PublicService Commission <psc@utah.gov>

Docket #13-035-184

Bryce Garner <brycewgarner@gmail.com> Thu, May 1, 2014 at 11:59 PM
To: PSC@utah.gov

Public Service Commission,

I am emailing to voice my concern over the planned Rocky Mountain Power rate increases including the $4.25 surcharge on net metering customers and the plan to have a $15 minimum charge, which is a de facto additional charge on those same net metering customers, and those who conserve energy with or without renewable energy sources.

The current minimum charge is $7 with $5 going for connecting to the grid, and $2 to get to the minimum charge. With the plan to increase the minimum charge to $15 with the grid connection going to $8, and another $7 to get to the minimum charge, we will now be charging every customer for the equivalent of about 77 kWh worth of electricity at current rates ($7 to minimum charge/$0.09 current rate per kWh). Then on top of this, solar customers would have to pay an additional $4.25? So every month, those with solar panels would pay a minimum of $19.25 before taxes whether or not they use power. If this were the case, it would make more sense for me to unplug my panels 9 months out of the year as that is almost the same amount as my power bill was before I installed panels.

I installed solar panels on my home in October of 2013. I live in a modest home on the west side of Salt Lake City, and had to save and make personal sacrifices to afford the system. The system is 3.5 kW, and had a price tag of about $14,000. Between October 22nd and the the end of March 2014, I had a solar surplus of 324 kWh (which was zeroed out at the end of April), and had a consistent electricity bill of $7.99. ($7 minimum charge and taxes). 9 months out of the year, I use about 100-200 kWh per month to power my house, and during the three months of summer, I use between 400-500 kWh. I expect to run a surplus every year, and this will be taken by RMP at no cost to them. I recently also sold my gasoline powered car and bought an all electric vehicle, and run that car with the surplus energy from the panels.

I would like to make the case that my solar panels are a benefit to Rocky Mountain Power, my neighbors, and all Rocky Mountain Power customers.

RMP benefits when electricity is produced at my house because RMP takes that power and sells it to my neighbors at no cost to create that power. As this power is created locally, they will not need huge transmission lines from central Utah coal fired plants to move that power to Salt Lake City as it is created and used locally.

My neighbors and other RMP customers benefit from the lower levels of pollution being emitted by power plants because my house is creating its own energy, they also get an added benefit because my electric car that is run by the panels also is not releasing any emissions.

When air quality is becoming a bigger and bigger issue every year, we should not be disincentivizing the installation of solar panels. We should be making it easier and cost effective.

Here are a few options for RMP. They could use the voluntary blue sky program to cover these supposed extra net metering costs by buying the power from net metering customers, as that is what the program is all about--buying renewable energy in 100kWh blocks. Or, they could set up a program where they lease solar panels to customers and lock in a electricity rate for the life of the panels, then keep any extra production to feed into the system.

Thank you for taking the time to read my email,

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