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Testimony for House Committee on Energy and Environment HB 2941 — Community Solar Gardens

On behalf of my wife, Laurel, and myself, I want to express my strong support for this bill. I'll briefly explain our solar situation so the committee can understand why we hope this bill will be passed by the 2015 Oregon Legislature.

We live in rural south Salem. Several times we have had our house assessed for the feasibility of solar panels. Since our house is surrounded by some large fir and oak trees, it just barely fails to qualify for tax credits.

When I heard about this bill, I realized that it seems to be exactly what we need. My wife and I want to support solar energy. We are “early environmentalist adopters” in other regards, having owned two Toyota Prius's, a Nissan Leaf, and now a Chevy Volt — all electric cars in one form or another.

We also have had energy audits performed on our early 1970's house and have done as much as possible to make it more energy efficient.

It would be great to be able to invest in an off-site community solar project and get the benefits that would accrue to us if we were able to have solar panels on our own house. I assume this would include a proportional share of the tax credits and reduction of our PGE bill.

This seems much better to us than signing up for PGE's renewable energy option, which we have resisted. We don't feel like we should have to pay more on our electric bill for doing the environmental “right thing.” It also concerns us that, apparently, much of the extra cost goes for PGE marketing and management.

So we urge the committee to pass HB 2941. Again, it is just what we are looking for: a way for us to support solar energy even though our house does not qualify for solar panels.

Sincerely,

Brian Hines
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