhance operating processes and internal culture to efficiently respond to change. Key takeaways from the October budget workshops include clarifying the need to serve communities and build relationships to reach energy goals,

expand outreach and work more efficiently and equitably to operate and expand the program portfolio.

Comments from the budget workshop show that people are interested in early long-term involvement with resilience planning and that Energy Trust needs to be proactive in reaching out to communities, while being inclusive and providing opportunities for community co-creation of new program offers. Diversity, equity and inclusion along with community outreach and collaboration are integral to creating shared goals. There is a need to expand storage and solar assistance and the work with PGE Smart Battery Pilot, microgrid feasibility, smart inverters and other controls. The OPUC recommendations on the draft budget include identifying and developing residential measures, particularly with greater peak impacts. Betsy Kauffman noted renewables, particularly when combined with storage, have peak management capability.

4. Solar Solutions for Energy Resilience

Topic summary

Jeni Hall, solar program manager, presented an update on the work that is being done to support community energy resilience planning, which was presented to the Renewable Advisory Council last year and shared definitions of energy resilience that are being applied to solar plus storage systems. Solar paired with advanced battery storage when strategically located can provide additional value to the grid and to the community and lower the electrical costs of the people that it serves and can be particularly valuable in multifamily housing. Resilient microgrid systems can lay the foundation for earthquake preparedness. A relatively new driver for energy resilience is the potential for a utility Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS) triggered by weather conditions that create a high risk for wildfire; Oregon's first PSPS was called by Portland General Electric in advance of the Labor Day windstorms. Resilience is a non-energy benefit that factors into customers decisions to invest in energy efficiency and renewable. Energy Trust has contracted with consultants including the Oregon Partnership for Disaster Resilience to validate and work on potential solutions to help communities meet their energy resilience goals. The solar program is completing Microgrid Feasibility Studies for critical facility sites around the state, including multifamily affordable housing, food banks, clinics and community shelters. There are 22 feasibility studies planned and so far; eight have been completed with the remainder being finalized in order to complete a draft report in early 2021. Defining critical facilities can vary depending on a community's priorities and are often a mix of public, private and nonprofit facilities. Staff acknowledged energy resilience is often a limited part of the conversation in Natural Hazard Mitigation Planning processes and utility infrastructure information is not necessarily something that emergency managers have access to.

Discussion

Members asked why 100% of the load is targeted instead of a lower percentage using load management and critical loads (Jaimes Valdez). Staff noted it's the easiest design standard and both utilities have provided advanced meters for interval data from these sites. This strategy also creates flexibility for the customer. Interconnected microgrids are important and this analysis allows emergency managers and the general community to gain a greater understanding of what resilience can look like (Les Perkins).

Next steps

None.

5. Upcoming Incentive for Community Solar

Topic summary

Dave McClelland, solar program manager, provided an update on community solar project incentives. Near term, the program will focus on a prescriptive incentive offer for projects that demonstrate equity goals that are less than 360 kW-AC in size. Betsy Kauffman noted a question came up at the October council meeting about funding larger community solar projects. Support for larger projects (≥ 360 kW-AC) is not compatible with Energy Trust's Renewable Energy Certificate policy but may be reconsidered in 2021 when the Energy Trust board reviews its policy and council members will be engaged in that review. To support smaller projects, the program will expand Equitable Solar Initiative incentives to include community solar projects, starting in early 2021. Available funding is weighted toward Portland General Electric territory. Incentives will also be available for Pacific Power projects, although funding is more constrained. To qualify, projects must be pre-certified in the Oregon Community Solar Program or on track for pre-certification within six months of incentive reservations. Additionally, the project must be installed by a solar trade ally and meet existing program installation requirements. To demonstrate a project's focus on equity goals, 50% of the project should be reserved for low-income customers or a project proponent that is a tribe or nonprofit will present a plan to enroll customers from underserved communities. These proposed eligibility criteria will be finalized along with other program development steps, including additional feedback from members, finalizing definitions and financial analysis.

Discussion

Members asked for clarification on aggregate projects exceeding the 360 kW-AC limitation and their allowance in the program (Suzanne Leta). Staff clarified projects can be up to 360 kW-AC, in aggregation, to comply with the Renewable Energy Certificate policy of Energy Trust and program requirements within the Community Solar Program.

Next steps

None.

6. Residential Non-energy Benefits Research

Topic summary

Jeni Hall and Mark Wyman, senior program manager on the residential team, presented research on non-energy benefits in energy efficiency, solar, battery storage and other distributed energy resources. The research found annual savings as a result of better health, fewer missed days at work and the use of battery storage and electric vehicle chargers; it also showed benefits related to energy resilience and reduced energy burden. The next steps are for Energy Trust to incorporate non-energy benefits into energy efficiency measure approval documents as appropriate. Pursuing program partnerships may help target interventions to discreet populations and in some cases reduce cost-effectiveness issues. Partnerships with public health or preventative care organizations around the state of Oregon could assist in serving customers.

Discussion

Members asked if similar research has been done on small commercial customers. Staff confirmed this is something that should be applied across the board for all customers and some assumptions can be made from residential customers to small business customers. Energy Trust worked with TRC companies to conduct a preliminary investigation into some of the non-energy benefits that may provide value to customers.

Next steps

None.

7. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

8. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 11:30 a.m.