PublicService Commission <psc@utah.gov>

Regarding the proposed rooftop solar tax

1 message

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To Members of the Public Service Commission,

I am writing in regards to Rocky Mt. Power's proposed fee—dubbed the "rooftop solar tax"—that has been hotly debated in our community.

I have long been fascinated by the concept of solar generation for years, and finally installed a 4.59 kW system on my home last fall. I am grateful for the government-provided incentives that made this feasible. I think it is wise for all forms of energy to be utilized and I am grateful that over time the technology has become more and more affordable for the average homeowner. I have been very happy with our system and the savings I am enjoying. I do get a sense of satisfaction knowing I am providing for my needs as much as it is possible and contributing to the power grid during peak hours of demand.

I have given much thought about the claims that solar generation puts an added strain on the wiring and grid. I have come to the conclusion that it does not. The way my panels are wired is such that any power they produce first goes directly in my home for my use, and the net meter installed by Rocky Mountain Power doesn't measure this power—it never sees it! Any excess power my panels have produced that I don't use is then put out onto the grid. The total electricity going one direction or other on the wiring infrastructure is reduced because I am largely providing electricity for my needs and it goes straight into my house. I do not believe that power going out of my house puts any more strain on wires than power going into my house. I don't know if there is really any way to trace how far my generated power goes onto the grid. My gut feeling is that if there is a draw on the grid at my next door neighbor's house, my generated power is going to go right there. Why would it be otherwise? Thus, I think the argument that solar generation puts more strain on the infrastructure is bogus.

Rocky Mountain Power has some programs that help lessen the demand on the grid. "Cool Keeper" is a good program. Only once or twice in the years that I have participated in the program have I noticed when my A/C has been cycled off. I approve of this program because it preserves the integrity of the grid during peak hours.

Blue Sky is another program that I participated in for years. When my solar system was installed, I discontinued participation in Blue Sky because I was producing my own environmentally-friendly power and had invested much money to do so.

Rocky Mountain Power also offers incentives to help a limited number of customers install alternative energy

systems. We applied for this, but were unsuccessful drawing out. We still went ahead with installing our system.

I have appreciated the "Wattsmart" tips over the years. I am aware of the inadequacies of the electrical grid around the nation and in my own way, I am doing something about it. I am demanding less from the grid. I am even contributing power to the grid. The way I see it, the power company should welcome these measures. This is why the proposed "rooftop solar tax" baffles me--it is contrary to the intent of all the above-mentioned programs offered by Rocky Mountain Power.

I pay the same basic fees everyone else does, and yet I draw less electricity from the power company. I make fewer demands on the infrastructure, use less electricity generated by the power company, and even contribute electricity to the power grid during peak hours of demand. The percentage of my bill that goes to basic fees is higher than the average Rocky Mountain Power customer. Why should I pay an additional fee?!

It feels like Rocky Mountain Power misses my money and is doing whatever it can to get it. I urge the Public Service Commission to reject this contrary fee.

Thank you for your consideration and time.

Teresa Clawson