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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>

Oregon News

Other views: How Oregon can create a More Clean and Reliable Electric Grid

More and more utility customers are embracing the “prosumer” revolution, purchasing and bringing solar, energy storage, wind and other clean energy resources onto the electric grid. Such action becomes important as severe weather puts pressure on our power supply. For example, a year ago, more than 400,000 Oregon residents lost power during a winter storm—Lisa Cohn and Elisa Wood, *East Oregonian*, Feb. 26, 2022: https://www.eastoregonian.com/opinion/columnists/other-views-how-oregon-can-create-a-more-clean-and-reliable-electric-grid/article_2a373560-f83f-5813-a0d6-c06c3b7a0846.html

A State Solar Mandate Is Still Producing Very Spendy Electricity

A new report to the Oregon Legislature shows that a solar power mandate for publicly funded building projects continues to generate some very costly electricity. In 2007, to promote solar energy, legislators mandated that public agencies must spend 1.5% of construction or renovation costs on solar power generation. They have tweaked the bill several times since—Nigel Jaquiss, *Willamette Week*, Mar. 2, 2022: <https://www.wweek.com/news/2022/03/02/a-state-solar-mandate-is-still-producing-very-spendy-electricity/>

Largest Solar Energy Facility in Oregon gets Final Approval after Legal Battles

The largest solar energy facility planned in Oregon got its final greenlight for construction last week. The approval follows years of legal battles mounted by area farmers and ranchers. It will be the largest solar facility in the Pacific Northwest and one of the largest in the country by output, with more than 1.7 million solar panels generating at least 400 megawatts of energy at a time – enough to power more than 76,000

homes, according to documents the company submitted to the Oregon Department of Energy—Alex Baumhardt, *Oregon Capital Chronicle*, Mar. 8, 2022:

<https://oregoncapitalchronicle.com/2022/03/08/largest-solar-energy-facility-in-oregon-gets-final-approval-after-legal-battles/>

State Energy Department to Offer \$12 Million in Grants for Community Solar, Wind Projects

Ideas for community projects to boost renewable energy access could soon have up to \$1 million each from the Oregon Department of Energy. The agency announced they will release \$12 million in grants for projects such as adding more electric vehicle charging stations in rural parts of the state and adding solar panels to public buildings. Money will also go to energy resiliency projects, like wind and solar energy storage systems that can kick in during an emergency and provide power to homes on a microgrid when the larger power grid is down. Applications for grants are due June 10, 2022—Alex Baumhardt, *Oregon Capital Chronicle*, Mar. 8, 2022:

https://oregoncapitalchronicle.com/briefs/state-energy-department-to-offer-12-million-in-grants-for-community-solar-wind-projects/?utm_source=Energy+News+Network+daily+email+digests&utm_campaign=2d112d01a2-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2020_05_11_11_44_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_724b1f01f5-2d112d01a2-89350008

Oregon and Washington Communities Selected for National Energy Reform Initiative

Senators Ron Wyden and Jeff Merkley announced that Warm Spring, Talent and Pendleton, Oregon have been chosen to take part in a new energy storage system meant to increase energy resilience with weather and climate changes. The communities were chosen by federal officials with 11 other communities, including two in Washington state—Karlee Van de Venter, NBC KNDO, Mar. 17, 2022:

https://www.nbcrightnow.com/news/oregon-and-washington-communities-selected-for-national-energy-reform-initiative/article_a987d1d4-a64d-11ec-a9c1-33de7ea78c05.html

Warm Springs Joins Group to Analyze Solar Potential

An aging power grid at Warm Springs may soon get a 21st-century upgrade. The Warm Springs Community Action Team, a non-profit that supports small business development on the reservation, has been accepted to a federal program that will offer consultancy work on solar energy and battery development.

