

BEFORE THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
FOR MULTNOMAH COUNTY, OREGON

RESOLUTION NO. 07-125

Authorizing the Development of Solar Energy Projects on County Facilities

The Multnomah County Board of Commissioners Finds:

- a. Global warming as a result of human activity threatens all of the earth's natural systems and people. Burning fossil fuels is the root cause of global warming.
- b. The majority of the 42,000,000 kWh/year of electricity used by Multnomah County facilities comes from power plants burning fossil fuels. By reducing our reliance on fossil fuel generated electricity we can reduce Multnomah County's contribution to global warming.
- c. Excessive reliance on foreign sources of energy is a serious threat to America's national security. Reducing our dependence on imported oil and natural gas, and developing ways to produce more of our energy locally will help us secure a more peaceful and prosperous future.
- d. Solar energy technology is more efficient than ever. Contrary to conventional wisdom, even a frequently cloudy and rainy climate like we have in Multnomah County can produce significant amounts of electricity from solar energy. Modern low-profile solar arrays fit on most roofs, and installation is relatively simple.
- e. The solar energy industry is an important source of future economic development in our community. Our region is already attractive to major solar energy technology companies, as evidenced by the recent decisions by SolarWorld of Germany to open a factory in Hillsboro employing up to 1,000 workers, and by Solaicx of California's recent decision to open a facility in Portland's Rivergate Industrial District employing up to 100 workers. Local government should do what it can to encourage our fast-growing local solar industry.
- f. Energy Trust of Oregon is an independent non-profit organization funded entirely by utility customers through a public purpose charge paid by the ratepayers of Portland General Electric, Pacific Power, NW Natural, Cascade Natural Gas, and Avista. A central part of its mission is to encourage renewable energy production in Oregon. They achieve this by providing cash incentives that reduce up-front and on-going costs, and by facilitating partnerships. Energy Trust has been a partner on 452 solar energy projects in Oregon to date.
- g. Multnomah County has an opportunity to develop solar power production resources on County owned facilities at little or no cost to the County by partnering with Energy Trust of Oregon. This will create a "Virtual Power Plant"

(the Project) mounted on the roofs of select County owned buildings. With minimal maintenance, the County should generate at least 20 years of electricity production from a free and renewable energy source.

- h. The County will purchase the electricity generated on our rooftops at the rates we currently pay our electric utilities. Producing this electricity will not change our status as customers of our utilities or impact our ability to buy the electricity we need from our utilities.
- i. Utility regulation and tax policy in Oregon encourage and protect alternative energy projects. Net metering arrangements allow small power generation facilities to produce and use the clean energy they generate on-site to supplement the energy they take from the utilities off the power grid. When on-site generation exceeds on-site use, our utilities will buy the excess energy and put it back into the power grid.
- j. The Project would be the largest solar power generation project in Oregon, and would more than double the current installed capacity of photovoltaic solar panels in our state.
- k. Multnomah County can help build the market for green energy by demonstrating the viability of solar energy projects located on County property. Energy Trust of Oregon will help the County launch these projects by connecting us with appropriate partners, offering direct financial support, and assisting us with project design and management. This effort should help validate new technologies and inspire others to use renewable energy.
- l. Not only will the Project with Energy Trust be completed at little or no additional cost to Multnomah County, but the County will also gain rate stability and predictability for the portion of its electric needs that comes from these solar energy-based electrical generation sites.
- m. In April 2001 by Resolution No. 01-052, the Board adopted the joint Multnomah County and City of Portland Action Plan on Global Warming. The central objective of that plan was to “reduce greenhouse gas emissions from City of Portland and Multnomah County facilities to 10 percent below 1990 levels by 2010 through energy-efficiency measures.” That equates to a 28% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from our 2001 baseline. As of 2006, we have achieved an 8.1% reduction from that 2001 baseline. The Project will bring us closer to reaching that goal.
- n. In February 2004 by Resolution No. 04-019, the Board adopted Multnomah County’s Sustainability Principles. One of those guiding principles is to “protect and restore air, water and land to preserve biological diversity and environmental health while providing a natural resource base for future generations.” Small

scale renewable energy projects incorporated into County facilities are consistent with the County's adopted sustainability principles.

The Multnomah County Board of Commissioners Resolves:

1. To collaborate with Energy Trust of Oregon on a series of solar energy production projects sited on County facilities. Collectively, these projects will be generating at least 1,000,000 kWh per year of renewable electricity from County owned buildings and property by the end of 2010.

ADOPTED this 28th day of June, 2007.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
FOR MULTNOMAH COUNTY, OREGON



Ted Wheeler

Ted Wheeler, Chair

REVIEWED:

AGNES SOWLE, COUNTY ATTORNEY
FOR MULTNOMAH COUNTY, OREGON

By *Agnes Sowle*

Agnes Sowle, County Attorney

SUBMITTED BY:

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