

OREGON COMMISSION BLOCKS PACIFIC POWER'S ATTACK ON LOCAL CLEAN ENERGY

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SALEM, Ore.. – The Oregon Public Utility Commission (PUC) rejected PacifiCorp's request to stifle the expansion of clean energy in the state and undermine policies that foster renewable energy growth locally.

PacifiCorp, through their subsidiary Pacific Power, proposed to dramatically shorten the length of contract terms it is required to provide to independent wind and solar developers from 20 years to only three years. The utility's plan would have effectively stopped independent renewable energy development in Oregon's burgeoning clean energy industry. The decision comes after Utah regulators rejected a similar request made by PacifiCorp subsidiary Rocky Mountain Power earlier this year. Sierra Club joined other clean energy supporters, including Renewable Northwest, the City of Portland, Renewable Energy Coalition (REC), and the Community Renewable Energy Association (CREA) to oppose PacifiCorp's plan to stifle competition from an important market for low cost renewable energy. A copy of the decision can be found [here](#).

In response to today's decision, Amy Hojnowski, Senior Campaign Representative for the Sierra Club's Beyond Coal campaign, issued the following statement:

"Oregon families and communities want more local clean energy to power our homes and communities. Yet Pacific Power's request would have undercut an important sector of the clean energy industry that has provided affordable power to Oregonians and creates good new jobs.

On the heels of historic legislation that will double Oregon's commitment to clean energy and move our state off of coal, the Public Utility Commission's decision will help ensure the continued growth of homegrown clean, renewable energy like wind and solar. We will continue to work to ensure that clean energy solutions like wind and solar are protected for all Oregonians to enjoy."

BACKGROUND

The federal Public Utility Regulatory Policies Act (PURPA) requires utility monopolies to purchase power from qualifying renewable energy producers if the projects can offer a price that is at or below what ratepayers would otherwise pay. The cost for solar and wind projects has dropped steeply in recent years, which has encouraged a burst of new clean energy projects that are able to offer competitive pricing. Unfortunately, in an attempt to protect their own profits, utilities like PacifiCorp have sought to undermine these projects by pushing states to shorten the required contract terms, which in turn makes financing for the projects more difficult, if not impossible.

PacifiCorp's attack on PURPA in Oregon follows a trend across the country. The utility, owned by Warren Buffett's Berkshire Hathaway Energy, has sought similar changes before state bodies in Idaho, Utah and Wyoming, and in 2015 failed to push through a bill in Congress that would have allowed an end run around PURPA.

Campaign Name:

[Beyond Coal](#)