

To: Utah Public Service Commission
Heber M. Wells Building
160 East 300 South
Salt Lake City, UT 84114

From: Bryson Garbett, Garbett Homes Construction

Date: November 29, 2011

Docket: Docket 11-035-104--In the Matter of an Investigation into Extending and Expanding the Solar Incentive Program and Possible Development of an Ongoing Program and Docket 07-035-T14 – In the Matter of the Approval of Rocky Mountain Power's Tariff P.S.C.U. No. 47, Re: Schedule 107 - Solar Incentive Program

Subject: Comments in Response to Division of Public Utilities' *Solar Incentive Report: Division Solar Incentive Program Review and Recommendations*

Dear Chairman Boyer, Commissioner Allen, Commissioner Campbell, and Commission Staff:

We appreciate the Commission's request for local stakeholder input on this important subject. Garbett Homes supports Utah's economic development strategy to promote a smart and financially sound energy infrastructure. As business owners and native Utahns, we are proud of our state's economic record and are fully invested in its bright future, and we believe renewable energy will be an important part of that future.

As you are aware, the economic downturn of the last few years brought significant changes to Utah's homebuilder industry. Countless construction and skilled trade companies have closed their doors, homes continue to lose value, and high unemployment continues to discourage home ownership. Every challenge presents an opportunity, however. For Garbett Homes, this challenge presented the opportunity to embrace a whole new way of adding value to our homes.

Garbett Homes has always strived to adapt to changing times, exploring new developments in building science in search of new ways to differentiate our product and demonstrate clear value to our customers. In the last two years, in response to homebuyers' growing interest in energy efficiency and the development of cost-effective technology, we have revolutionized our construction practices to achieve building performance that exceeds even the most stringent new Energy Star requirements. Garbett Homes has also made it possible for middle income homebuyers to afford a home with one or

more renewable energy components, capturing the energy in the ground to decrease home power consumption, and from the sun to actually produce power.

Influential American biologist Barry Commoner said, “The more complex the ecosystem, the more successfully it can resist a stress.” This perfectly describes Utah’s successful economic strategy. Our state leaders know that Utah’s construction industry cannot afford to stagnate. Around the developed world, standards for residential and commercial building energy performance rise continuously as construction professionals and the science community work together to make the best in modern human innovation accessible to more people. Technology is making it possible for greater useful energy to be produced in return for energy expended. Solar Photovoltaics and solar thermal provide an opportunity to generate energy for decades in return for energy expended in production.

Known for its innovation, responsiveness to market trends and sound fiscal decision-making, Utah belongs among the select populations participating in and leading these exciting developments. It does not make sense to deprive Utah of the opportunity to capture the benefits of a program with a demonstrated ROI, as reported by the Division in its comments. Not only will a solar incentive make it possible for more people to realize more savings from an investment in power generation versus passive consumption, it will also increase Utah’s ability to participate in the growing conservation-oriented economy. We have seen the ripple effects of our choice to invest in energy efficiency just within our company. We are hiring as other construction companies are laying employees off. We are partnering with architects and skilled trades to improve techniques and systems, achieving remarkable results that will benefit homeowners for a lifetime. All of Utah can similarly benefit from a state-wide commitment to a smarter, more efficient energy grid built and serviced by a smart, technologically savvy workforce on the cutting edge of human innovation.

To this end, Garbett Homes supports the proposed Solar Incentive public Workgroup tasked with designing a sustainable and expanded solar incentive program in Utah. We request the opportunity to be involved in the Workgroup and look forward to coordinating with all involved stakeholders going forward. Thank you for your consideration of these comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Bryson Garbett", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Bryson Garbett
Founder, Owner
Garbett Homes