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Annual Report on Support for Energy Trust of Oregon Energy Efficiency Goals

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# 2020 PGE Residential and Commercial Senate Bill 838

## Introduction

PGE collaborates with the Energy Trust of Oregon (Energy Trust) to increase our customers' awareness of and participation in Energy Trust residential and small-to-mid-sized business energy efficiency (EE) programs through marketing and outreach activities. In addition, PGE uses Senate Bill (SB) 838 funding to enhance trade-ally awareness of the Energy Trust Heat Pump program and Heat Pump installation standards. As a utility with existing customer relationships and communication channels, PGE can enhance SB 838-funded activity through existing newsletters and an education curriculum focused on the wise and efficient use of energy.

## Summary of Marketing Activities

### Collaboration Process

PGE marketing and outreach action plans are created based on market conditions, Energy Trust program goals and projected results. PGE focuses on promoting Energy Trust programs to customers likely to participate in the programs, those most in need of upgrades, and when PGE is the appropriate and effective communication channel.

Senior utility and Energy Trust managers meet annually to discuss goals and plan for the upcoming calendar year. Marketing program and management-level staff then meet regularly to coordinate marketing activities. Throughout the year, collaboration meetings guide the direction of ongoing marketing activity to meet changing market conditions and adjust to changes in program offerings.

PGE-funded SB 838 communications are reviewed by Energy Trust staff for approval. PGE collaborates with the Energy Trust to ensure timing of specific communications is aligned with program participation goals.

### Expectations, Goals and Impacts

PGE utilizes many communication channels and approaches. Activities directly drive customer participation in Energy Trust programs. All SB 838 activity is designed to increase general awareness of Energy Trust programs. Specific promotions are developed based on lessons learned from previous outcomes. Promotions are evaluated based on metrics appropriate for



the specific campaign. Other activities relate to elevating awareness of specific Energy Trust programs and these efforts are tracked via impressions. High-level goals included 1,400 heat pump installations and 800 qualified commercial and industrial/agricultural leads to Energy Trust or trade allies.

**RESIDENTIAL SUMMARY**

PGE newsletters are leveraged to enhance SB 838 activity. PGE’s residential customer newsletter, *Update*, is sent six times a year to approximately 443,000 households along with their PGE bills. PGE’s residential e-newsletter, *Home Connection*, is also sent six times a year to roughly 382,000 customers with email addresses on file. Direct mail and email are utilized for more targeted marketing based on customer data that helps us identify and promote the right technological solutions to a more specific group of customers. Newsletters, social media ads, and digital ads are also utilized for general awareness and education.

**Marketing Activity**

- January - Energy Trust 2020 incentives covered in bill insert
- February - Ductless heat pump social ad campaign
- May/June - Ductless and ducted heat pumps via email social media ads, and employee news
- July - Heat pump water heater incentives in digital newsletter
- July/August - Ductless and ducted heat pumps via email, social media ads, and printed newsletter
- September - Weatherization and insulation in digital newsletter
- September/October- Ductless and ducted heat pumps via email, social media ads, and printed newsletter, and employee news
- October - 2020 incentives covered in digital newsletter
- October - Smart thermostat email
- November - Smart thermostats deals in newsletters
- November - Weatherization covered in digital newsletter

**Expectations, Goals, and Impact** (Based on the agreed upon plans between PGE/Energy Trust)

**Table 1: Residential Program Activity Impressions\***

<b>Impressions</b>	<b>Q1</b>	<b>Q2</b>	<b>Q3</b>	<b>Q4</b>	<b>Total</b>
Measured through newsletters, bill inserts, email, social media ads, employee news	629k	562 k	1/2mil	2.6 mil	4.9 mil

\* Awareness is a key metric for SB 838 activity and is measured by impressions.



