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BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Order Instituting Rulemaking Regarding Policies, Procedures and Rules for the California Solar Initiative, the Self-Generation Incentive Program and Other Distributed Generation Issues.

Rulemaking 12-11-005
(Filed November 8, 2012)

**ASSIGNED COMMISSIONER'S RULING
REGARDING THE TRANSFER OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR COLLECTING
SOLAR STATISTICS FROM THE CALIFORNIA SOLAR INITIATIVE TO THE
NET ENERGY METERING INTERCONNECTION PROCESS**

1. Summary

The California Solar Initiative (CSI) application process currently collects valuable data about customer-sited solar photovoltaic systems. As the CSI incentive funds are depleted, an increasing share of customer-sited renewable generation facilities will be installed without going through the CSI application process. This ruling proposes that the electric utilities' Net Energy Metering interconnection applications be updated to include additional data fields from the CSI application form. This ruling also proposes that the electric utilities then transfer this data to the California Solar Statistics contractor (currently Energy Solutions) on a monthly basis for processing and posting to the California Solar Statistics website. After parties file comments and reply comments on this ruling, the assigned Commissioner will issue a proposed decision.

2. Background

The Commission established the California Solar Initiative (CSI) in 2006, to provide \$3.2 billion in incentives and other support for solar photovoltaic (PV) systems with the goal of installing 3,000 megawatts in the service territories of California's three large investor-owned electric utilities. The Legislature codified the program and adjusted the program's scope and adjusted the Commission's portion of program total cost to \$2.17 billion, later that year. The Commission subsequently modified the CSI program to be consistent with Senate Bill (SB) 1, including a limit of \$100.8 million for incentives to solar thermal technologies. (*See Pub. Util. Code § 2851(b).*) The program launched to the public on January 1, 2007.

When customers apply for CSI rebates, the application requires that certain information be provided by the applicant, including whether systems are leased or owned, the cost of systems and their components, make and model of the PV systems and inverters, whether tracking hardware is present, and the orientation of fixed-axis PV panels. These data are collected by PowerClerk, the online application system for the CSI program. Energy Solutions, the California Solar Statistics contractor, downloads these data and, after additional data quality control and processing, posts them to the California Solar Statistics website on a weekly basis.

The data collected for California Solar Statistics provide invaluable information to the Commission, the Program Administrators (PAs), market participants, researchers and the general public related to the system characteristics, cost and expected performance of customer-sited PV systems. Among other benefits, the data help utility planners understand the grid and resource impacts of these distributed generation fleets. As CSI incentive budgets

are depleted, the PAs will reach a point, or have already reached the point, where they cease accepting CSI applications. It is vital that these data not be lost as the CSI program winds down.

3. Discussion

Net Energy Metering (NEM) interconnection application forms collect some system data although the forms are not uniform, and no utility’s interconnection form includes all of the system data fields currently collected in the CSI rebate applications. I therefore propose to establish certain minimum reporting requirements related to interconnection data. The relevant data fields that each utility would need to include on its NEM interconnection forms, and other data that the utility would provide, are listed in the table below.

PV System and Customer Data to be Collected via NEM Interconnection Process

Field	Include on NEM Form	Supplied by utility	Published to CA Solar Statistics
Customer name and address	X		
Meter number		X	
Utility account number	X		
Electric tariff	X		
Customer zip code, city, and county	X		X
Name of distribution utility		X	X
Customer sector (residential/commercial/ industrial/non-profit/K - 12 education/post-secondary educations/military/other	X		X

government)			
Installer name and contact info	X		X
Participating in California rebate program? If so, which program?	X		X
Date online		X	X
Customer-owned or third party-owned?	X		X
Sale price	X		X
If customer-owned, was PACE financing used? If so, which program?	X		X
If third party-owned, then name of owner at time of sale	X		X
If third party-owned, then contract type (Power Purchase Agreements/lease/pre-paid lease/other)	X		X
Capacity in DC watts and in AC watts	X		X
Number of inverters and inverter manufacturer(s) and model(s)	X		X
Number of PV panels and panel manufacturer(s) and model(s)	X		X
Mounting (rooftop/ground/mixed)	X		X
System output monitoring? If so, vendor	X		X
Tracking (fixed/single-axis/dual-axis/mixed)	X		X

If fixed, then what tilt and azimuth?	X		X
Electric vehicle(s) charging on site? If so, how many EVs?	X		X
Decommissioned date (if applicable)		X	X

The above list omits certain data currently being gathered by the CSI program, such as mounting and shading details. These data are deemed less useful for our purposes, and in the interest of not over-burdening the interconnection applicant, they are excluded.

The data from the fields specified above shall be compiled by each utility and transferred to Energy Solutions for processing and posting on the California Solar Statistics website. The utilities are encouraged to streamline and automate the collection and transfer of these data, perhaps with an online application portal similar to PowerClerk. Regardless of the specific mechanism used, the data should be collected at minimum for each calendar month and transferred to Energy Solutions by the 10th, or next business day, of the following month in order to maintain access to the data on a timely basis. The Energy Division shall work with the utilities and other interested stakeholders to develop a consistent format for the data to facilitate its processing by Energy Solutions, or any successor contractor.

The need to process and publish this additional data may impose incremental costs on Energy Solutions. The CSI PA who currently manages the Energy Solutions contract should be authorized to amend the contract to cover

these incremental costs, which the CSI measurement and evaluation (M&E) budget would cover.¹

The CSI program currently provides the funding vehicle for the data analysis and public reporting discussed herein, and this will carry into 2017. Before CSI funding for this activity is no longer available, the Commission will decide whether it wishes to continue this activity and if it does, will need to find another funding vehicle.

IT IS RULED that parties are invited to comment on the proposal to modify Net Energy Metering interconnection applications and to require the investor-owned utilities to transfer these data for publishing on the California Solar Statistics website as described in the body of this ruling. Opening comments, not to exceed 15 pages, are due August 30, 2013. Reply comments, not to exceed 10 pages, are due September 6, 2013.

Dated August 22, 2013, at San Francisco, California.

/s/ MICHAEL R. PEEVEY
Michael R. Peevey
Assigned Commissioner

¹ On August 2, 2013, Energy Division, in consultation with the CSI PAs, established an updated CSI M&E Plan. Under the new Plan, the PAs are authorized to pay for public reporting expenses out of their dedicated CSI M&E budgets. They are also instructed to modify the contract with Energy Solutions so as to authorize Energy Solutions to receive, analyze, and publish distributed PV generation data from the utilities' interconnection departments.