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BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Order Instituting Rulemaking on the Commission's own motion to consider alternative-fueled vehicle tariffs, infrastructure and policies to support California's greenhouse gas emissions reduction goals.

Rulemaking 09-08-009
(Filed August 20, 2009)

ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE'S RULING REQUESTING ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND SETTING COMMENT SCHEDULE

This ruling requests additional information from parties and sets a comment schedule for the filing of this additional information with the Commission. The Commission intends to issue a decision in February 2011 on the more time sensitive matters identified in phase 2 of this proceeding and discussed in the Administrative Law Judge's ruling dated August 9, 2010. The February decision will also address legislatively-mandated issues in accordance with Pub. Util. Code § 739.9 (Senate Bill 626 Kehoe, c. 355, stats. 2009). Section 739.9 directs the Commission, in consultation with several state agencies and others, to evaluate policies to develop infrastructure sufficient to overcome barriers to the widespread deployment and use of plug-in hybrid and electric vehicles (collectively Plug-in Electric Vehicles or PEVs). Prior to the issuance of the February decision, additional information is needed on certain issues addressed in the Staff Workshop Issues Papers.

1. Separate Meter Costs

The Staff Workshop Issues Paper entitled “The Utility Role in Supporting PEV Charging” recommended three metering arrangement categories. These categories included single metering, separate metering, and submetering. The Paper recommended that these categories be made available to current PEV customers of utilities as part of the existing special PEV rates.

In written comments and as discussed during the September 27, 2010 PEV Workshop, parties generally concurred with the concept of providing customer flexibility for metering options. Some parties raised the related issue of the rate treatment for the costs of separate PEV metering. TURN, for example, recommended not subsidizing the cost of additional meters, stating that “any cost incidental to installing a second meter should be charged directly to the customer requesting meter installation.” (TURN Sept. 20, 2010 comments at 5).

When addressing who bears the cost of these separate meters, issues arise related to how PEV metering costs are incorporated into customer tariffs. For example, if PEV users are responsible for the cost of separate meters, it may be possible for the utility to incorporate the separate meter cost into PEV electric usage rates or a separate electric rate charge, thereby allowing the utility to, in a sense, finance the upfront cost of the meter for the customer.

Presently, it does not appear that utilities treat the costs of separate meters uniformly. Pacific Gas & Electric Company (PG&E) and Southern California Edison Company (SCE) both finance the cost of the PEV meter through tariffed meter charges on PEV users. San Diego Gas & Electric (SDG&E) does not have a PEV meter charge, but instead recovers the meter cost through its general distribution charges, which are borne by all SDG&E ratepayers.

Related to these separate meter issues, provide responses to the following questions:

- a. For PEV customers that choose to use a separate meter, who should bear the cost of the separate meter and why?
- b. How should a separate meter be financed (on-bill financing, meter charges, upfront charges, etc.) and why?

2. Submetering Protocol

In comments and during Workshop discussions, parties generally supported the use of submetering as an option for metering PEV usage. (SMUD September 20, 2010 comments at 2). Parties identified several technical and policy issues to be addressed as part of the process to develop submetering protocols. In their written comments, SDG&E stated “metering standardization” was a near-term issue critical to allowing for EVSE embedded metering and ensuring utilities receive usable meter data. (SDG&E Sept. 20, 2010 comments at 9.) Coulomb Technologies recommended the Commission develop a “timeline for submetering” integration. (Coulomb Sept. 20, 2010 comments at 3).

Several parties suggested that a submetering protocol was needed to determine the policies and rules for governing the use of submeters on PEVs. SCE and SDG&E suggested that direct access meter protocols could serve as a guide for developing a protocol for PEV submeters.

Parties are requested to recommend a process and timeline by which the Commission, utilities, and/or other stakeholders should develop submetering protocols. Parties’ responses should include the following:

- a. What is the Commission’s role and the utility’s role in developing a submetering protocol?
- b. What other agencies need to lead or be involved in this process?

- c. What are the key issues to be addressed in a submetering protocol?
- d. Should the Commission consider adopting the metering and meter data requirements similar to the requirements developed in Decision 98-12-080 regarding direct access for PEV submeters?

3. Utility Customer Education & Outreach

In written comments filed in response to Staff Workshop Issues Papers and during the discussion at the Workshops, utilities requested that the Commission address existing customer outreach and education programs for potential purchasers of PEVs. Such programs seek to ensure the appropriate level of customer education on PEV charging rates, tariffs, billing, service options, and the benefits of electric transportation and load management. (SCE Sept. 20, 2010 comments at 5; PG&E Sept. 20, 2010 comments at 9; SDG&E Sept. 20, 2010 comments at 9.) Coulomb Technologies suggested that utility outreach should be limited to a neutral role, to prevent utilities from gaining an unfair marketing advantage. (Coulomb Sept. 20, 2010 comments at 3.)

