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Welcome to this month's issue of **Solar Newsbriefs**, brought to you by the Washington State University Energy Program. Please feel free to forward this issue to those of your colleagues interested in solar energy. For archives of past **Solar Newsbriefs**, visit

<http://www.energy.wsu.edu/solarnewsbriefs.aspx>

Solar Plus NW News

Solar Plus NW Year 3 Funding

The Solar Plus Solar Seeds SES program, funded through the Department of Energy, has been approved for Budget Year Three activities. This program is in its third and final year. Partners are completing their Year Three Scopes of Work. Questions, contact Linda Irvine at:

linda@sparknw.org

Solar Plus NW Case Studies

Spark NW recently published two case studies on community solar plus storage in Washington state. [Community Solar at Decatur Island](#) discusses the 504kW community solar array that went live July 31, 2018 and provides energy services to residents of 20 islands in San Juan county; and [Building Community Resilience](#) discusses Snohomish PUD's Arlington Microgrid, which will open in spring 2019. In addition, Spark Northwest finalized [Community Solar in Washington State: History and Path Forward](#), a report on Washington's Community Solar program to provide the history, context, and recommendations for future programming. These publications and other Partner news can be found on the Solar Plus NW website: <http://solarplusnw.org/>

Oregon

Update from OSEIA

Oregon Solar Energy Industries Association (OSEIA) is promoting two bills in the Oregon legislature this year. The first bill, HB 2618, creates a rooftop solar incentive for all Oregonians. The rebate program, which includes battery storage, provides up to \$6,000 or 40% of the system costs and the program sunsets in 2024. This short term support will help promote solar in areas of the state where other incentives are not available. The bill has bi-partisan support in both chambers.

OSEIA is also working to improve Oregon's law which requires 1.5% of public building renovation or new building construction to be invested in green energy technology. The bills, HB 2496 and HB 2497, seek to include storage and create an enforcement mechanism to ensure all projects are following the law. For more information contact Angela Crowley-Koch at angela@oseia.org

Feds Loan \$48 million for 6 Oregon Solar Energy Projects

Senators Jeff Merkley and Ron Wyden, D-Ore., announced Monday six Rural Energy for America Program (REAP) loans amounting to \$48.2 million will help bring solar energy production to rural towns in Klamath, Lake, Deschutes and Clackamas counties, where solar facilities will produce enough electricity to power 11,289 Oregon homes and businesses – *News Channel 21, KTVZ.com*, Feb 7, 2019: <https://www.ktvz.com/news/feds-loan-48-million-for-6-oregon-solar-energy-projects/697350106>

Northwest Ag Show: OSU Professor Talks Farm Technology

A chance observation at a sheep pasture near campus could soon lead to a multi-million-dollar research project for Oregon State University professor Chad Higgins. The university had just installed new solar panels at the six-acre pasture in 2015 when Higgins began to notice something curious. The grass seemed to be growing more lush and green later in the summer beneath the panels, prompting Higgins to monitor weather data in the field – *Capital Press*, January 21, 2019: https://www.capitalpress.com/ag_sectors/research/northwest-ag-show-osu-professor-talks-farm-technology/article_d80cc23e-1b50-11e9-97de-6b8a351b7efd.html

Rockwood Boys & Grils Club Installs Solar Panel Array

Thanks to a grant from Portland General Electric, the Rockwood Boys & Girls Club now has a sustainable source of energy. The club used a \$97,500 grant from PGE's Renewable Development Fund to install solar panels on the facility's property at 454 S.E. 165th Ave., Portland. Funding also provided an educational kiosk for youth to learn about renewable energy and track how much power is generated and used by the building. The grant allows Boys & Girls Clubs of Portland Metro to generate nearly 117 kWh, enough to power 75 percent of the Rockwood Club on a high energy use day – *The Outlook*, February 1, 2019: <https://pamplinmedia.com/go/42-news/418769-321824-rockwood-boys-and-girls-club-installs-solar-panel-array>

