



Oregon Public Utility Commission
201 High Street SE, Suite 100
Salem, OR 97301-3398

May 17, 2021

RE: Docket No. UM 1930 – Community Solar Program PPA Revisions

Dear Chair Decker, Commissioner Tawney and Commissioner Thompson,

The Oregon Solar + Storage Industries Association (OSSIA) and the Project Managers (PMs) it represents appreciate the work of staff and the Program Administrator in response to comments received by the Renewable Energy Coalition (“REC”) regarding revisions to the Community Solar PPA. OSSIA is supportive of REC’s position and agrees with their comments.

As an overarching matter, OSSIA is concerned with the additional hardship that Project Managers may have to endure, which may be not fault of their own, if they are unable to sell start-up test energy for a period that is longer than 90 days. As explained below, limiting the sale of start-up test energy may create additional undue hardship for Project Managers.

1. Inherent delays already exist between placed in-service and Certification

As a requirement to request Certification of a project, Section 5.2 of the Program Implementation Manual (“PIM”) requires that a Project Manager submit the “final, as-built plan set for the Project.” For many Project Managers, the final as built plan sets are not available until after the project is already interconnected and operational. This requirement to request Certification creates an inherent delay from when a project is placed in-service and generating electricity and when it reaches the Commercial Operation Date within the PPA. Project Managers will already be facing hardship during this time as they will not be receiving the full bill credit rates. Artificially capping the time in which a Project Manager can sell start-up test energy may create additional hardship for Project Managers.

As a further matter, OSSIA requests that staff and the Program Administrators review Section 5.2 of the Program Implementation Manual and recommend changes in order to mitigate the hardship that Project Managers may face due to the requirement of submitting final as-built plans as part of the certification process. OSSIA would be happy to engage in this process.

2. Timing of Certification is not fully in the control of the Project Manager

The staff report notes that “The program and CSP PPA both establish the expectation that the project will become certified by the Commission before or during that 90-day planned test period.” For the reasons previously stated, this may not be feasible. Further, while the program may establish this



expectation, there is nothing guaranteeing that it will happen. A Project Manager may submit everything required in order for their project to become Certified, but the ultimate timing of Certification is out of the Project Manager's control. For example, there are multiple requirements of the Program Administrator and Commission prior to Certification. These include participant verification and agency review and approval. The Program Implementation Manual provides an estimated timeframe for these to occur, but only estimates. If these items, which are outside the control of Project Manager, take longer than expected, the Project Manager faces the possibility that it may not be compensated for some of the start-up test energy it produces.

3. Project Managers are barred from selling power under a different PPA

Project Managers that would be selling start-up test energy would be doing such pursuit to a Community Solar PPA. Because they would have an executed PPA in place, they would be unable to sell their electricity elsewhere, either through a standard offer avoided cost PPA or any other option that may be available to them. Further, the Program Implementation Manual explicitly states that a Project can not have an existing PPA in place when in requests pre-certification.

In order for a project to sell start-up test energy, it would need to be both operational and interconnected. Limiting a Project Manager to only 90 days may cause further hardship to the Project Manager as it waits to become Certified as they have no other possible avenue to sell their electricity, even if it is at a fraction of the full bill credit rate.

4. Utility indifference

As a practical matter, the utilities should be indifferent to buying start-up test energy from a Community Solar Project. Start-up test energy would be compensated at the As-Available Rate. In the case of Portland General Electric, as defined further in Schedule 201, this would equate to an amount equal to 82.4% of the average monthly Mid-C index price. This is not a long-term fixed price contract and does not create an imbalance between the contracted price and the market price of electricity. The As-Available Rate should be more or less equal to what the utility would otherwise be buying electricity for.

OSSIA appreciates the efforts of staff and the Program Administrator to address the concerns of Project Managers in this matter.

Sincerely,

Angela Crowley-Koch
Executive Director