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Hearing Officer Report

To:	Oregon Department of Energy
From:	James Cogle, Rulemaking Coordinator
Date:	March 30, 2026
Subject:	Hearing Officer's Report on Rulemaking Hearing and Written Comments
Hearing Date:	March 25, 2026
Hearing Location:	Online

Rule Filing Caption: Amendments to Oregon Solar Plus Storage Rebate Program

Rule Hearing

The rulemaking hearing on the proposed rules was convened at 11:07 a.m. on March 25, 2026. Eight members of the public attended along with six Oregon Department of Energy staff, including the hearing officer. People were asked to state their names, affiliations, and whether they wished to comment on the proposed rules. They were informed of the procedures for taking comments. They also were told that the hearing was being recorded.

Before receiving comments, James Cogle briefly summarized the proposed rules.

Summary of Oral Public Comments

Angela Crowley-Koch, OSSIA: I really want to thank you for putting together these rules. It's important that the rulemaking be conducted and concluded as quickly as possible. So, we do appreciate your focus on this. Because the federal residential solar tax credit ended last year, moderate- and middle-income homeowners lost the largest incentive, making rebate funding especially important right now. Overall, we support the draft rules and the inclusion of battery storage after the passage of SB 827 (2025). We also support the extension included in the rules. We have three substantive comments on the draft rules.

First of all, and most importantly, OSSIA recommends that ODOE release all available funds at once. Because there are so little funding left and the need is at a high, there's no need for separate tranches of funding like have been done sometimes in the past. In addition, releasing all funds available at once will make it more likely that each eligible contractor will be able to reserve funds without the funds running out.

Second, OSSIA noticed a technical error in the drafts, and it is in the project eligibility section, which is on page six, new section nineteen. This is about the total solar resource fraction TSRF. We believe that the word 'and' should actually be 'or' because the rules state that systems should meet minimum requirements for TSRF, but subsection (a) and subsection (b) for 330-240-0030(18)(a) and (b). Those are two different ways to measure TSRF and so only one or the other will apply, and that's why we recommend replacing the word 'and' instead with the word 'or'.

Lastly, OSSIA members support separating the rebate funding into the two buckets, one for low- and modern-income projects and low-income service provider projects, and one for projects that are not low and modern income.

A plurality of OSSIA members supported the higher cap of twenty-five for the low- and moderate-income low-income service provider bucket that are listed in the draft rules. However, there are other members, thirty-three percent that supported having a twenty-project cap for each bucket and twenty-two percent supported reducing the caps to fifteen. We didn't have a total consensus on the right way to configure the caps since the market is so constrained right now. But like I said, there is a plurality of OSSIA members that supported the higher cap for low and moderate income and low-income service provider funding that are in the draft rules.

Close of Hearing

The hearing was adjourned at 11:24 a.m. The public comment period closed at 5 p.m. on March 27, 2026.

Written Comments Submitted During Public Comment Period

Ann Brayfield: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed rule amendment concerning solar. As early adopters of solar in Oregon going back 18 years we support rebates for connecting existing solar to battery back ups. We have four existing systems in Oregon and given grid issues in recent years and the cost of back ups coming down we would consider adding back ups sooner with rebates. Two of our systems serve low income tenants who are paying rent amounts considerably lower than market rents in Bend and whose electric bills we pay.

A rebate for existing systems hooking up to back up would be supportive to early solar adopters who continue to encourage other folks to go solar.

Stanley Tussing, Precision Heating & Indoor Air Quality & Solar: I think it is good to bring back the rebates! Thank you.

Angela Crowley-Koch, OSSIA: OSSIA appreciates the opportunity to review and comment on the draft rules for the Oregon Solar + Storage Rebate Program (OSSRP). OSSIA members are anxious to conclude this rulemaking as quickly as possible in order to re-open the program for new reservations. Since the federal residential solar tax credit ended in 2025 moderate- and middle-income homeowners lost the largest incentive, making the OSSRP funding especially important now.

Overall OSSIA supports the draft rules and the inclusion of battery storage after the passage of SB 827 in 2025 and thank Oregon Department of Energy (ODOE) staff for their work. OSSIA has three substantive comments on the draft rules.

First, and most important, OSSIA recommends that ODOE release all available funds at once. With so little funding left and the need at a high, there is no need for tranches of funding. In

addition, releasing all funds available will make it more likely that each eligible contractor will be able to reserve funds without the funds running out.

Second, OSSIA noticed a technical error in the draft rules. In the "Project Eligibility" section on p.6, new section 19, we believe that the systems should meet minimum performance standards under 330-240-0030(18)(a) OR (b), not (a) and (b). 330-240-0030(18)(a) and (b) are two different ways to measure Total Solar Resource Fraction (TSRF) and so only one or the other will apply. OSSIA recommends replacing the "and" with an "or."

Lastly, OSSIA members support separating rebate funding into two "buckets," one for low- and moderate-income (LMI) and low-income service provider (LISP) projects and one for projects that are not LMI projects. Overall, 40% of OSSIA members support the higher cap of 25 for the LMI and LISP bucket in the draft rules. However, 33% supported having a 20 project cap for each bucket and 22% supported reducing both caps to 15. While there was not total agreement, a plurality support the caps in the draft rules.

Evaluation of Comments

ODOE appreciates all the comments provided during the public comment period. ODOE notes support for the rule amendments and reopening the program for rebate applications.

Changes to draft language

Following the comments from OSSIA, ODOE changed the rule language 330-240-0030(19) to correct the language and state that either (18)(a) or (b) rather than both (a) and (b) of the Total Solar Resource Fraction requirements in 330-240-0030(18) are required to be met as part of the new rule language in 330-240-0030(19).

ODOE decided to revert to the original language in 330-240-0150(2) and (3) and keep the cap on the number of reservations at 20 for systems for low- or moderate-income residential customers or low-income service providers. This follows comments from OSSIA that while many OSSIA members supported a change, a majority supported either maintaining the existing levels or reducing the cap.

ODOE decided to keep the original language in 330-240-0130(5), which provides ODOE with the ability to extend reservations for low-income service providers every six months if the project is making progress toward completion. ODOE acknowledges the support from OSSIA for the extended time, however, by keeping the original language, contractors will have the potential to extend a reservation for a low-income service provider for the same length of time as the draft language had proposed, and potentially longer, if they are making progress toward completion. ODOE recognized that the new language only provided one last extension of one year, which may have affected a project's ability to claim a rebate if they took longer, and so opted for keeping the language that provided greater flexibility for allowing projects to reach completion and receive a rebate.