



Douglas County Global Warming Coalition
143 SE Lane Avenue
Roseburg, OR 97470

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Via email

Puc.filingcenter@state.or.us

Oregon Public Utilities Commission
PO Box 1088
Salem, OR 97308-1088

RE: Docket No. AR 603, Community Solar Rulemaking Stakeholder Feedback

Public Utility Commission (PUC) staff and Commissioners,

The Douglas County Global Warming Coalition, representing approximately 500 residents in our community, wishes to comment on the proposed rules for community solar as mandated by Senate Bill 1547. We appreciate the hard work and dedication of the Public Utility Commission and staff to ensure input from the public. However, we wish to register the following comments and concerns:

Section 860-088-0170
Low Income

This section strongly suggests that 5 per cent of a solar project dedicated to low income participation is sufficient to meet the mandate under law. Senate Bill 1547 clearly states that ten per cent low income participation is mandated. We would also refer to the definition of low income community manager in the proposed rules, Section 860-088-0010 Subsection 12) which states: "Low income community manager" means an entity awarded a contract by the Commission to facilitate project managers' compliance with the 10 per cent capacity of the community solar project allocation to the qualifying low-income customer requirement.

We agree with PacifiCorp's comments that "...Draft rules revert to the language in previous versions requiring the 10 per cent requirement be met by each project."

The Douglas County Global Warming Coalition recognizes that concerns have been raised that the ten per cent mandate may prove challenging for project investors. It is unclear to us that the limited experiences in other states necessarily apply in Oregon. However, if the Commission has an overarching concern in this matter, it is reasonable that a portion of the mandate may be met by providers of housing services to low income residential customers. The proposed rules as presently written do not ensure that their customers will be direct beneficiaries of the

program. It opens up the unintended possibility that revenue generated will be dedicated to profits or other areas unrelated to low income benefits. Further, the language of the proposed rules implies that all of the mandate may be met in this way.

We suggest the following language:

- (1) Every project must provide at least 10 per cent of its total name plate capacity to only qualifying residential low income customers.
- (2) Ten per cent of the total program capacity tier must be designated for project or portions of projects that exclusively serve qualifying low income customers or entities qualifying under Subsection (3).
- (3) Public or private entities that provide housing services to qualifying low income residential customers may count for no more than five per cent towards the capacity requirements described in Subsections (1) and (3). Providers must document how their qualifying low income residential customers are directly benefiting from the providers' participation in the project.

860-088-0050

Community Solar Advisory Group

This section designates at least one member each from the low-income community, a community of color, and a rural community. This we fully support. However, in order to ensure these members have a reasonably proportional voice in the advisory group, the number of advisory group members should be specified. We suggest a range from 9 to 13 members. In addition, we suggest distribution of representation be based on the geographic location and amount of the electrical power generated by each electric company.

860-088-0090

Bill Credit Rate, Subsection (5)

The language of this subsection, allowing rates to be reviewed every other year, will potentially have a significant impact on the willingness of investors to commit to this program. Without having a bill credit rate nailed down, investors will be reluctant to participate. The bill credit rate should be figured for a period in the neighborhood of 15 years in order to satisfy investor's willingness to finance a project. Therefore, the language of Subsection (5) should be changed to reflect this. Bill credit rate adjustments every other year are acceptable for new projects coming into the program, but not for existing projects in the program.

860-088-0060

Program Level

We agree with the limitation that a participant cannot subscribe or own more than 40% of a single project. We believe this will prevent single large customers from dominating a community solar project and the community solar program.

860-088-0080
Eligible Customers

Subsection (1) (b) We recommend removing the restriction that a participant cannot be affiliated or participate in another community solar project. We believe one-time choice rule is overly restrictive. An organization would not be able to participate in an additional community solar project, even as their electrical needs may change. This rule could prevent a city or county government meeting its community energy and environmental goals in phased projects over time. Furthermore, limiting the participation of housing agencies and other entities that may play a role in meeting the low-income goals, will severely diminish the effectiveness of the program.

Subsection (2) states, "A retail customer's ownership interest in, or subscription to, a project cannot exceed the retail customer's average annual consumption of electricity in the service territory where the project is located." We recommend the retail customer's ownership interest in, or subscription to, a project cannot exceed the retail customer's average annual consumption of electricity in the service territory where the project is located, including meters at multiple sites and/or addresses within the service territory rather than limiting it to meters at the same site and/or address.

As per 860-088-0060, we believe the limitation that a participant cannot subscribe or own more than 40% of a single project is a sufficient safeguard to ensure that this will remain a community solar program.

We believe these changes will allow a broad opportunity for participation while preventing large customers from dominating the community solar market.

The Board of the Douglas County Global Warming Coalition

Stuart Liebowitz, Polly Stirling, Dick Dolgonas, Neal Hadley,
Arthur Chaput, Ruth Kaser, Amy Nathanson, Melanie MacKinnon