

**BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION
OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA**



FILED
3-10-15
04:59 PM

Order Instituting Rulemaking to Develop a
Successor to Existing Net Energy Metering
Tariffs Pursuant to Public Utilities Code
Section 2827.1, and to Address Other Issues
Related to Net Energy Metering

Rulemaking 14-07-002
(Filed July 10, 2014)

**BRIGHTLINE DEFENSE PROJECT'S
NOTICE OF EX PARTE COMMUNICATION**

Eddie Ahn
Policy Counsel for
Brightline Defense Project
1028A Howard Street
San Francisco, CA 94103
Phone: 415-252-9700
Fax: 415-252-9775

E-mail: eddie@brightlinedefense.org

Dated: March 10, 2015

**BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION
OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA**

Order Instituting Rulemaking to Develop a
Successor to Existing Net Energy Metering
Tariffs Pursuant to Public Utilities Code
Section 2827.1, and to Address Other Issues
Related to Net Energy Metering

Rulemaking 14-07-002
(Filed July 10, 2014)

**BRIGHTLINE DEFENSE PROJECT'S
NOTICE OF EX PARTE COMMUNICATION**

Brightline Defense Project gives notice of the following ex parte communication, in accordance with California Public Utilities Commission (Commission) Rule 8.3.

On March 10, 2015, Eddie Ahn, Policy Counsel for Brightline Defense Project, sent a letter to Commission President Picker urging the Commission to continue California's current net energy metering program beyond 2017 and to expand access to clean energy to more low-income ratepayers. The letter was also signed by fifteen other signatories representing California's communities of color, including Presente.org, Dr. Luis Pacheco, California Environmental Justice Alliance, Asian Pacific Environmental Network, Environmental Health Coalition, Center on Race, Poverty and the Environment, Green for All, People Organizing to Demand Environmental and Economic Rights, The Greenlining Institute, Voces Verdes, Todos Unidos, California Lulac Institute, William

C. Velasquez Institute, Communities for a Better Environment, and the Mexican American Political Association.

Commissioners Florio, Peterman, Sandoval and Randolph also received copies of the letter, in addition to Governor Brown. The letter is attached hereto as Attachment A.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Eddie Ahn

By: Eddie Ahn

Policy Counsel for
Brightline Defense Project

1028A Howard Street

San Francisco, CA 94103

Phone: 415-252-9700

Fax: 415-252-9775

E-mail: eddie@brightlinedefense.org

ATTACHMENT A



March 9, 2015

President Michael Picker
California Public Utilities Commission
505 Van Ness Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94102

Dear Commissioner Picker,

Our organizations represent communities of color from across California that want a clean energy future. We are writing to express our support for policies that support the continued growth of rooftop solar, which creates local jobs, reduces air pollution that disproportionately impacts our communities, and enables families, schools, and businesses to manage and save on their energy bills. We urge the California Public

Utilities Commission (CPUC) to continue California's current net energy metering program beyond 2017 and to expand access to clean energy to more low-income ratepayers.

Net metering is a simple accounting mechanism for consumers to offset their monthly electricity bills by getting fair credit for producing their energy onsite. It allows solar customers to send excess energy from an onsite installation back to the grid to be used by neighboring homes and businesses. Neighboring customers pay the full retail rate for that excess clean, locally generated energy, and the solar customer gets a corresponding credit on her power bill. This simple and fair crediting arrangement is one of the most important state policy tools for empowering families, churches, schools and businesses to go solar, and it has been adopted in 44 states. Of critical interest to our organizations, net metering helps reduce the need for expensive, polluting fossil fuel infrastructure like natural gas peaker plants. This pollution reduction is particularly important for our communities of color, who have long borne a large share of the public health burden of dirty energy, and who are especially vulnerable to the impacts of climate change if we continue our dependence on fossil fuels, from rising sea levels and superstorms on the East Coast to record droughts and extreme temperatures in California and the Southwest.

