MULTIYEAR PLANNING RENEWABLES STAKEHOLDERS WORKSHOP SUMMARY

Energy Trust held a virtual workshop March 6, 2025, for stakeholders interested in learning about and providing input on Energy Trust's renewable energy programs and services for the next five years. Staff presented information on the organization's background and services, 2025-2030 Strategic Plan and the transition to multiyear planning, replacing its current annual budgeting process. Workshop content also presented draft energy generation targets. Staff that manage renewable energy programs and services presented information on the sector's structure and offers and key activities they plan to pursue:

- Evolving incentives to market change and needs, including for solar + storage, hydro and biopower projects, feasibility studies and other early-stage assistance, and developing a solar financing product

- Expanding assistance for priority customers, including with targeted campaigns and higher incentives, implementation of the federally funded Solar for All program in Oregon, and incentives for community solar

- Expanding work in energy resilience through community mapping and planning, technical and financial feasibility studies, funding and outreach

- Supporting customer education and trade allies

Participants could ask questions and respond to information presented during full group question and answer breaks, in the Zoom chat, in a short poll, in small group discussions and in a follow-up survey after the workshop. Energy Trust and other attendees answered questions throughout the presentation and those responses are not included here. The following are themes that emerged from participants, including specific comments and questions:

Customers, especially low- and moderate-income customers and other priority groups, face barriers that Energy Trust should anticipate and plan around.
Customers face financial barriers when it comes to installing solar, from upfront costs to maintenance and repairs over the lifetime of a solar system. Customers can also experience accessibility barriers and difficulties navigating options or lack education around renewable energy technologies and the benefits of solar + storage.

- *Customers want more financing options; make sure to elevate banks that don't have user dealer fees – can't use ITC (investment tax credit) to cover these; problematic when fees aren't disclosed.*
- *My team provides technical assistance to Justice 40 communities hoping to establish community microgrants and resilience hubs in their areas. Many of the communities we support very concerned about the federal de-prioritization on DEI and Environmental Justice funding.*
- *Cost in relation to capacity of funding and customer resources is a HUGE restriction to processing solar. I live in a high tree, low sunlight, low-income area and the cost for solar here is very high. Considering the costs I've seen for solar, what funding supports are actually planned? I do appreciate the long-term planning structure.*
- *We have been tracking Energy Trust's programs, especially Solar Ambassadors. One of the biggest learnings is on doing the time upfront for outreach, engagement, trust building, and education. Building in time and funding for that upfront engagement. A lot of*

what we are hearing from people is that a big barrier is cost as well as an inability to navigate and understand how to go about applying incentives.

- *I see a lot of existing Energy Trust customers, because of their changed situation from when they purchased solar to now, they haven't been able to maintain what the solar equipment is attached to. Inability to afford roof replacement is also a factor.*

There are abundant opportunities for collaboration with entities like community-based organizations, Tribal governments, trade organizations and utilities.
Mutually supportive collaborations might include financial assistance, customer education, outreach, and incentive awareness. Entities named during the workshop include Oregon Department of Energy, school districts, architects and engineers, and tribal governments.

- *How to approach deferred roof maintenance in very low-income situations. Is there any opportunity for collaboration form granting agencies for deferred maintenance?*
- *Are there any opportunities to partner with the NW Native Chamber to include projects completed on native land?*
- *I know Energy Trust has supported communities in considering microgrids in the past. I also know there is interest among various parties in exploring more complex, front-of-the-meter microgrids that could involve the utility in helping municipalities meet resilience goals related to emergency facilities (like planning for Cascadia). I think Energy Trust incentives could be important in supporting those projects, which may have increased above market costs.*
- *Outreach to faith communities to adopt solar; people need a lot of hand holding; churches and houses of worship are there philosophically but need to cultivate trust that advantages/incentives will be present.*
- *Is there anyone on Energy Trust staff tracking school districts and bonds for capital projects to do outreach to the schools to use their 1.5% requirement for renewable energy? And then some guidance about how to best stack or braid incentives? There have got to be some really great opportunities for public projects here. Who is or should track this?*
- *Do you have any bridge loans for orgs trying to use the ITC (investment tax credit) projects? We work in partnership with frontline and environmental justice communities to design clean energy projects and get a lot of inquiries around the ITC credits, but a lot of folks are not interested in putting money, doing paperwork, and waiting for IRA to repay. It would be great if Energy Trust could support even with that paperwork.*

POLL RESULTS

What do you see as the biggest challenge in the renewable energy market in the coming several years? Select all that apply. (Respondents = 37)

Uncertainty of incentives and tax credits: 59%
Inflation, supply chain, and technology costs: 54%
Interconnection challenges: 32%
Permitting and siting: 22%
Workforce capacity: 16%
Lack of knowledge about renewable options: 16%

What additional challenges have we missed?

- Trust in governmental incentives and programs. We often assume people want to take advantage of these programs, but there needs to be advocates encouraging and frankly, pushing, people to take action.
- Threat to the ITC (investment tax credit), tariffs, policy decisions that affect first cost.
- I wasn't able to attend the full presentation prior to this so may have missed it, but I've heard there are potential changes (i.e. reductions) coming to the compensation rate for net metered solar?
- Increasing demand for electricity beyond the ability of renewables to supply.
- Rural regions with high priority customers lacking local solar trade allies. People prefer to have a local company.
- Storage solutions to deal with late afternoon / early evening times.
- Critical repairs needed prior to installation.
- Trade policy.
- Not allowing energy generated to offset cost to the homeowner if they develop more power than they use.
- We work with exclusively low-income households and deferred maintenance of the roof is a huge barrier for households experiencing low income and stops projects in their tracks.