

Renewable Energy Advisory Council Meeting Notes

January 16, 2025

Attending from the council:

Angela Crowley-Koch, Oregon Solar + Storage Industries Association
Joe Abraham, Oregon Public Utility Commission
Josh Peterson, Solar Monitoring Lab, University of Oregon
Stasia Brownell, Portland General Electric
Ryan Harvey, Pacific Power
Alan Beane, GeoGrade
April Snell, Oregon Water Resources Congress
Rob Del Mar, Oregon Department of Energy

Attending from Energy Trust:

Abi Sloan	Jeni Hall
Alicia Li	Jenny Urbina
Alina Lambert	Jess Siegel
Amanda Thompson	Josh Reed
Andy Wheeler	Julie McMorine
Betsy Kauffman	Kristin Sellers
Bryan Goodwin	Kyle Petrocine
Cameron Starr	Lori Lull
Carrie Wilhelm	Matt Getchell
Chris Lyons	Megan Greenauer
Cory Hertog	Melanie Bissonette
Dave McClelland	Merissa Larson
Dave Moldal	Mike Colgrove
Eduardo Beltrán	Natalia Ojeda
Ernie Guerrero	Nate Merrill
Elisa Simko	Renita Lamberth
Elizabeth Fox	Shannon Wall
Heather McNeill	Zach Sippel

Others attending:

Nikita Chan, CLEAResult

1. Welcome and announcements

Josh Reed, project manager, convened the meeting at 1:32 p.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/>.

Staff announced Energy Trust will receive \$20 million in grant funding over the next five years from the Portland Clean Energy Community Benefits Fund (PCEF) to implement Portland Solar for All. This will complement the statewide Solar for All program and focus on residential rooftop solar for customers with low incomes. Energy Trust plans to hire an outreach person and a technical assistance person for Solar for All and a program manager and project manager for Portland Solar for All.

2. Multiyear planning update

Topic summary

Mike Colgrove, Energy Trust's executive director, gave an update on multiyear planning. The plan is the organization's way of operationalizing its [2025-2030 Strategic Plan](#). The goal is to maximize acquisition of clean, affordable energy to help the state meet its decarbonization goals. Multiyear planning will free up time to engage more meaningfully with stakeholders to coordinate and implement programs. The longer time horizon will allow for developing longer-term relationships and building more infrastructure that enables a longer-term program focus and reaching more priority customers. Energy Trust will move toward 18-month forecasts done on a quarterly basis.

The plan will describe what we will do over the next five years and tie those activities to our long-term strategic outcomes. It will include a business plan, human resource plan, financial plan and complementary funding strategy and will detail targets for energy efficiency, renewable energy generation and battery storage.

Key engagement points for the plan:

- Mid-Feb – Mid-March – Energy Trust will hold five public stakeholder workshops including a session on renewable energy on March 6
- August 7 – Staff will release the draft multiyear plan and open 6-week public comment
- November – Staff will share how the draft plan is changing based on feedback before submitting to the board in December for final approval

Discussion

The council if the Diversity Advisory Council and Conservation Advisory Council would also receive presentations and have engagement opportunities (Josh Peterson). The other advisory councils, utility partners and the Oregon Public Utility Commission are also being engaged.

Next steps

An email with details on the engagements will be sent shortly after the meeting.

3. Enhanced report on Energy Trust solar and battery storage activity

Topic summary

Staff presented the enhanced Solar and Storage Market Summary Report. The information reflects data from project applications submitted to Energy Trust for an incentive. Staff expanded the weekly reports because the program has been collecting new data, it aligns with our core value of transparency, and it supports a competitive bid market. Energy Trust is now sharing system specific application data via this enhanced report showing average costs and average capacity for solar-only systems, solar + storage systems and storage-only systems. Additionally, customer purchase details are provided showing the number of trade ally reported systems purchased via financing methods, cash or unknown purchase methods for solar-only systems applying for incentives. Feedback for the enhanced report has been overwhelmingly positive.

Discussion

The council asked what the goal of Energy Trust's work in financing was (Joe Abraham). The overall goal is to decrease the cost of solar and improve consumer protection; the increased cost of financed solar is thought to be largely from dealer fees. The council asked if the difference accounts for interest (Joe Abraham) and suggested it might come from associated projects like roof repairs or enabling upgrades, making the project more expensive, so financing would be needed (Josh Peterson). Staff said interest is not the cause of increased costs; staff heard that it is specifically caused by high dealer fees. Companies nationally base their entire business models on financing.

The council asked if the report could include an itemized list of costs (Josh Peterson). That information is not collected; companies generally have widely varied itemized costs to create a competitive edge.

The council asked why Pacific Power customers receive higher solar incentives than Portland General Electric, but the reverse is true for battery storage incentives (Ryan Harvey). Incentives reflect what was budgeted for the utilities based on demand. Energy Trust manages the solar and storage incentives according to demand, so when there is a higher demand for an incentive, staff lower the incentive amount. As Pacific Power is launching its own battery storage incentive, it would be a good time to look at Pacific Power incentive amounts.

The council asked how many systems are installed by non-trade ally contractors (Ryan Harvey). Energy Trust incentivizes 40% of projects in investor-owned utility service areas, which is half of what it did four years ago, despite the increased numbers of projects it supports. This is partially driven by non-trade ally contractors using high pressure sales. The council said it would be useful to have some statistics showing the minimum, median and maximum for various values to give the reader an understanding of the range of values they could expect (Josh Peterson).

Next steps

Staff will keep the council engaged in these topics throughout the year.

4. Updates on 2025 legislative session

Topic summary

This was an open discussion on information related to the 2025 legislative session. Angela Crowley-Koch stated Oregon Solar + Storage Industries Association is working with partners on a state budget request to provide more funds for the ODOE Solar + Storage Rebate Program. The alternative plan is to create a solar + storage refundable tax credit for paired systems.

There is also a consumer protection bill seeking to address dealer fees and other challenges. Currently a legislative workgroup, which includes Energy Trust, is creating the bill language that would include dealer fees disclosure. The council asked if non-trade ally contractors could be required to disclose that Energy Trust incentives exist (Stasia Brownell). The statute could not identify Energy Trust specifically but perhaps the existence of incentives (Angela Crowley-Koch). OSSIA limits requirements on state agencies especially when information can change quickly and in ways that are more prescriptive than in other trades; however, it is a good idea to make them generally aware there are resources available. The hope is that households follow the best practice of receiving three bids, hopefully from at least one trade ally.

5. Public comment

Stasia Brownell announced Portland General Electric's Green Future Choice and Green Future Block Products will release requests for proposal for their marketing and Renewable Energy Credit supply in April. Anyone who has any relevant contacts can reach her at stasia.brownell@pgn.com. Energy Trust staff announced it is recruiting additional members for the Renewable Energy Advisory Council. There will be more details at upcoming meetings.

6. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 3:20 p.m. The next regular meeting of the council will be Thursday, April 17, at 1:30 p.m.