For generations, communities of color have disproportionately borne the weight of the utilities' antiquated electricity production system. California is home to the five regions with the worst particle air pollution in the nation, all of which have populations that are majority Latino.¹ While Latinos, African-Americans and other communities of color endure most of the harmful impacts of traditional energy production, these communities reap few of the benefits. A study by the American Association of Blacks in Energy found that, while African-Americans spent \$41 billion on energy in 2009, only 1.1% of conventional energy jobs were held by Black professionals and a mere 0.01% of profits were earned by Black businesses.

We need to build a more just relationship between communities of color and energy, and net metering is a core tool for driving that transformation. In fact, in its 2013 [Just Energy Policies report](#), the NAACP includes full retail net metering among its key policy recommendations for achieving economic and environmental justice within the energy sector.

We appreciate the leadership the CPUC has demonstrated in making California a major rooftop solar market. Our net metering policy has been key to facilitating the transition to self-generated and distributed clean energy, already enabling the development of more than a quarter million solar rooftops in California. Under 2013 legislation that was signed into law (AB 327), the current program will end for new

¹ The American Lung Association lists these regions as Fresno-Madera, Visalia-Portville-Hanford, Los Angeles-Long Beach, Bakersfield, and Modesto-Merced at <http://www.stateoftheair.org/2014/city-rankings/most-polluted-cities.html>.

customers by July 1, 2017, or when the utilities reach the program cap of 5% of utility aggregate customer peak demand. AB 327 requires the CPUC to determine this year how customers who go solar after current cap is reached will be compensated for power they export to the grid. As part of this future program design, AB 327 requires the CPUC to “include alternatives designed for [renewable distributed generation] growth among residential customers in disadvantaged communities.”

California’s net metering policy has helped leverage billions of dollars in private investment in the installation of solar energy systems across the state, and will save customers billions of dollars on their power bills. Thanks to net metering, solar businesses are creating economic opportunity in our communities as well. Today, the solar industry employs more than 54,000 Californians, more than 20% of whom are Latino. The rooftop solar industry also facilitates worker training programs so solar can be a pathway out of poverty for disadvantaged families. For example, workers of color represent the largest populations served by California’s GoSolarSF Workforce Development program, with 40% African American and 22% Latino/Hispanic job placements.

A cleaner, more equitable approach to energy will be achieved by continuing to find ways to expand clean energy access, not by weakening effective and successful programs like net metering simply because they are opposed by the utilities. We urge the Commission to continue making net metering available to customers who go solar after the current cap is reached and to explore innovative additional approaches — including virtual net metering, community shared renewables, new tariffs and workforce development programs — to help more low-income families and communities of color participate in and benefit from California’s growing clean energy economy.

Sincerely,

Arturo Carmona, Executive Director
Presente.org

Dr. Luis Pacheco, MD, FAAFP

Joshua Arce, Executive Director
Brightline Defense Project

Strela Cervas, Co-Coordinator
California Environmental Justice Alliance

Miya Yoshitani, Executive Director
Asian Pacific Environmental Network

Kayla Race, Policy Advocate
Environmental Health Coalition

Caroline Farrell, Executive Director
Center on Race, Poverty and the Environment

Jeremy Hays, Executive Director
Green for All

Antonio Diaz, Organizational Director
People Organizing to Demand Environmental and Economic Rights

Orson Aguilar, Executive Director
The Greenlining Institute

Adrianna Quintero, Executive Director
Voces Verdes

Angel Luevano, Executive Director
Todos Unidos

Argentina Luevano, Executive Director
California Lulac Institute

Antonio González, President
William C. Velasquez Institute

Byron Ramos Gudiel, Executive Director
Communities for a Better Environment

Juan Avita, Executive Director
Mexican American Political Association

CC: Governor Jerry Brown
Commissioner Carla Peterman
Commissioner Michael Florio
Commissioner Catherine Sandoval
Commissioner Liane Randolph