

SolarTek Solutions
6510 South 300 West, Suite 1
Midvale, UT 84047



Mr. Ron Allen, Chairman
Utah Public Service Commission
160 East 300 South
Salt Lake City, UT 84114

July 7th, 2014

Dear Mr. Allen,

SolarTek Solutions is the largest residential solar provider in Utah, and has been a key driver in supporting the nascent solar industry. We are writing to request your support of free energy choice by rejecting the \$4.25 monthly net metering fee currently being proposed by Rocky Mountain Power.

Rocky Mountain Power has privileged fossil fuel interests to the detriment of rooftop solar net metering customers and the general public. As part of PacifiCorp, the single largest polluter in the western U.S., RMP has extensive sunk costs in carbon-centric infrastructure, and is acting in concert with fellow coal-dependent utilities nationwide in an attempt to stifle distributed generation of solar energy. According to a 2011 study by the Harvard School of Public Health, coal adds billions of dollars in healthcare costs: the equivalent of an additional 9-27 cents per kWhⁱ of energy produced. These costs can be avoided, though, through the development of clean energy.

RMP's arguments in support of the residential net metering fee are flawed. The utility fails to recognize the benefits of solar, wrongfully claiming that net-metering customers are wealthy and unfairly burden lower-income customers. Net-metering doesn't increase costs to the utility or non-solar customers. Solar reduces demand on the grid by lowering the amount and distance electricity must be carried. RMP's proposal for a flat fee actually penalizes customers irrespective of income level or energy consumption.

Utilities themselves acknowledge the value of solar, having installed 80% of new solar capacity in 2013ⁱⁱ. Coal, on the other hand, accounted for only 10% of new U.S. generating capacity in 2013, compared to 29% from solarⁱⁱⁱ. The PSC should reject RMP's current analysis of solar costs and benefits, and conduct an unbiased and thorough analysis through a neutral party.

Economically, Utah's future is brighter with solar than with fossil fuels. The U.S. solar industry already employs more people than the coal and natural gas industries combined^{iv}, and solar continues to create 14 jobs for every 7 created by the coal industry, or the 5 created by the natural gas industry^v. SolarTek itself has averaged 208% annual growth since 2010. Utah has some of the nation's best solar potential. Sadly, we are dead last among western states in capitalizing on this valuable, clean resource.

As chairman of the Public Service Commission, you are entrusted with the public's best interest. RMP's proposed solar fee disserves our energy future and public health. Please act for the common good and support free energy choice by rejecting RMP's request for a net metering fee. Under your guidance, the PSC can help RMP develop a business model which will support the development of clean energy solutions.

Sincerely,


SolarTek Solutions

ⁱ <http://chge.med.harvard.edu/resource/full-cost-accounting-life-cycle-coal>

ⁱⁱ http://www.pv-tech.org/news/utilities_responsible_for_80_of_us_solar_in_2013_sepa

ⁱⁱⁱ Source GTM 2013 Annual Year in Review report

^{iv} <http://www.greenbiz.com/blog/2014/01/31/us-solar-industry-employs-more-coal-gas-industries-combined>

^v <http://theenergycollective.com/rosana-francescato/202511/truth-about-solar>