**Table 2: Energy Trust residential program participation\***

Program	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
PGE customers who received Energy Saver Kits	747	1,382	6,435	3,064	11,628
PGE customers who received an instant ETO discount at retail for heat pump water heaters	85	163	305	348	901
PGE customers who received a Midstream Distributor heat pump water heater	114	338	562	285	1,299
PGE customers who participated in Savings Within Reach (for electric measures including HPWH)	157	111	114	335	717
SWR in Elec Heated Homes	24	25	27	63	139
SWR in Gas Heated Homes	133	86	87	272	578
PGE customers who received ETO smart thermostat incentive (any eligible heating system)	1,372	2,283	1,552	3,541	8,748
PGE customers who received ETO smart thermostat incentive (electric heating system)	241	489	302	707	1,739
PGE customers who received ETO DHP incentive	127	139	255	267	788
PGE customers who received ETO ducted heat pump incentive	99	99	193	211	602
PGE customers who received ETO heat pump advanced controls incentive	121	116	177	194	608
Total	3,220	5,231	10,009	9,287	27,030

\* Instant discount numbers are counts of units; all other numbers are counts of customers served at verified sites.

### Heat Pump Program Support

There are two dedicated PGE positions supporting the heat pump program. The positions include a Heat Pump Specialist and a Data Management Specialist.

PGE promotes residential high efficiency heat pumps and advanced control technology to customers as well as to PGE-approved heat pump contractors, connecting them to the Energy Trust incentive programs within PGE’s service territory. PGE manages the relationship with 30 PGE-approved contractors in addition to three distributors. Contractors are required to be



Energy Trust Trade Allies and must meet certain criteria to retain PGE-approved status, including, but not limited to, quality adherence and elevated customer satisfaction levels.

To ensure that heat pumps are installed to specifications, PGE performs quality assurance (QA) inspections on a percentage of heat pumps that are presumed eligible for Energy Trust incentives both for PGE-approved and non PGE-approved contractors. These inspections verify that the installations produce the highest efficiency results and system performance, and that the customer receives the greatest benefit long-term.

Each on-site inspection confirms equipment and system compliance are to specifications. Inspections receive either a pass or fail grade. Depending on the severity of the failure, PGE may make simple corrections in the field. A failure that is larger in scale is referred to the installing contractor who works with the customer to take corrective actions. PGE also uses these opportunities to work with the contractor to instill future installation quality practices.

Ongoing data sharing between PGE, the heat pump contractors, and the Energy Trust program delivery contractor occurs monthly and weekly, respectively, throughout the year. We track goals, status, customer receipt of incentives, inspection results, market trends, and more.

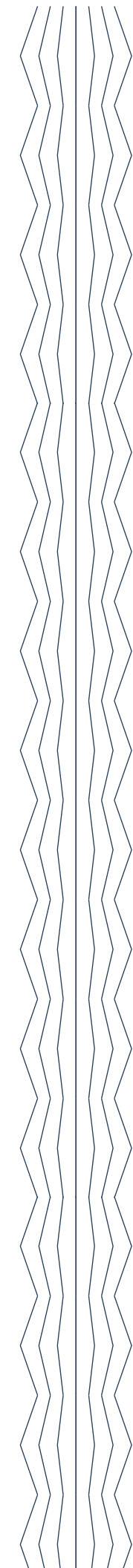
**Table 3: Key Activity**

Activity	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total	Goal
Inspections of Heat Pump Installations	45	6	32	37	120	120
Failed Installations	4	0	5	9	18	N/A
Simple Field Corrections	3	0	0	0	3	N/A

**Residential Conclusion**

1. Progress to Goals and Key Learnings:
  - a. PGE and Energy Trust aligned timing of customer communications and activities throughout the year. Areas of focus included coordination of QA field inspections including timing, and technique and results/trend sharing to meet goals.
  - a. Heat Pump communications included three promotions in 2020 and a slight reduction in marketing leads sent to participating Energy Trust Trade allies from 1,585 in 2019 to 1,495 in 2020. Although lead quantity was reduced, higher lead quality helped increase Energy Trust incentivized ducted heat pump projects. There was a reduction in ductless heat pump and heat pump advanced controls projects. Heat pump installation volume was expected to be reduced in 2020 due the pandemic. There was an early reduction in volume, but installations increased significantly in Q2. Volume likely grew in 2020 because home owners spent much more time at home and focused on improving their properties.
  - b. The pandemic prevented in-person heat pump inspections for the majority of 2020. However, ductless heat pump inspections successfully transitioned to a virtual format





via the use of technology to connect with customers virtually. The use of technology will be continued post-pandemic if preferred by customers. The complexity of verifying installer level thermostat settings on ducted heat pumps resulted in the inability to perform remote inspections. Once in-person inspections resume in 2021, there will be an increased focus on ducted heat pump quality assurance including installations that occurred in 2020. The inspection failure rate more than doubled in 2020 compared to 2019 for ductless heat pumps. Both years had approximately the same volume of installations. However, COVID resulted in staffing challenges for contractors. In addition to labor issues, contractors had to also focus on new COVID protocols while in customers' homes.