A second phase could see the installation of hard infrastructure—Michael Kohn, *The Bulletin*, Mar. 23, 2022: https://www.bendbulletin.com/localstate/environment/warm-springs-joins-group-to-analyze-solar-potential/article_34fdb83e-aa2f-11ec-a656-a3344a3e8097.html

Large Solar Projects on the Rise in Oregon

The director of Oregon's energy department says more utility-scale solar energy projects could be in the cards after the recent approval of a 400-megawatt facility in Southern Oregon. One of the largest solar energy facilities in the country is moving forward in Southern Oregon's Christmas Valley after receiving state approval last month — and the director of the Oregon Department of Energy says more industrial solar projects could follow—Bradley W. Parks, Oregon Public Broadcasting, Apr. 5, 2022:

<https://www.ijpr.org/environment-energy-and-transportation/2022-04-05/large-solar-projects-on-the-rise-in-oregon>

Washington News

Washington State Department of Commerce Solar Grant Program [for] Energy Retrofits for Public Buildings

Solar Energy grants provide competitive funding to install solar at public buildings and facilities, such as schools, hospitals, civic buildings and wastewater treatment plants. These grants cut energy costs, reduce pollution and showcase solar projects in communities across the state. Commerce is now accepting applications for the 2022 Solar Grants with up to \$1.2 million available. Applications are due by May 25, at 4:00 p.m. for more information: <https://www.commerce.wa.gov/growing-the-economy/energy/solar-grants/>

Gov. Jay Inslee has Solar Panels Installed at his Home on Bainbridge Island

The roof of Gov. Jay Inslee's home near Hawley Cove is now equipped with an array of solar panels. Inslee, the three-term Democratic governor of Washington who has championed the cause of reducing carbon emissions in the face of climate change, had the panels installed earlier this month—Josh Farley, *Kitsap Sun*, Mar. 24, 2022: <https://www.kitsapsun.com/story/news/2022/03/24/gov-jay-inslee-has-solar-panels-installed-his-home-bainbridge-island/7122443001/>

PSE's Community Solar Program Partners with Issaquah School District

Puget Sound Energy (PSE) partnered with the Issaquah School District to install its third Community Solar site, allowing PSE customers in east King County to subscribe to renewable energy. This installation at Pine Lake Middle School features 480 solar panels and provides 175 kilowatts of AC power, enabling subscribers to share the benefits of solar without the need to install or maintain their own rooftop solar array—Puget Sound Energy [Press release], Mar. 17, 2022: <https://www.pse.com/press-release/details/PSEs-Community-Solar-Program-partners-with-Issaquah-School-District>

New Solar Array Proposed in South Everett would Benefit PUD Bill-Aid Program

The Snohomish County PUD is looking to build a new solar panel array in South Everett. On March 30, the Everett City Council will hold a public hearing at 6:30 p.m. on Zoom to consider a 15-year lease of city property to the PUD for this project. The property is about 1.75 acres sited adjacent to Walter E. Hall Park on Casino Road. The money that the PUD would save by generating electricity here will be donated into its program to help people with their utility bills, known as Project Pride—Michael Whitney, *Snohomish County Tribune*, Mar. 23, 2022: http://www.snoho.com/html/stories_2022/03232022_pud_solar_proposed_for_casino_road.html

Latest Power Plan Highlights Role of Renewables, Energy Efficiency in Region's Future

The Northwest Power and Conservation Council's 2021 Northwest Power Plan aims to address the challenges of a dynamic energy landscape with an emphasis on renewable energy and energy efficiency. The six-year plan, which was adopted in February, comes amid substantial transformation, from clean energy policies and states' decarbonization goals to the dramatic drop in cost of wind and solar energy and the retirement of several coal-fired power plants across the West by 2028, according to the council—Energy Trust blog, Mar. 24, 2022: <https://blog.energytrust.org/latest-power-plan-highlights-role-of-renewables-energy-efficiency-in-regions-future/?category=our-news>

Northwest Tribes among those Getting Federal Energy Grants

More than a dozen tribal communities around the U.S., including three in the Pacific Northwest, will share

\$9 million in federal grant funding for renewable energy projects, the U.S. Department of Energy announced Monday—Felicia Fonseca, *The Columbian*, Mar. 25, 2022:

<https://www.columbian.com/news/2022/mar/25/northwest-tribes-among-those-getting-federal-energy-grants/>