In consideration of the above and in order to further develop a phase 2 decision record related to the utility role in education/outreach, this ruling suggests the below guiding principles so that parties can address the additional questions on this topic:

1. The utility role with respect to PEV customer education and outreach is to facilitate customer awareness of tariff options, technology options, billing options, installation options, and load management options.
2. Utility customer education and outreach efforts should present information neutrally that gives no preference to a particular rate option and related metering arrangement, charging level or technology, installation provider, and other aspects related to customer installation of customer premise electric vehicle supply equipment.

3. Utilities should be prepared to answer common customer questions, including but not limited to the following:
 - a. Customer bill impacts for available PEV rates and usage.
 - b. Bill impacts of combining PEV usage and customer-owned rooftop solar PV generation.
 - c. Customer options in residential MDU or commercial MDU settings.

Related to the suggested guiding principles above and related issues, provide responses to the following questions:

- a. What specific changes, if any, should the Commission consider to the proposed language above?
- b. What limitations, if any, should the Commission place on the utility in implementing customer outreach and education programs to avoid unfair competition with non-utility entities?

4. Roadmap for Revisiting Rate Design

In comments filed in response to the Staff Workshop Issues Paper entitled “Revenue Allocation and Rate Design,” most parties agreed, with the exception of PG&E, that existing time-variant PEV rates were sufficient for the early market. (e.g., SCE Sept. 24, 2010 comments at 2; Green Power Institute Sept. 24, 2010 comments at 3, PG&E Sept. 24, 2010 comments at 10.) Parties filed written comments related to whether existing rates are scalable for a larger PEV market in the long term. In written comments, parties also addressed whether certain legislative requirements constrained residential rate redesign.

This ruling seeks input from parties to gain additional understanding on a potential timeline for when the Commission should direct utilities to revisit existing PEV rates:

Parties are requested to recommend a procedural timeline for when the Commission should revisit PEV rate design.

5. Electric Vehicle Service Provider (EVSP) – Applicable Rate Schedules

Parties recommended the Commission address what rate schedules EVSPs qualify. (SCE Sept. 24, 2010 comments at 4.)

At the September 29, 2010 workshop, parties noted that EVSP rate treatment should consider how rate treatment does or does not create a level playing field for charging services. Additionally, utilities noted at the September 29, 2010 workshop that various costs are anticipated to integrate EVSPs, including, but not limited to, back-end network and billing costs. It is generally anticipated that nascent EVSP business models will change in response to market conditions and regulatory requirements. At the September 27, 2010 workshop, parties identified various emerging categories of EVSPs.

The Commission would like additional input on issues that may be time-sensitive and merit immediate Commission attention. Parties are requested to comment on the following questions:

- a. For electric vehicle charging in non-residential settings, what rate schedule(s) should customers with electric vehicle charging qualify for (e.g., General Service or a new EVSP rate schedule) and why?
- b. For electric vehicle charging in residential settings, what rate schedule(s) should customers with electric vehicle charging qualify for (e.g., residential, General Service or a new EVSP rate schedule) and why?
- c. What special conditions, if any, should be added to existing rate schedules pertaining to electric vehicle charging?
- d. What changes to Electric Rules are needed, if any, in the near-term pertaining to electric vehicle charging and why?

6. Smart Grid Overlap Issues – Schedule Modification

The August 9, 2010 Administrative Law Judge’s Ruling scheduled a workshop in November 2010 addressing the development of smart charging programs or policies to manage the impacts of electric vehicle charging on the grid. This ruling defers the staff workshop issues paper related to Alternative-fueled vehicle and Smart Grid proceeding overlap issues to after the anticipated February 2011 decision. The Commission may direct consideration of smart charging issues in related proceedings. Consequently, parties are requested to respond to the following question:

Should the Commission direct utilities to include cost-effective “smart charging programs” targeting PEV charging in their next Demand Response application?

7. Comment Schedule - Workshop Report

Parties are requested to respond to the questions above on or before November 12, 2010. Reply comments will be due on or before December 3, 2010. This ruling also serves to notify parties that Staff Workshop Reports will be provided to the proceeding service list and subsequently entered into the record by the end of this year.

IT IS RULED that:

1. Parties are requested to submit comments and reply comments in accordance with the schedule set forth above.

Dated October 27, 2010, at San Francisco, California.

/s/ REGINA DeANGELIS
Regina DeAngelis
Administrative Law Judge

