



PublicService Commission <psc@utah.gov>

Docket #14-035-114

1 message

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Fri, May 19, 2017 at 10:34 AM

To: psc@utah.gov

Dear commission members,

I'd like to provide input on Docket #14-035-114. I am a RMP customer, I have a net-meter with my solar installation on my roof, and I'm also an Associate Professor of Electrical Engineering at the University of Utah, although I am commenting on my own behalf and not on behalf of my employer.

RMP claims that net metering customers are being subsidized by other customers. As an electrical engineer, I am aware that the largest costs of the provision of electricity are incurred by RMP at peak times of usage, typically mid-day on sunny days in summer months. New power plants are built because of the peak demand at these peak times. The high costs of new power plants are borne by all customers. These plants are not needed at non-peak times. It would be extremely advantageous to RMP to "even out" the load. Net metering solar customers provide this service. The peak power consumption is offset in part by the power generated by solar, which has its peak generation occur mid-day on sunny days in summer months, at just the same time as the peak in consumption. This is a means for RMP to reduce the need for new plants that serve purely the peak demand.

I understand that when solar generation reaches a certain percentage (near 25% of the total generation) then the peak consumption will be matched to the peak generation by solar, and then the benefit of solar to RMP will reduce. Until then, from my perspective, the goal of RMP is purely to increase profit wherever they can, regardless of the true costs and benefits of net meters.

It is easy to, by counterexample, show that RMP is bluffing about the costs of net-metering customers. I have a breaker switch on my net meter. Imagine what would happen if I and all other net-metering customers turn off the breaker on our solar panels, during a peak day in the middle of a sunny day in the summer. By Rocky Mountain Power's argument that they are presenting to the commission, they would save money, because they would no longer have to pay me and the other net metering customers for the power we are generating, at the same rate that we pay to consume power. By their argument this would lower the costs for other customers. However, I think we all know what would happen. RMP would panic, turn on even the most expensive power generation source at their disposal, buy power from any other source they could. They'd lose a lot of money. I'm certainly not suggesting to net metering solar generators to do this. I'm simply showing how transparently disingenuous the arguments from RMP on this matter are.

Sincerely,
Neal Patwari