Rep. Dye Says Inslee's Sectional Vetoes to Energy Siting Bill Will be Devastating to Eastern Washington Landscape

Rep. Mary Dye and Rep. Mark Klicker say Gov. Jay Inslee's veto of significant sections in a clean energy facility siting measure Friday will have devastating consequences on the future landscape of Eastern Washington communities and farmland—John Sattgast and Kent Livingston, *Big County News*, Mar. 26, 2022: https://www.bigcountrynewsconnection.com/local/rep-dye-says-inslee-s-sectional-vetoes-to-energy-siting-bill-will-be-devastating-to/article_cc9d2102-ad13-11ec-8182-cbd4a0ccc4d5.html

Inslee Guts Legislation to Look at How Wind, Solar Projects Would Change Eastern WA.

Gov. Jay Inslee vetoed sections of an energy bill that would have given Eastern Washington residents more input and a broader, long-term look at where wind and solar projects are site. Late Friday afternoon the governor signed House Bill 1812, which makes changes to the state council that evaluates and makes recommendations on allowing new energy projects in the state—Annette Cary, *Tri-City Herald*, Mar. 28, 2022: https://www.wenatcheeworld.com/news/northwest/inslee-guts-legislation-to-look-at-how-wind-solar-projects-would-change-eastern-wa/article_04c390cf-55d9-58bd-9db4-8e138e7c27cf.html

Inslee Veto Upsets GOP Lawmakers from Farming Districts

Gov. Jay Inslee has signed legislation giving his administration more control over where energy-related projects are built, but vetoed a study on how those projects will reshape Eastern Washington's agricultural landscape. Inslee's partial veto rankled the top-ranking Republican on the House Environment Committee, Rep. Mary Dye. She said Thursday that the bill won Republican support only after Democrats agreed to the study—Don Jenkins, *Capital Press*, Mar., 31, 2022:

https://www.capitalpress.com/ag_sectors/rurallife/inslee-veto-upsets-gop-lawmakers-from-farming-districts/article_ebafc642-b11b-11ec-a94e-17244de40941.html?block_id=703134?utm_source=newsletter&utm_campaign=top-stories-newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_content=read%20more

Gov. Jay Inslee Signs Bill to Fund \$100 Million of Community Solar in Washington

Led by Representative Sharon Shewmake, lawmakers in Olympia have approved new funding for Washington's expired solar energy incentive program. Governor Inslee signed [House Bill 1814](#) on March 30 with the aim of closing an equity gap in community solar—Kelsey Misbrener, *Solar Power World*, Apr. 4, 2022: <https://www.solarpowerworldonline.com/2022/04/governor-jay-inslee-signs-washington-bill-community-solar-program/>

Washington Reestablishes its Solar Incentive Program

For the first time since 2018, Washington state has a solar energy incentive program. Governor Inslee signed House Bill 1814 into law March 30, [which was first proposed](#) by Representatives Sharon Shewmake and Liz Berry. Aimed at expanding the opportunities for low-income residents to access renewable energy through an increased focus on installing community solar projects in the state, [HB 1814](#) creates a new

\$100 million incentive program, beginning in 2023 [July 1, 2022], that will provide funding for low-income households and low-income service providers' installing solar—Tim Sylvia, *pv magazine*, April 4, 2022: <https://pv-magazine-usa.com/2022/04/04/washington-reestablishes-its-solar-incentive-program/>

Agrivoltaics

UbiQD to Develop New Type of Greenhouse Roof with Canadian Company

Los Alamos advanced-materials startup UbiQD plans to invent a new type of greenhouse roof with Heliene Inc., a solar panel manufacturer in Ontario, Canada. The partnership aims to combine Heliene's solar manufacturing capabilities with UbiQD's "quantum dot" technology — meant, in part, to promote plant photosynthesis by shifting long-wavelength light to short-wavelength light—Collin Krabbe, *New Mexico INNO*, Mar., 24, 2022: <https://www.bizjournals.com/albuquerque/inno/stories/news/2022/03/24/ubiqd-to-develop-new-product.html>

