



27 June 2016

Higher Education Coordinating Commission  
775 Court St. NE  
Salem, OR 97301

Sent via E-mail to: [ben.cannon@state.or.us](mailto:ben.cannon@state.or.us)

Dear Commission Members:

OSEIA is Oregon's solar trade association representing 74 member businesses. We write to you in support of Oregon Tech and the Oregon Renewable Energy Center (OREC) as they seek state support through a Policy Option Package to fulfill their mandate in ORS 352.221 to "engage in renewable energy system engineering and applied research."

Oregon Tech is a leader in the development of university-based renewable energy generation that provide respected bachelor's and master's degrees in renewable energy engineering. Not satisfied to merely be an "ivory tower," Oregon Tech has worked consistently to generate most of its electrical power for its campus in Klamath Falls with geothermal and solar energy. It is also the home of the Geo-Heat Center, an internationally renowned repository of information and technical advice on geothermal energy development.

Oregon Tech established OREC to expand the development of renewable energy, provide technical assistance on its use, and engage with companies and communities to grow jobs in the energy sector.

Graduates of Oregon Tech have gone on to work in many sectors of the solar industry, whether for various solar installers or with manufacturers like SolarWorld. Several have also taken the extra step to found their own businesses to carve out their own niche within the industry.

Workforce issues are a central concern for the industry. We are looking at the possibility of doubling the installed solar capacity in the state over the next two years and installing perhaps as much as 500 MW of solar capacity in the next 10 years. Oregon Tech will be a key source of graduates to fill the workforce needs of the industry.

In addition, OREC's applied research mission will be an anchor for the innovation needs of the solar industry. Solar costs have been coming down over the last several years. Future cost reductions will depend on the innovations we can achieve. OREC must be strong in order to conduct and contribute the research base that will drive those innovations.

We hope that the commission can help the solar industry in supporting Oregon Tech's Policy Option Package for OREC. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have question or need additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jeff Bissonnette". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Jeff Bissonnette  
Executive Director  
503-516-1636  
[jeff@oseia.org](mailto:jeff@oseia.org)