

Renewable Energy Advisory Council Meeting Notes

November 17, 2021

Attending from the council:

Alexia Kelly, Energy Trust Board Member
Angela Crowley-Koch, Oregon Solar +
Storage Industries Association
Anna Kim, Oregon Public Utility
Commission
April Snell, Oregon Water Resources
Congress
Erik Anderson, Pacific Power
Jaimes Valdez, Portland Clean Energy
Community Benefits Fund
John Cornwell, Oregon Department of
Energy

Josh Peterson, University of Oregon Solar
Radiation Monitoring Lab
Kacia Brockman, Oregon Public Utility
Commission
Les Perkins, Farmers Irrigation District
Max Greene, Renewable NW
Raphaela Hsu-Flanders, Bonneville
Environmental Foundation
Suzanne Leta, SunPower
Tess Jordan, Portland General Electric

Attending from Energy Trust:

Albert Stanfield
Alina Lambert
Amanda Thompson
Amber Cole
Art Sousa
Bayo Ware
Betsy Kauffman
Dave McClelland
Dave Moldal
Elaine Dado
Emily Estrada
Emma Clark
Fred Gordon
Greg Stokes
Hannah Cruz
Jeni Hall
Josh Reed

Julianne Thacher
Kyle Petrocine
Kyle Morrill
Laura Schaefer
Lizzie Rubado
MacKenzie Kurtzner
Matt Getchell
Michael Colgrove
Quinn Cherf
Robert Wyllie
Ryan Cook
Shelly Carlton
Sue Fletcher
Taylor Navesken
Tracy Scott
Tyrone Henry

Others attending:

Andy Huffman, Medford Water Commission
Brian Runyen, Medford Water Commission
Chris Wanner, Portland Water Bureau
Dan Allison, Portland Water Bureau
Don MacOdrum, TRC
Henry Lorenzen, Energy Trust Board
Member

Jed Jorgensen, Farmers Conservation
Alliance
Jeff Ballard, RH2
Knowledge Murphy, Multnomah County
Zach Sippel, Elemental

1. Welcome, Introductions and Announcements

Betsy Kauffman, sector lead for renewables, convened the meeting at 9:30 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/>.

Betsy Kauffman announced that Josh Halley and Suzanne Leta will no longer serve on the advisory council and thanked them for their valuable input. Tess Jordan was welcomed as the newest member of the Renewable Advisory Council, joining from Portland General Electric.

2. In-progress Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Plan for 2022

Topic summary

Tracy Scott, energy programs director, framed a discussion regarding Energy Trust's draft Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Plan for 2022. Insights from work in 2021 include the need for focusing on community engagement, hiring with intention and supplier diversity, and goals set to be based on community needs. In 2021, Energy Trust is on track to meet 18 out of 22 diversity, equity and inclusion targets. Staff is seeking input from council members on the upcoming plan for 2022.

Discussion

Members asked for clarification on what learnings have been presented in the process (Jaimes Valdez). Staff emphasized that community-led goals and activities need to be prioritized (Tracy Scott). A council member suggested that rural engagement be included in the prioritization of underserved communities, as generally not categorized into diversity, equity and inclusion groups (Alexia Kelly).

Next steps

In the coming months, staff will continue to seek feedback on the plan and will continue to meet with attendees from the 2021 diversity, equity and inclusion summits.

3. Solar Ambassadors National Renewable Energy Laboratory Grant Funding

Topic summary

Bayo Ware, project manager, presented the Renewable team goal to develop more funding by applying for a Solar Energy Innovation Grant from National Renewable Energy Laboratory. The grant application was developed in partnership with Verde, African American Alliance for Homeownership and several other community-based organizations. The project's education program will seed a network of Black, Indigenous and people of color "Solar Ambassadors," trusted solar advocates who are rooted in their communities and can help their neighbors navigate the process of installing solar and related home improvements. Staff intends to create solutions with this funding by developing a roadmap to solar, recruitment, curriculum and providing training to individuals to address common barriers including high cost, home readiness and low awareness.

Discussion

Members inquired about the possibility of the grant being used for community solar (Jaimes Valdez). Staff clarified that the focus of the grant is for homeowners in communities of color, however, a portion of the program could potentially filter to community solar (Bayo Ware). A member added that the Department of Energy's new Communities Local Energy Action

Program ties into this grant offering (Suzanne Leta). An attendee noted that trade allies would like to support this effort (Zach Sippel).

Next steps

Staff is waiting to hear back from National Renewable Energy Laboratory.