Recycling

What Happens to Used Solar Panels? DOE Wants to Know

The Department of Energy released an action plan last week intended to help the United States launch a comprehensive system for handling and recycling solar panels, which some studies have suggested could make up a tenth of all electronic waste in coming decades. The Solar Energy Technologies Office (SETO) announced a new target to bring the cost of recycling solar panels to about \$3 per panel by 2030, a threshold that would make the practice economic for the first time—David Iaconangelo, *E&E News*, Mar., 21, 2022: <https://www.eenews.net/articles/what-happens-to-used-solar-panels-doe-wants-to-know/>

Publications

Inclusive Shared Solar Initiative Releases Checklist: Key Elements to Consider for a Low- and Moderate-Income Community Solar Project

NASEO and the National Energy Assistance Directors Association (NEADA) have released a new resource, [Key Elements to Consider for a Low- and Moderate-Income Community Solar Project](#), a checklist that details key steps and considerations for State Energy Offices and State Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) Offices interested in supporting the development of community solar projects that are accessible to lower-income communities and households. It offers guidance for program planning, financing and identifying sites for projects, supporting and protecting customers, and tracking progress; additionally, it emphasizes the importance of continued stakeholder engagement to elevate the priorities and needs of target communities. NASEO, Feb. 2022: <http://naseo.org/Data/Sites/1/documents/tk-news/issi-equity-checklist-final.pdf>

Deploying Solar with Wildlife and Ecosystem Services Benefits (SolWEB)

On March 1, 2022, the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) announced the Deploying Solar with Wildlife and Ecosystem Services Benefits (SolWEB) funding opportunity, which will award \$10 million for innovative solutions and strategies that maximize benefits and minimize impacts to wildlife and ecosystems from solar energy infrastructure. DOE is interested in projects that will produce results with broad relevance to solar stakeholders by establishing methods, technologies, models, best management practices, or resources that facilitate ground-mounted photovoltaic energy generation, including utility-scale and community solar, or concentrating solar-thermal power that is compatible with surrounding wildlife. For

more information, see DOE, EERE, Solar Energy Technologies Office, Mar. 1, 2022:

<https://www.energy.gov/eere/solar/articles/funding-notice-deploying-solar-wildlife-and-ecosystem-services-benefits-solweb>

Conferences, Webinars and other Training Opportunities

An Introduction to the Solar Power in Your Community Guidebook: April 14, 2022 10:00 a.m. PT

Panelists from NREL and DOE will present the updated Solar Power in Your Community Guidebook and discuss how it can be a resource for developing a supportive local environment for innovative, equitable, and community-led solar. For more information and to register: <https://www.cesa.org/event/an-introduction-to-the-solar-power-in-your-community-guidebook/>

Resilience Hubs: Model Overview and Community Case Studies

Presenters will discuss the services, programs, communications and operational elements in addition to the building retrofits and resilient power systems – solar PV paired with battery storage – that have made their Resilience Hubs a trusted community node for resilience. For more information and to register: <https://www.cesa.org/event/resilience-hubs-model-overview-and-community-case-studies/>

ASES Solar 2022: Energy Transition with Economic: Albuquerque, NM June 21-24, 2022 and Online

Registration is OPEN for the 51st Annual National Solar Conference, SOLAR 2022. They are partnering with their New Mexico Chapter, the [New Mexico Solar Energy Association](#) (NMSEA), who is celebrating 50 years of achievements at this conference. Register by March 31 to receive significant early bird discounts. For more information and to register: <https://ases.org/conference/>

IREC Releases Training Courses for Residential Solar Plan Review and Permitting

The Interstate Renewable Energy Council (IREC) and a team of partners announced the launch of a free series of self-paced, interactive, online professional development courses on the plan review and permitting process for residential rooftop solar installations. The series covers the primary tasks to confirm the electrical, structural, and fire code compliance of PV systems prior to issuing a permit—Anne Fischer, *pv magazine*, Mar. 7, 2022: <https://pv-magazine-usa.com/2022/03/07/irec-releases-training-courses-for-residential-solar-plan-review-and-permitting/>

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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