2. Areas of Success:

- a. Throughout the year, PGE provided contractors with monthly report cards that give performance feedback, including the quality of installations and level of customer service. Ranking contractors has increased their performance and addressed areas of concern. The metric showing the duration between when a heat pump is installed and when the Energy Trust incentive was received and helped contractors see if and where incentives were "stuck" in the process. In 2020, a few contractors had outstanding incentive receivables from Energy Trust in the \$10s of thousands for instant incentives. PGE's gap analysis identified Energy Trust incentive eligible projects, the length of time between when Energy Trust received an incentive application, and when the incentive was paid. The analysis helped contractors identify process issues including administrative problems and improve cash flow.

The goal of the reports is to increase the number of Energy Trust qualifying heat pump installations and for contractors to better assist the submission of customer incentive applications as quickly as possible. These efforts resulted in more customers receiving Energy Trust incentives and receiving incentives more quickly and, in many instances, instantaneously. In turn, it helped contractors get more quickly reimbursed by Energy Trust for incentives the contractor gave customers up front.

- b. PGE provided training at several heat pump technology related events before covid-19 restrictions began in March: ORACCA (Oregon Chapter of Air Conditioning Contractors of America) utility roundup meeting, a homeowner association meeting and energy efficiency HVAC training for Yamhill County Realtors. Support of these events helps to increase the number of Energy Trust qualifying heat pump installations.

3. Opportunities and Areas for Improvement:

- a. PGE continued to promote the installation of smart thermostats on existing heat pumps while providing customers with Energy Trust incentives and PGE's demand response program incentives. PGE included DR compatible thermostats in the three major 2020 heat pump promotions. PGE is continuing to work with heat pump contractors and distributors to increase the number of smart thermostat installations in 2021.
- b. PGE works directly with Existing Homes staff at Energy Trust. Most heat pump volume is in single family homes, but many installations occur in owned and rented multifamily residences. In late 2019, PGE connected with Energy Trust's Multifamily Program manager who works under Energy Trusts Existing Buildings Program to discuss opportunities for collaboration.



In 2020, we continued to work with the Energy Trust to identify opportunities to support increasing multifamily heat pump installations and assisting with quality assurance inspections. PGE is now applying its monitoring and management of contractor performance in the multifamily sector. This will continue in 2021 as well.

### **COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL/AGRICULTURE SUMMARY**

PGE has four dedicated Outreach Specialists whose focus is on enhancing customer awareness and facilitating their participation in Energy Trust programs. The results of these efforts are screened and qualified leads handed over to the Energy Trust. The team utilizes a variety of tactics to engage customers in Energy Trust programs.

#### **Outreach activities include, but not limited to:**

- On-site and phone consultations
- Targeted outbound customer calls
- Cold calls and door-to-door canvassing
- Response to business marketing
- Response to customer email inquiries ([energy.consultation@pgn.com](mailto:energy.consultation@pgn.com)) Point of origin: PGE’s web site and contact center
- Business partnerships (i.e. City of Portland Sustainability at Work program, Partners for a Sustainable Washington County Community, Clackamas County Resource Conservation and Solid Waste, Gresham Resource Efficiency Assistance to Businesses (GREAT), cities, etc.)
- Chamber, Business and Trade Association presentations
- Customer follow-up after PGE Energy classes
- Leveraging internal networks (i.e. Key Customer Managers, Governmental Affairs representatives, Economic Development, etc.)
- Assisting customers with Energy Trust application paperwork

#### **Outreach Activities**

These activities elevate Energy Trust program awareness and engage customers in identifying potential energy saving opportunities. The following events were held in each quarter demonstrating PGE’s engagement and commitment in providing customers EE opportunities and learnings. Approximately 3,158 business customers attended these events. Engagement in these events results in customer requests for onsite energy efficiency consultations to identify energy efficiency upgrades:

Q1
Hillsboro Chamber of Commerce
Hillsboro Chamber of Commerce
Salem Chamber
Salem Chamber
Hillsboro Chamber of Commerce