4. House Bill 3141 information and update

Topic summary

Kacia Brockman, a representative from the Oregon Public Utility Commission, presented changes that are likely to be seen as a result of House Bill 3141, including the shift of energy conservation funding out of the public purpose charge and into utility rates, the addition of distribution system connected technologies (DSCT) as eligible for funding, mandates that at least 25% of renewable energy funds be allocated to benefit low- and moderate-income customers and the extension of the public purpose charge through 2035. Current examples of DSCT that are being investigated include smart inverters and battery energy systems coupled with smart inverters and/or integrated controls capable of providing grid support.

Discussion

Members asked for clarity on the approach of focusing on smart inverters paired with solar as the form of incentivized DSCT, rather than a broader array of services. A narrow definition could make it more difficult to provide peak shaving (Alexia Kelly). Staff is approaching the definition with a narrower scope in the beginning with the intention of expanding the list of eligible technologies later (Kacia Brockman). Members discussed qualifying facilities and the interpretation that they are excluded from eligible DSCT. Members stated the current approach ensures that Energy Trust can get started on adding programs for DSCT in 2022 with a plan to continue discussion of nuances in 2022 as part of a larger discussion with stakeholders (Anna Kim). Oregon Solar+Storage Industries Association is okay with qualifying facilities not being included and agreed that starting small and expanding later makes sense (Angela Crowley-Koch). Members suggested that the Oregon Public Utility Commission continue to look into customer-supported renewables (Jed Jorgensen).

Next steps

None.

5. Community Solar Program Feedback

Topic summary

Bayo Ware informed members that the Renewables sector is looking at ways to provide assistance to community-led projects that fulfill the reserved carve-out capacity in the community solar program. This is in addition to the existing Community Solar Development Assistance funding and previously offered custom project incentives. Staff conducted eight interviews to gain insight into current needs and barriers for community-based organizations to be involved in the program. The two pathways include developing a roadmap to provide guidance for project proponents and providing coaching support with another organization. Details are still being developed, and staff are looking at supporting three to five projects in 2022.

Discussion

Members asked for clarification on interconnection permitting costs and whether this is supported through Community Solar Development Assistance (Angela Crowley-Koch). Staff explained that funding can be used for interconnection feasibility costs, although not interconnection permitting, and is separate from the proposed project support and coaching

(Bayo Ware, Lizzie Rubado). Members noted that there are many different barriers for community-based organizations and agreed that it would be helpful to have a programmatic tool that would help them to navigate identifying a project manager, potential sites, administrative assistance and demystifying the program (Jaimes Valdez, Raphaela Hsu-Flanders). Staff stated the coaching pathway is aimed at answering some of these questions and Energy Trust is interested in playing a role in being a liaison with utilities (Bayo Ware). A member added there's a role that the utility can play with larger customers in connecting available land with projects (Tess Jordan).

Next steps

Council members should send their feedback on the concept to Bayo Ware (bayoan.ware@energytrust.org) by Dec. 3.

6. Municipal PRV Hydro Scoping Study

Topic summary

Energy Trust conducted a study of 595 water pressure reduction sites across Energy Trust territory and engaged 21 municipalities to explore the hydro potential in municipal drinking water systems. Focusing on utilizing existing infrastructure is the quickest pathway for hydro development at this time. Results of the study indicate there are several 'good' and 'excellent' potential projects. Municipalities are not only focused on economic payback for these projects, but also sustainability goals. Staff will share this study with participating municipalities and work with Portland, Salem and Medford on advancing projects into development.

Discussion

Members asked if these projects generate energy only if water is flowing and the capacity factor that the facilities realize (Josh Peterson, Tess Jordan). Staff confirmed that water must be flowing through the project location to generate and the capacity is typically high; the entire year is taken into consideration as opposed to irrigation which is seasonal (Kyle Petrocine). Members asked if these projects are incentivized with Public Utility Regulatory Policies Act (PURPA) rates and also how Renewable Energy Certificates (REC) are treated (Tess Jordan, Jaimes Valdez). Net-metering rates are used when the site has enough load, although many have to opt for the qualifying facility rate since there is not enough on-site load to cover generation. Forthcoming green tariff options per House Bill 2021 will likely improve the economic performance of the qualifying facility sites. RECs are also dependent on the size of the project and work with the utility on when the project can retain RECs (Kyle Petrocine).

Next steps

None.

7. Board of Directors Recruitment

Topic summary

Greg Stokes, organizational development manager and staff liaison to the board, announced that the Energy Trust Board of Directors is recruiting two members. The two most important criteria for board members include 1) energy expertise management applied in the industrial manufacturing sector, and 2) community engagement expertise in working effectively with culturally and ethnically diverse communities. The deadline for applications through the online form (<https://energytrust.org/board-nomination-form/>) is December 10.

8. Public Comment

None.

9. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 11:27 a.m. The next meeting will likely be on Wednesday, February 16th at 9:30 am.