

OREGON INTERFAITH POWER AND LIGHT

Solar Congregations Program

The Solar Congregations Program is designed for any faith community in Oregon that wants to reduce its carbon footprint and publically express its commitment to Creation Care by installing solar panels on its property. Federal law currently provides tax or cash incentives for solar photovoltaic systems installed by individuals or groups with taxable status. These federal incentives cover 30% of the cost of solar installations, making them affordable and thus supporting an emerging market for clean, distributed, renewable energy technology. Nonprofit organizations and individuals without tax liability do not have direct access to these incentives.

The Solar Congregations Program creates a partnership between a congregation, investor/lender members of the congregation, and Oregon Interfaith Power and Light for the purpose of installing a solar photovoltaic system on the congregation's property financed in a way that allows the project to receive the federal solar incentives.

OIPL provides the legal framework and documents for the program, an internal C-corporation to own or co-own the solar installation in trust for the congregation for five years (to allow collection of the federal incentive), and insurance and financial administration of the program for those five years.

The congregation provides a relatively new roof with good solar aspect, a location inside or outside the building for inverters and meters, congregant or community investor/lenders, and a Solar Champion who provides the leadership to move project forward.



For more information about this opportunity and to arrange a solar assessment, please contact Jenny Holmes at Oregon Interfaith Power and Light: 503-232-1054 ext 214; jholmes@emoregon.org

OIPL is a project of Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon, 0245 SW Bancroft St # B, Portland, OR 97239-4297

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Two Paths for Oregon Solar Incentives

The State Tax Credit Path

- Available throughout the state of Oregon
- Uses Oregon Business Energy Tax Credits (BETC) and local power company incentives as available
- Seed funding comes from the congregation
- Bulk of financing comes from individuals in the congregation or local community who together have sufficient and appropriate tax liability to use all the tax credits generated
- Investors and the congregation purchase the system together, with OIPL holding the congregation's share in trust for the first five years.
- Over five years investors regain their financial investment from state and federal tax credits and available local cash incentives. The investors' share of the installation is then sold to the congregation for a nominal fee.
- All energy produced by the system is used by the congregation and after five years becomes the property of the congregation, thus insulating the congregation from future electric rate increases.
- Note: BETC funding is now limited and as of writing likely to be available only on specific application dates: **Feb 18 and April 11, 2011.**

The Payment for Power Path

- Uses the state feed-in-tariff type program in which the solar incentive is paid out over 15 years in the form of above-market payments for power produced by the system
- Available only to Congregations that purchase their power from:
 - PGE (apply under the *Solar Payment Option*)
 - Pacific Power (apply under the *Oregon Solar Incentive Program*)
 - Idaho Power (apply under the *Oregon Solar Photovoltaic Pilot*)
- Uses the Federal Treasury Grant in lieu of tax credits
- Small amount of funding may come from the congregation
- Bulk of financing comes from simple loans from members and friends of the congregation
- OIPL owns the system in trust for the congregation for first five years then transfers ownership to congregation
- Lenders paid back over 15 years through power payments from utility for energy produced
- Opportunities for enrollment on **April 1** and **Oct 1** each year; the incentive rate may drop between enrollment periods. This program is available for all of **2011**, but depends on extension of the Federal Treasury Grant for years going forward.

OIPL's fee for the Solar Congregations Program covers the legal, insurance, and administration costs associated with each congregation's participation and varies by situation but leaves the bulk of the federal incentive to the benefit of the congregation.

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