

Renewable Energy Advisory Council Meeting Notes

February 15, 2023

Attending from the council:

Alan Beane, Geograde Constructors
Amy Schlusser, Oregon Department of Energy
Angela Crowley-Koch, Oregon Solar + Storage Industries Association
Anna Kim, Oregon Public Utility Commission
April Snell, Oregon Water Resources Congress

Jaimes Valdez, Portland Clean Energy Fund
Josh Peterson, Solar Monitoring Lab, University of Oregon
Les Perkins, Farmers Irrigation District
Ryan Harvey, Pacific Power
Tess Jordan, Portland General Electric

Attending from Energy Trust:

Abby Spegman
Alanna Hoyman-Browe
Alex Novie
Alina Lambert
Amanda Thompson
Amber Cole
Bayo Ware
Betsy Kauffman
Cheryle Easton
Dave Moldal
Elaine Dado
Elizabeth Fox
Fred Gordon

Hannah Cruz
Isaiah Kamrar
Jay Ward
Jeni Hall
Josh Reed
Juliette Poff
Kate Wellington
Kyle Petrocine
Lidia Garcia
Lizzie Rubado
Lori Lull
Matt Getchell
Megan Greenauer

Mike Colgrove
Natalia Ojeda
Robert Wyllie
Ryan Cook
Steve Lacey
Sue Fletcher
Taylor Ford
Taylor Navesken
Themba Mutepfa
Tracy Scott
Tyrone Henry

Others attending

Henry Lorenzen, Energy Trust Board
Joe Abraham, Oregon Public Utility Commission

Susan Brodahl, Energy Trust Board

Welcome and Announcements

Dave Moldal, Renewable Energy Sr. Program Manager, convened the meeting at 10:00 a.m. on Zoom. Notes were taken by Alina Lambert. 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/>.

Alan Beane is a new Renewable Advisory Council member; Lori Lull is a new Project Manager for Renewable Energy at Energy Trust.

1. Energy Trust Staffing Update

Topic summary

Tracy Scott, director of energy programs, provided a staffing update and announced that Lizzie Rubado is the new Director of the Innovation and Development Services, whose purpose is to find solutions that require additional sources of funding for renewable energy and energy efficiency projects that cannot be completed with funds from the public purpose charge. Alex Novie was announced as lead for the Communities and New Initiatives Sector. This new team is working to support communities and cross program initiatives including, community engagement and equity, utility strategy and support, and measure development and pilots.

2. OPUC Equity Metrics for Energy Trust & Solar Ambassadors

Topic summary

Alex Novie, Communities and New Initiatives Sector lead, presented the Oregon Public Utility Commission (OPUC) equity metrics for Energy Trust that were approved by OPUC in December 2022. The equity metrics are mandated by House Bill 3141 and the performance measures are a minimum expectation for the organization. OPUC Metric #3¹ is focused on reducing energy burden and is more energy efficiency focused. OPUC Metric #4² has a direct nexus with the Renewables Sector and is focused on achieving community resilience through solar plus storage projects. Staff are launching a solar plus storage offer mid-year. The metric includes a proposed 2023 target from OPUC staff that includes at least five community-based organizations being engaged in creating and evolving the solar plus storage offer.

Bayo Ware, Renewables Project Manager, presented the Solar Ambassador's program that is constructed to stimulate customer engagement and solar deployment in Black, Indigenous, people of color, immigrant and refugee communities. Community Energy Project and Solar Oregon are working on developing the curriculum for Solar Ambassadors. Recruitment and training will conclude in June. Solar Ambassadors supports equity Metric #2³. Additionally, Energy Trust has an additional metric in its Diversity Equity and Inclusion plan that includes indicators of success that are not currently in the OPUC equity metrics.

Discussion

Council members asked if Metric #3 is based only on the total number of offers, or if the amount of money is part of the metric or a separate metric (Jaimes Valdez). Alex Novie responded that the current metric is about getting the offer developed and then over time the metric will expand and scale. Metric #1 will be more focused on dollar investments. A council member added that the language in the metrics are set but the targets are up for discussion and OPUC welcomes comments (Anna Kim). Staff mentioned that there are two places where the Renewable Energy Advisory Council members are involved –Metric #2 and #4 – and asked members how they would like to remain engaged. OPUC staff set annual performance metrics every year. There

¹ **Equity Metric #3** - New and expanded low cost and no-cost offers to reduce energy burden created and launched.

² **Equity Metric #4** - Solar and solar-with storage system projects supported for low- and moderate-income residents in areas with limited infrastructure or high energy burden.

³ **Equity Metric #2** - Increased funding to support targeted outreach to environmental justice communities, including funding for community ambassadors, education, and workshops.

will be more outreach and the OPUC will look for opportunities in the budget process to consider if additional metrics should be added and incorporated into the budget process (Anna Kim). Council members requested more narrative along with the metrics themselves to hear about how the programs are impacting people directly (Jaimes Valdez).

Next steps

Staff are engaging with stakeholders that serve environmental justice communities to design and provide a solar plus storage program. Council members will have an opportunity to inform future efforts in the 2024 budget and action plan process.

3. Preliminary 2022 Results

Topic summary

Betsy Kauffman, sector lead for renewables, presented the 2022 generation and energy savings results. It was a strong year for renewable energy generation, particularly in Portland General Electric service area. Strong demand remains in the residential solar market and the average solar system size is now about 8kW, however cost increases may affect that in 2023. House Bill 3141, which requires the Renewable Sector to spend 25% of anticipated revenue to benefit customers experiencing low and moderate income, was achieved. For energy efficiency programs, inflation, general economic uncertainty, and skilled labor shortages all affected last year's results, which were under goal in several areas.