Salem Chamber
Gresham Chamber
Beaverton Chamber of Commerce
Keizer Chamber
Beaverton Chamber of Commerce
Salem Chamber
Salem Chamber
Hillsboro Chamber of Commerce
Gresham Chamber
North Clackamas Chamber
Hillsboro Chamber of Commerce
Keizer Chamber
Hillsboro Chamber of Commerce
Gresham Chamber
Beaverton Chamber of Commerce
Hillsboro Chamber of Commerce
Beaverton Couch Chat

Q2
Hillsboro Chamber of Commerce
Tigard Chamber of Commerce
Hillsboro Chamber of Commerce
Keizer Chambers
Hillsboro Chamber of Commerce
North Clackamas Chamber
Gresham Chamber
Hillsboro Chamber of Commerce
Keizer Chamber
North Clackamas Chamber
Hillsboro Chamber of Commerce
Tigard Chamber of Commerce
Tualatin Chamber of Commerce
Keizer Chamber
Hillsboro Chamber of commerce
Tualatin Chamber of Commerce





Tigard Chamber of Commerce
Workforce Solutions Webinar - GreenForce
Tualatin Chamber of Commerce
Gresham Chamber
Tigard Chamber of Commerce
Hillsboro Chamber of Commerce
Gresham Chamber
Tigard Chamber of Commerce
Lake Oswego Chamber of Commerce
Tigard Chamber of Commerce
Hillsboro Chamber of Commerce
North Clackamas Chamber
Keizer Chamber
Tigard Chamber of Commerce
Hillsboro Chamber of Commerce
Gresham Chamber
Q3
North Clackamas Chamber
Hillsboro Chamber of Commerce
Gresham Chamber
Hillsboro Chamber of Commerce
City of Gresham
North Clackamas Chamber
Gresham Chamber
Gresham Chamber
Hillsboro Chamber of Commerce

Q4
Salem Chamber
Gresham Chamber
Salem Chamber
Salem Chamber
Hillsboro Chamber of Commerce
Salem Chamber
Gresham Chamber



Salem Chamber
Hillsboro Chamber of Commerce
Salem Chamber
Salem Chamber
North Clackamas Chamber
Hillsboro Chamber of Commerce
Keizer Chamber
Keizer Chamber
Hillsboro Chamber of Commerce
Hillsboro Chamber of Commerce

### Commercial Energy Efficiency Marketing

PGE utilizes its business newsletters (both in print and via email) to promote Energy Trust programs to business customers. PGE’s business newsletter, *Energize*, is sent quarterly to 51,000 customers in their bills. PGE’s business e-newsletter, *Business Connection*, is sent bi-monthly to 16,000 business customers.

### Marketing Activity

- February - Energy Trust 2020 incentives covered in bill inserts and newsletters
- February - Thermostats and EE consultation in Energize newsletter
- February - Thermostats with EE consultation direct mail
- June - Smart Watt direct mail
- July - Bonus incentives direct mail
- August - Thermostats and EE consultation in Energize and Business Connection newsletter
- August - Thermostats with EE consultation direct mail
- October - Thermostat with EE consultation direct mail
- November - Thermostats and EE consultation in Energize and Business Connection newsletter

**Expectations, Goals and Impact** (based on the agreed upon plans between PGE/ Energy Trust)

**Table 4: Outreach Team Results**

Key Objectives	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total	Goal
Increased participation-qualified leads delivered to Energy Trust	251	165	300	174	890	800
Increased awareness of Energy Trust programs -	22	32	9	17	80	60



outreach presentations and networking						
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**Table 5: Commercial Energy Efficiency Impressions**

Impressions	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total	Goal
Measured through newsletters, direct mail, and email	91,500	8,352	121,222	97,500	318,574	N/A

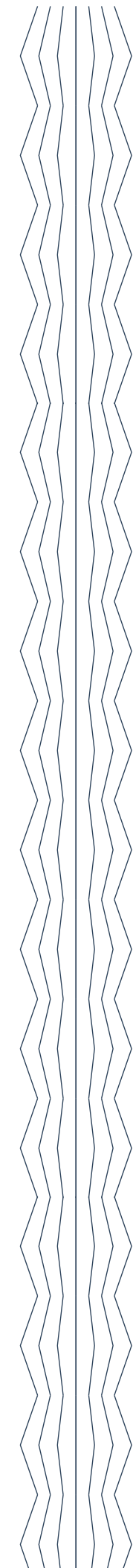
**Table 6: Commercial Energy Efficiency Requests for Consultation**

