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July 1, 2022

Via Electronic Filing

Public Utility Commission of Oregon
Attention: Filing Center
P.O. Box 1088
Salem, OR 97308-1088

Re: UM 1930 Community Solar Program; PGE Comments on Staff Draft Recommendation on Use of Agent Subscription Model

Dear Filing Center:

PGE respectfully submits these comments in response to Staff’s Draft Recommendation on Use of Agent Subscription Model, posted to Docket No. UM 1930 on June 14, 2022. PGE appreciates Staff’s attention to this important topic and the opportunity to comment on Staff’s draft recommendations.

PGE agrees with Staff’s findings and supports their recommendation to the OPUC to not approve use of an agent subscription model in the Community Solar Program. As described in these comments, PGE agrees that the Staff recommendations align with the policy intent of the Community Solar Program (CSP). Further, PGE’s see no issues regarding “agency law” broadly cited by Common Energy as applicable. Lastly, PGE is concerned by Common Energy’s lack of knowledge of Oregon’s energy landscape, or the stakeholders actively involved and affected by the comments and policies espoused by Common Energy.

Staff’s Recommendations Align with the CSP Policy Intent

PGE appreciates Staff’s process in defining and reviewing the agent subscription model including hosting a public workshop in which entities seeking to employ this model explained their platforms and business practices. PGE supports and agrees with Staff’s conclusions regarding the risks and costs this model introduces to the program, and how it limits program access without providing offsetting benefits.

Staff’s proposal furthers consumer protection while preserving access to this program. The customer bill is an important aspect of regulated business as it provides clarity, transparency and represents an important avenue for customer communication. A third-party repackaging of the customer bill jeopardizes the regulated purpose and protections of the customer bill.

Staff’s proposal aligns with a key policy intent of the CSP, to provide expanded access to renewable energy for customers. The agent subscription model restricts access to customers with

email accounts, those with the ability to enroll in auto payments, and those able to pay their bill in full each month. Thus, the agent subscription model cherry picks the utility's most financially stable customers.

The many entities working to establish the CSP continue to work through post launch improvements to ensure a positive experience for customers and a viable opportunity for developers. Staff's proposal recognizes the significant ratepayer investment made in the program.

Broader Assertions Regarding Agency Law are not Relevant

Common Energy erroneously asserts that the draft recommendation exceeds Commission authority under an assertion of "agency law". Common Energy cites no law, rule or order for this argument, but rather cites comments submitted by Oregon Solar + Storage Industries Association (OSSIA) as primary legal authority. Common Energy additionally confuses an unrelated practice as carrying legal weight as an argument against the Commission's ability to shape and manage a program for the benefit and protection of participants and ratepayers. Common Energy goes on to suggest that a broader issue of agency is somehow raised by Staff's recommendation, when in fact, Staff's recommendation is narrowly tailored to the issues raised in this docket. Common Energy's interest in expanding the set of issues is not appropriate and out of scope.

Common Energy goes on to assert that consolidating billing provides benefits but does not provide an example of meaningful benefits to customers, ratepayers or participants. Common Energy states that transferring subscribers from a failed project to another project and updating a subscriber's subscription level as unique to their preferred approach. PGE fails to see these as benefits requiring consolidating billing. Nor can these examples be categorized as benefits which extend to customers and ratepayers nor address the concerns Staff raised regarding the lack of benefits.

Lastly, with their comments Common Energy demonstrates their lack of understanding of Oregon's energy community. In the consolidated billing example provided by Common Energy the bill shows "PGE Gas" under a section entitled **Bill Summary**. Portland General Electric does not provide gas service. This lack of knowledge and dismissiveness is concerning and likely indicates how Common Energy intends to engage in the future. The fact is that Common Energy's business practices in Oregon to date have led to customer confusion and loss of consumer protections, issues that were discussed in detail in PGE's and CUB's letters and the Staff workshop discussion.

PGE thanks Staff for consideration of these comments.

Sincerely,

/s/ Jason Salmi Klotz

Jason Salmi Klotz
Manager, Regulatory Strategy