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Date: July 23, 2009

Subject: Office of Consumer Services' Comments on Rocky Mountain Power's Solar Photovoltaic Incentive Program (Schedule 107) Annual Reports for Program Years 2007 and 2008 -- Docket No 07-035-T14.

In May 2007 the Public Service Commission (Commission) approved the Solar Photovoltaic Incentive Program (Program) subject to several conditions, one of which was that the Company provide an annual report no later than March 1 of the following year. On May 27, 2009 Rocky Mountain Power (Company) filed the Solar Photovoltaic Incentive Program Annual Reports for Program Years 2007 and 2008. In this filing the Company noted that it had not met the Commission established deadline for the Reports.

The Office of Consumer Services (Office) appreciates the opportunity to review the information and looks forward to a more comprehensive report on the Program at a later date. Although the Office believes the Report complies with Commission requirements¹ it also highlights a problem with the Attestation Certificates that should be addressed. Therefore, we submit the following observations and recommendation regarding Attestation Certificates.

A key goal of the Pilot Program is to assess the benefits of a solar incentive program, thereby aiding a determination of whether such a program should continue and perhaps be expanded in the future. The 2007 Annual Report at page 11 reads:

“[T]he company recognizes that accurate assessment of installation output is essential to assessing performance of both equipment and the program

¹ Other than missing the filing deadline as acknowledged by the Company.

as a whole. As noted in the Recommendations section above, customers have been slow to return the Attestation certificates....”

The referenced Recommendations for the next year (2008) at page 10 include:

2. Program administrator or Company or joint communication reminder(s) to customers with installed projects to provide completed Attestation Forms.”

The problem seems to continue in 2008 as similar recommendations for the next year are included in the 2008 Annual Report.

3. Continue the informal program administrator reminder to customers with installed projects to provide completed Attestation Forms. Implement Company branded communication to follow-up.

4. Continue informal communication to solar trade ally community on importance of generation data from actual installations and that missing, incomplete or inaccurate Attestation forms are a barrier to complete assessment of program effectiveness. Implement formal program administrator or Company communication to follow-up.

The report continues, “The company recognizes that accurate assessment of installation output is essential to assessing performance of both equipment and the program as a whole. In addition to the information from the Attestation certificates which has been slow to come back to the program administrator, the company has retained a third party consultant to estimate hourly output of the systems using the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) PV Watts calculator available at http://rredc.nrel.gov/solar/codes_algs/PVWATTS/version1/ and the information about each system in the 2008 program provided in detail in Appendix One. This is similar to the approach utilized for the 2007 program.”

This Program is being funded through rates paid by Rocky Mountain Power customers in an effort to determine the costs and benefits of financially supporting solar incentive programs in Utah. Unless there is a way to compel participants in the Program to comply with the requirement to return Attestation certificates customers are not getting the full value of their investment. The Office is concerned that the lack of reliable information will not allow the Company to provide an accurate determination of the benefits all customers may obtain through solar incentive programs.

Recommendations

The Office understands that Attestation certificates are an important factor for Program evaluation and therefore believe the Company should be considering other avenues to obtain compliance in this area.² Potential solutions might include withholding incentive

² There may also be some savings in administrative costs from eliminating continued follow-up to obtain

payments until Attestation certificates are received or making only partial incentive payments until participants are in compliance with the requirements of the Program. The Office recommends that the Commission require the Company to assess the problem and consider alternative methods for increasing participant compliance in returning Attestation certificates.

certificates.