Cypress Creek Backs Clean Energy Project in Klamath Schools

Cypress Creek Renewables and the Bonneville Environmental Foundation are proud to partner in a \$25,000 commitment to provide high-quality, high-impact classroom experiences that helps with access to real-world careers in Klamath County. Through a commitment to the foundation's program: Clean Energy, Bright Futures, Cypress Creek will provide a professional development workshop with a full day of renewable energy STEM/CTE activities for 20 educator – *Herald and News*, February 3, 2019: https://www.heraldandnews.com/news/local_news/cypress-creek-backs-clean-energy-project-in-klamath-schools/article_6717426b-bc4f-5b7a-a19d-1597ea0ab8b1.html

State of Oregon Proposes New Rules That Would Limit Solar PV on Farmland

The Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development – the state agency charged with overseeing and implementing the state’s land use planning program – is proposing new regulations that would prevent developers from siting solar PV facilities on certain farmland deemed high value. Read more and link to the proposed rules at *Renewable + Law*, January 10, 2019:

<https://www.lawofrenewableenergy.com/2019/01/articles/oregon/state-of-oregon-proposes-new-rules-that-would-limit-solar-pv-on-farmland/>

Temporary Rules Restrict Oregon Solar Development

Oregon’s land use regulators have temporarily expanded restrictions on solar arrays on high-value farmland over the objections of advocates who claim they will impede development. Solar facilities larger than 12 acres on high-value farmland have required conditional use permits in Oregon, but ambiguities in the regulatory language raised concerns among farm and conservation groups – Mateusz Perkowskim, *Capital Press*, January 28, 2019:

https://www.capitalpress.com/state/oregon/temporary-rules-restrict-oregon-solar-development/article_3f5e652e-2320-11e9-b718-9fda6d3bbe89.html

Energy Trust Seeks Partners to Devise Innovative Solar Programs for Lower-Income Folks

The Energy Trust of Oregon, which was criticized during Portland's recent Clean Energy Fund campaign for failing to assist lower-income folks, is enlisting the help of community groups to develop programs that deliver solar energy to residents of modest means. Energy Trust is offering eight to 12 grants of \$5,000 to \$10,000 to help groups create programs to provide solar for low- and moderate-income Oregonians within PGE and Pacific Power territory – Steve Law, *Sustainable Life*, November 13, 2018:

<https://pamplinmedia.com/sl/412014-312731-energy-trust-seeks-partners-to-devise-innovative-solar-programs-for-lower-income-folks->

Oregon Clean Energy Jobs Bill: An Economic Engine and a Decarbonization Catalyst

2018’s “Green Wave” election has set the stage for Oregon to lead the United States on climate action in 2019 by enacting statewide cap-and-trade legislation and accelerating complementary policy in its biggest energy-consuming sectors. Governor Kate Brown focused on climate action in her re-election campaign, and legislative leaders have added momentum to pass the state’s most significant climate policy opportunity – the Clean Energy Jobs Bill would cut emissions while generating hundreds of millions for statewide investments – Silvio Marcacci, *Forbes*, January 22, 2019:

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/energyinnovation/2019/01/22/oregons-clean-energy-jobs-bill-an-economic-engine-and-a-decarbonization-catalyst/#12f336ed512d>

Washington News

Solar Deployment Grant Program - Clean Energy Fund

The Clean Energy Fund Solar Deployment Grant Program is continuing to accept applications for review. This program is for deployment of solar projects in Washington state. For more information and to be added to the distribution list for notifications, please visit: <https://www.commerce.wa.gov/growing-the-economy/energy/clean-energy-fund/clean-energy-fund-solar-program/>

Puget Sound Energy Funds Five Solar Projects with Green Power Program Grants

This week Puget Sound Energy granted the King County Housing Authority, HopeSource in Cle Elum and the Opportunity Council in Bellingham nearly \$465,000 to install solar panels at five low-income multi-family housing facilities they own and operate. Puget Sound Energy picked the organizations for their work with families in need. Through its Community Energy Efficiency Program, the Washington State University Energy Program provided half of the funding for this project – *Auburn Reporter*, January 30, 2019:

