

OHSU helps accelerate Oregon's clean energy economy

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Skai Dancey

Associate vice president
OHSU Facilities

One of the most significant ways large organizations can make meaningful progress on sustainability goals is to shift their power portfolio away from carbon-based generation to clean, renewable resources.

By 2020, OHSU was already on track to purchase half of its power from carbon-free sources and was ready to do more. But the challenge in Oregon — and elsewhere — is the imbalance of in-state clean energy supply with growing demand.

To overcome this challenge and help increase the supply of renewable power, OHSU has joined forces with Portland General Electric and several other electric power customers to invest directly in the development of new in-state green power projects.

"We have a predictable electric power demand, which allows OHSU to commit to long-term power purchase agreements," said Skai Dancey, associate vice president of facilities at OHSU. "Bundled together with other PGE customers, these purchase commitments help developers secure the necessary funding packages for new renewable energy projects."

OHSU entered into a 15-year agreement to purchase power generated at a 162-megawatt solar facility that will be constructed on 1,200 acres of privately owned land near Boardman in Gilliam County. PGE is partnering with Avangrid Renewables, an international company headquartered in Portland, on what will be Oregon's largest solar plant. At peak construction in 2021, the new array will create about 300 jobs in partnership with local unions. Once up and running, the project is projected to provide an estimated \$1.3 million annually in taxes and property owner lease payments.

"The project is a welcome investment in Gilliam County. The new tax revenue, jobs and lease payments to landowners will further strengthen our communities for years to come," said Gilliam County Judge Liz Farrar. "It's gratifying to see urban businesses and public entities with large electricity demand, like OHSU, invest in new power projects that support rural economies and keep Oregon dollars in Oregon."

"It's a good feeling when the pieces fall into place for projects like this in a way that benefits a wide cross-section of Oregonians and meets sustainability and economic goals," Dancey said. "With this project, and others we're evaluating now, OHSU is on track to purchase 100 percent of our power from renewable resources by 2035. We're really excited about that."