Discussion

An attendee inquired about the number of solar installations installed in rural areas. This past year, Energy Trust exceeded the goal for serving people with low and moderate incomes in PGE service area, but came in under goal for Pacific Power, which is more rural. Staff noted the sector is focused in 2023 on how we are serving people with low and moderate incomes in rural areas. In addition, expanding Solar Ambassadors to rural communities has been discussed and will be explored after the pilot is developed. Engaging Community Based Organizations in rural areas is a part of the OPUC metrics.

Next steps

None.

4. Community Agreements for the RAC

Topic summary

Bayo Ware, project manager for renewables, outlined how community agreements create an accountability framework, especially for groups with diverse and varying perspectives, lived experiences, and professional backgrounds. Agreements set the tone for the experience of being in the group, including communicating and participating in meetings. Community agreements will improve how we serve customers that we have historically underserved. The agreements will be a guide to help us in unattended actions. The council participated in a reflection discussing both positive and negative experiences in group or meeting settings.

Discussion

Council members suggested staying engaged and participating in meetings by keeping computer cameras on while participating virtually (Ryan Harvey) with the acknowledgement that being on camera is not always an option, especially in rural areas (Les Perkins). Members expressed that not having decision makers in the room can be a negative experience (Tess Jordan). An attendee noted that hybrid meetings can be challenging when not being able to see faces and there is a discomfort and an uneven power dynamic. Staff also shared that frustration

can come from not being prepared for a meeting or not understanding your audience. Council members suggested that perhaps the sample agreements presented are not suited for this type of meeting and the council members are good at engagement. Council members added it is helpful when there are clear questions being asked to members and information is provided ahead of time (Anna Kim, Ryan Harvey).

Members mentioned that it is helpful when there are direct questions and knowledge on how input is incorporated. Members suggested an approach of stepping up but also stepping back when there's too much input (Jaimes Valdez). Members have experience in various backgrounds and people are generally pretty good at jumping in on topics that they have experience in. Mandatory participation in conversation may lead to longer meetings but less meaningful dialogue (Les Perkins, Ryan Harvey).

Members expressed that the council could accept non-closure but suggested adding an addendum that over time there should be closure (Jaimes Valdez). An attendee stated the proposed agreements belong in a social setting rather a professional setting and do not reflect the members of the Renewable Advisory Council and their value as industry experts. While the council meetings are a professional space, discomfort and power dynamics are indeed part of that and social and racial disparities are indeed a part of that. There is a level of discomfort in the way that systems have been built (Jaimes Valdez).

Next steps

Members can email Bayo Ware (bayoan.ware@energytrust.org) with additional thoughts.

5. Board Discussion on Renewable Advisory Council

Topic Summary

Susan Brodahl, Energy Trust Board member, summarized the board's discussion on the purpose of the Renewable Advisory Council and the functions that it serves, concluding by asking council members what purpose or role the Renewable Energy Advisory Council serves for the organization, the Board and staff.

Discussion

Members expressed interest in providing the maximum benefit of the group of members' expertise for the customers' benefit (Anna Kim). There's uncertainty in how the Board takes council feedback. The role of the advisory council is to make requests of staff or elevate issues as necessary (Jaimes Valdez). The advisory council meetings are helpful in creating a space to connect with staff members and professionals within the industry and educate each other (Jaimes Valdez, Ryan Harvey, April Snell, Alan Beane). It's valuable to present the industry's thoughts and ensure that staff priorities and technical processes align with the industry (Angela Crowley-Koch). Members asked what communications are presented to the Board from the advisory council meetings (Jaimes Valdez, Angela Crowley-Koch). Susan Brodahl stated a presentation to the board at every meeting that summarizes items at the council meetings. The Renewable Energy Advisory Council focuses mostly on residential which limits the scope of its impact as there's a lot being missed in the commercial space (Josh Peterson). Receiving feedback from a diverse group is better overall for stakeholders and provides an opportunity to increase awareness of all the initiatives happening throughout the ecosystem and ways to coordinate and leverage one another's work (Amy Schlusser, Tess Jordan).

Energy expertise and feedback is beneficial to staff. The Renewable Energy Advisory Council and Conservation Advisory Council were put into the original grant agreement with the OPUC to inform the Board about programs. Industry experts were intended to provide expertise to bring

to the Board for program implementation. Staff shared that there has been an evolution of the advisory councils to become more of a benefit for staff rather than for the Board. The feedback is instrumental to the implementation and design of Energy Trust services and a diverse set of experts as a third-party entity to hold the organization accountable and responsible. The role of the Renewable Energy Advisory Council shifts depending on what's going on within the legislature and it's a place to bring strategies if needed.

Next steps

Board members would like to hear from staff, council members and the public on how the council can be altered to achieve more, do more for ratepayers and service area members.

6. Renewables Team Structure

Betsy Kauffman, sector lead for renewables, summarized a recent reorganization of the Renewables Sector staff into 'Market Ready Solutions' and 'Custom Solutions' teams. The Market Ready Solutions team will focus on mature and high-volume offerings, such as legacy solar programming, while the Custom Solutions team will focus on custom program offerings and piloting new offerings and products. These changes are internal-facing and will not impact customers or Trade Allies.

7. Public Comment

No public comment.

8. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 11:51 a.m.