<http://www.auburn-reporter.com/business/pse-funds-five-solar-projects-with-green-power-program-grants/>

New ‘Washington Environmental Health Disparities Map’ Elevates Frontline Community Priorities

While solar may not directly alleviate local pollution, targeting solar projects to the communities facing the worst of fossil fuel power can be both a symbolic act of transitioning to cleaner communities and provide real value that reduce vulnerability to environmental hazards by reducing economic disparities. Read Deric Gruen’s blog on the new Washington Environmental Health Disparities Map. This map offers policy leaders and advocates new, data-driven insights into where people experience the greatest environmental health risk factors in Washington – *Front and Centered Blog*, posted January 8, 2019:

<https://frontandcentered.org/ej-map/>

School District and City to Reap Benefits of Utility-Owned Microgrid, Thanks to Group Effort

A group effort by Puget Sound Energy, the city of Tenino, Wash., a nonprofit organization, and others has yielded plans for a utility-owned microgrid that can island and provide power to the Tenino School District. Ultimately, the goal is to create a project that teaches local students and residents about innovative energy technologies and encourages them to pursue careers in the field – *Microgrid Knowledge*, January 2019: <https://microgridknowledge.com/utility-owned-microgrid-puget/>

Recent Reports

Solar-Power Benefits Aren’t Reaching Communities of Color

One of the fundamental drivers of the environmental-justice movement is that low-income communities and communities of color are often at the forefront of environmental harm, since they are more likely to live in the path of air pollution and near toxic facilities like oil refineries. But a study recently published in *Nature Sustainability* highlights the fact that communities of color are also disproportionately missing out on the benefits of rooftop solar power. Read abstract and access the report – Amal Ahmed, *CityLab*, January 30, 2019:

<https://www.citylab.com/environment/2019/01/solar-panel-pv-black-hispanic-environmental-justice-equality/581506/>

Design and Implementation of Community Solar Programs for Low- and Moderate-Income Customers

The report reviews existing and emerging low- and moderate-income (LMI) community solar programs, discusses key questions related to program design, outlines how states can leverage incentives and finance structures to lower the cost of LMI community solar, and examines marketing and outreach consideration. Produced for CESA by NREL and funded by the U.S. Department of Energy Solar Energy Technologies Office – Clean Energy States Alliance, December 19, 2018:

<https://www.cesa.org/resource-library/resource/design-and-implementation-of-community-solar-programs-for-low-and-moderate-income-customers>

Conferences and Training

Oregon Solar Energy Conference, May 7-9, 2019, Portland, OR

OSEIA has opened registration to the Oregon Solar Energy Conference in May. The Oregon Solar Energy Conference features three days of well-curated content including keynote presentations from industry leaders. The conference blends the best networking opportunities with training, panel discussions and new technology. Take advantage of interacting with over 30 solar, storage and smart energy exhibitors. For more information and to register: <https://conta.cc/2CV6MRc> Oregon

OSEIA Seeking Tech Training Sponsors & Instructors

OSEIA is seeking quotes for sponsors and instructors for their Technical Training Program 2019-2020. Tech training sponsors generously provide a classroom style room, seats with tables or desks, a video projector and screen, light breakfast items, and a lunch. [Click here to review the sponsorship flyer.](#) Instructors apply to teach the solar industry about best practices and code update. Click here to review the [Solar Electric \(PV\) Technical Training Instructor](#). Instructors applications are due February 22, 2019. Keep an eye on OSEIA's website for upcoming trainings: <https://www.oseia.org/training/>

Want to Contribute? If you have information on events, publications or other solar topics that you would like mentioned in an upcoming issue of *Solar Newsbriefs*, please contact Anne Whitney at whitneya@energy.wsu.edu

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