

1/23/14

Commissioners:

I wish to submit these comments for Docket No. 13–035–184.

Rocky Mountain Power's (RMP) proposal to charge solar-powered or wind turbine-powered homes an extra fee to "offset the fixed cost of supplying service ... as well as receiving the extra electricity" (Salt Lake Tribune, 1/6/2014) is patently ridiculous. This is tantamount to donating goods to a charity, which then sells the items to others —but charges the donor a fee for such generosity!

Here are several specific reasons why RMP's proposal is outrageous, expressed in terms of homes powered by solar panels (since that is our situation) but the same arguments apply to wind turbine-powered homes:

In terms of supplying services to solar-powered homes:

1) RMP has not proven what, if anything, it costs the company to supply service to solar-powered homes (e.g., during the nighttime hours). The grid connections for solar-powered homes to receive electricity are no different than those installed on non-solar homes. The question thus becomes why would it cost RMP anything more to supply electricity to solar-powered homes?

In terms of "receiving extra electricity" from solar-powered homes:

2) RMP actually earns a profit from the unused kilowatts these homes generate and that RMP then receives (when, in point of fact, RMP actually should be *paying* these customers for the electricity RMP receives from them). This obviously is possible, as is evident in other states (e.g., California).

3) This surcharge acts as a disincentive for people to install solar panels. Moreover, it's a slap in the face to those who have, and who are doing their part to reduce air pollution here in Utah, while generating pollution-free electricity from which others can benefit.

4) If RMP's surcharge is approved, which would be the epitome of hypocrisy given our state's supposed efforts to improve air quality and reduce air pollution's impact on our climate, then RMP should first subtract from that surcharge all of the profits it reaps from the extra kilowatts solar-powered homes generate. If RMP exacts the surcharge on a monthly or quarterly basis (or any other basis), then the net charge based on all extra kilowatts generated also should be calculated on the same basis.

5) Finally, if RMP's surcharge is approved, then solar-powered homes should be given the option of installing a meter solely for the purposes of RMP providing these homes power, thereby giving homeowners the choice of RMP *not* receiving back any extra electricity they have generated. In this respect, if the state of Utah and RMP truly are committed to improving our air quality and climate, then how about instead selling the battery backup units to owners of solar-powered homes for them to store and later use the extra electricity they've generated? But no, oh no, RMP wouldn't dare go there, because they can more easily and quickly reap profits off the backs of those already doing their parts for Utah's air quality and climate.

Sincerely,

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