



**PORTLAND BUSINESS
ALLIANCE**

Leading the way

Testimony by Sandra McDonough
Portland City Council
May 18, 2011

Mr. Mayor and Members of the Council:

My name is Sandra McDonough and I am president and CEO of the Portland Business Alliance. I am here today to support the proposed loan guarantee agreement with the Oregon Department of Energy which will ensure SoloPower locates its new manufacturing plant in Portland.

As you know, the focus of the Alliance for the last couple of years is to increase awareness of the need for greater private-sector job creation and retention. Over the last 12 years, wages and incomes in the greater Portland region have fallen in relation to the national average and, in fact, we are below the national average. This is not good for families and it is not good for public services. Oregon is an income-tax-dependent state; if we want strong schools, great open spaces and adequate social safety nets to help our vulnerable residents, we need good jobs that generate healthy family-wage salaries that then yield the income tax revenues our state depends on. That pyramid will be strongest if the base is made up of high-value private-sector jobs.

SoloPower is exactly the kind of employer that will help us make our base stronger. Initially, we will benefit from construction jobs as the site is prepared. Then, when production starts, SoloPower will employ about 170 individuals – but that could grow to as many as 500. These are good wage manufacturing jobs, at an average of \$51,000 per year. And they are traded-sector jobs, which means that much of the product will be sold outside of our region, bringing new dollars into our local economy that can be spent in local businesses. This is consistent with the city's economic development strategy and a huge win for our region.

I want to thank officials in Clackamas County and Wilsonville, as well as Business Oregon, who initially talked to SoloPower about coming to the Greater Portland region. When that site became unworkable, due to circumstances outside the control of the elected officials in Clackamas County, I am very proud that Mayor Adams, the Portland Development Commission and City Council stepped up to provide an opportunity that would keep the company and its new jobs in Oregon.

This is a great win for Portland, for our region and our state. Congratulations to all of you. I look forward to welcoming SoloPower to Portland.

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