

Shayne Kimball
Solar Surfers, LLC
Meeting Date: 3-3-15
HB 2941-1

Testimony

I've been in the trenches of this industry for over 5 years now, and there is one idea that stands out like no other. It is the concept of Solar Gardens and use of virtual net metering. This is the key to unlocking the real potential of solar and allowing solar to stand on it's own.

Last year, one of my clients asked me to check out a low-income housing complex here in Salem, to see if we could put solar on the property. Unfortunately, there were several problems. One, there were too many trees. Two, we didn't have the ability to offset every single meter in the complex separately. Pacific Power allows you to put solar on adjoining pieces of property, but my client didn't happen to own a vacant lot that adjoined his apartment complex. Additionally, we would have had to install a main meter for the whole complex and then do our own billing to each tenant. A Solar Garden using virtual net metering would solve this extremely complex issue. The project was abandoned unfortunately for now. However, besides low income housing, farmers would also benefit from this idea.

Many of my friends and family farm leased irrigated land, and with this irrigated land comes some hefty electric bills from running water pumps. We're talking thousands of dollars a month. If a farmer could put in a solar array on the main farm, not the leased ground down the road, then that farmer would be able to offset all the meters on the leased ground. This would allow farmers to be able to virtually change which meter was going to be offset by the solar array. I believe that a farmer could install his own system, possible with no incentives, and still be able to make solar work. It would be a huge advantage since farmers periodically lease different pieces of land over the course of their life. In addition, if a farmer decides he no longer wants to farm, he could then sell that power to people in the local community assuring him that the investment was a wise decision. This has been a concern for some of my clients who are older and don't know if they are going to be farming long enough to see there investment pay off. Solar Gardens and virtual net metering will solve this problem.

