Building an Equitable and Just Energy System
Serves communities by building environmental wealth through social enterprise, outreach, and advocacy.

- Community members involved in the planning and building of these investments
- Benefits flow to frontline communities
- Projects have included building a community park and developing a community energy plan
Serves communities by building environmental wealth through social enterprise, outreach, and advocacy.

- Community members involved in the planning and building of these investments
- Benefits flow to frontline communities
- Projects have included building a community park and developing a community energy plan
Questions

- What is Environmental Justice
- Who are Environmental Justice Communities?
- How Does Environmental Justice Play Out in the Energy Space
- What Kinds of Solutions Exist?
  - Portland Clean Energy Fund
  - Community Solar
  - Equity in the Public Utility Commission Space
  - State Office of Environmental Justice
What is Environmental Justice?

Fair distribution of burdens and benefits of environmental health hazards and meaningful participation in decisions that impact the environment and people who live, work, learn and play. – Oregon Environmental Justice Taskforce

Prevent Harm  
(Who is burdened?)

Provide Benefit  
(Who benefits?)

Ensure Inclusive and Accountable Decision-Making  
(Who’s at the Table?)
Who Are Environmental Justice Communities?

Communities of color, communities experiencing lower incomes, tribal communities, rural communities, frontier communities, coastal communities, and other communities traditionally under-represented in public processes and adversely harmed by environmental and health hazards, including but not limited to seniors, youth, persons with disabilities, and people
Principles of Equity for Energy Transformation

- Inclusive, accessible, meaningful, and sustained engagement and representation
- Programs and policies result in fair distributions of benefits and burdens
- Decisions are made with a recognition of the historical, cultural, and institutional dynamics and structures
- Decisions consider generational impacts

Private Ownership Financed Infrastructure in Cities and Generated Shareholder Returns and Urban Development

Displacement of Indigenous People to Build Hydro
- Lack of compensation
- Impacts to subsistence lifestyles

Rural Electrification Act
- Anti-poverty strategy
- Public initiatives funded major regional infrastructure
- Agricultural growth

Restricted Opportunity for Homeownership
- Article XVIII, original Oregon State Constitution
- Redlining

Historical Benefits and Burdens of the System
Energy Burden = % of Household Income that Goes to Energy

Source: US Department of Energy
Challenges and Pathways for Equity

Challenges
- Lack of Political Will
- Location and Scale of Investment
- Financial Costs and Tools
- Ownership and Split Incentives
- Outreach, Education, and Marketing
- Climate Change and Resource Variability

Pathways
- Identifying Overburdened and Impacted Communities
- Prioritizing Identified Communities for Investment
- Advancing Local Models for Resilience
- Moving from “Least Cost / Least Risk” to also include Least Harm and Greatest Benefit
- Establishing Community Governance and Decision-Making Processes

Inclusive, Transparent, Meaningful Decision-Making

Access to information (translation, no jargon)

Technical assistance to make an informed decision

Opportunity to influence the outcome of the decision

Decision-makers seek out options of most impacted

Translation, language accessibility

What, where, who, what, when, why and how?

No half-baked ideas. CO-CREATION

“Non-traditional” stakeholders engagement
Solutions

- Community Solar
- Community Benefits Initiatives
- Community Energy Planning
- State-Level Reform
Why Solar?

**Environmental Justice:** Environmental Justice Communities bear the brunt of pollution and climate change.

**Participation:** Solar is an opportunity to participate in a transition to clean energy.

**Equitable Access:** Everyone pays into solar incentives (especially in IOU territory) and everyone should benefit.

**Economic Benefit/Jobs:** Solar is an opportunity to save on utility bills, build community wealth, and create local, living wage jobs.

**Widespread Adoption:** The more people who adopt solar the more pressure it puts on municipalities, states, and utilities to adopt clean energy policies and programs.
Community Shared Solar

Participants subscribe to or own a share of the generation of a large group of solar panels.

Accessibility and Affordability

Compatibility and Integration

Sustainability and Flexibility

Addresses barriers of cost and upfront capital, location/solar viability, homeownership status and housing conditions.
Living Cully Energy Plan

- Identifying pilot energy investments that solve community problems
- Advocating for community control of energy investments
- Replicable Model
Energy Plan Pilots
• Established by a successful ballot measure in November, 2018 which passed by 65%

• First-ever environmental measure in Oregon history created and led by communities of color.

• Campaign focused on communities that are disenfranchised in elections but would benefit most from the measure
• Establish a state Office of Environmental Justice

• Establish funding for environmental justice communities to participate in Public Utility Commission proceedings

• Allow utilities to create low-income rate discounts or special rate classes