Consultations	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total	Goal
Request through direct mail, email, PGE call center and outreach	335	228	365	237	1,165	1,000

**Commercial Conclusion**

1. Progress to Goals and Key Learnings:
  - a. There was a decrease in the total requests for consultations from 1,546 in 2019 to 1,165 2020 (over 24% decrease). The year began strong until the pandemic emerged which significantly reduced customer interest in energy efficiency March through May. The decreased interest in this three-month period was the primary driver of decreased interest in consultations in 2020.
  - b. The pandemic impacted all business customers. However, the most impacted business included, restaurants, lodging and retail. While many other business types were impacted to a lesser degree, they were reluctant to make significant capital investments for energy efficiency projects. This was particularly the case earlier in the year.
  - c. PGE Outreach Specialists transitioned to performing remote consultations in March for the remainder of the year. While remote consultations were not ideal, the team was able to engage with customers and facilitate Energy Trust program participation.
  
2. Areas of Success:
  - a. During the initial stay-at-home order in March and April, outreach specialists focused on helping customers manage their cost when businesses were closed or operating under reduced hours. The specialists continued to engage with business associations and chambers to provide information to save energy and understand how the pandemic was initially impacting business customers. PGE provided information and resources for business customers in the form of content from chamber communications and via PGE newsletters. In addition to efficiency information, PGE worked on informing customers about billing payment arrangements and assistance programs.



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- b. Despite the economic impact the pandemic had on customers, total lead generation decreased by less than 7% compared to 2019. Customer engagement and lead generation significantly increased in June through the remainder of 2020. PGE focused on both low-cost measures and Energy Trust bonus incentives to overcome the first cost barrier in 2020.
    - The Outreach Team focused on Energy Trust’s SmartWatt program that was designed to support smaller and rural customers with lighting upgrades with increased incentives.
    - PGE continued to focus on enrolling customers in its Energy Partner thermostat program in which customers receive a free smart thermostat and ongoing demand response incentives. Customers also benefited from energy savings via partnership and installation cost sharing with Energy Trust.
    - Energy Trust bonus incentives were promoted in Q4 with a focus on lighting and standard industrial/ag measures.
  3. Opportunities and Areas of Improvement:
    - a. PGE found the SmartWatt program with increased lighting incentives critical for small and medium business customers to complete projects in a very challenging year. It is expected that business customers will continue to operate in similar economic climate in 2021. PGE understands Energy Trust has a new small business program underdevelopment and is looking forward to supporting it.
    - b. Outreach Specialists utilized Spanish speaking PGE employees in other areas of the company to work with customers in 2020. The Outreach Team will leverage translation technology in 2021 to work with more non-English speaking customers to facilitate their onsite energy efficiency consultation in multiple languages.
    - c. PGE looks forward to coordinating its business customer DEI efforts with Energy Trust’s focus in this area. PGE plans to engage with the Latinx community and launch a campaign to support increased energy efficiency program participation. We plan to work with PGE's business resources groups to connect with minority chambers of commerce and association groups. Lastly, PGE will make business customer content available in Spanish on the PGE website.



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May 14, 2021

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Salem, OR 97308-1088

**RE: PGE 2020 Annual Report on Support for Energy Trust of Oregon Energy Efficiency Goals**

This report submitted under RE 139 highlights PGE's outreach and marketing efforts, under Schedule 110, to support Energy Trust of Oregon's 2020 goals. PGE is pleased with the solid partnership it has with the Energy Trust and appreciates the positive impacts these programs offer to customers.

Should you have any questions or comments regarding this filing, please contact Mary Widman at [mary.widman@pgn.com](mailto:mary.widman@pgn.com)

Please direct all formal correspondence and requests to the following email address [pge.opuc.filings@pgn.com](mailto:pge.opuc.filings@pgn.com)

Sincerely,

*\s\ Robert Macfarlane*

Robert Macfarlane  
Manager, Pricing & Tariffs

Enclosure

cc: JP Batmale  
Anna Kim