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SERVICE COMMISSION

2016 NOV 22 P 3:40

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**To: The Public Service Commission of Utah**

**Re: Public Comment to Docket No. 16-035-T14**

with attention to:

Advice No. 16-13

Revisions to Schedule 135, Net Metering

Proposal for new Schedule 135A, Net Metering - Transition Service

November 22, 2016

Dear Commissioners,

Thank you for accepting this comment by UCARE expressing our opposition to the net metering tariff proposal submitted by PacifiCorp (dba Rocky Mountain Power) on November 9, 2016. We urge the Commission to reject PacifiCorp's request for modifications to Schedule 135, Net Metering Service, that would close that schedule to new service and establish a transitional Schedule 135A for rooftop solar customers. For several reasons listed below, UCARE believes that consideration of PacifiCorp's proposal should be incorporated into scheduled proceedings for Docket #14-035-114.

Utah Citizens Advocating Renewable Energy (UCARE) was formed in 2014 in response to PacifiCorp's attempt, via Docket #14-035-114, to impose a surcharge on its rooftop solar customers. UCARE intervened as a party to that docket and has participated in the proceedings. We appreciate the Commission's rejection of the surcharge and its call for further investigation and analysis. In that spirit, we hope the Commission will turn a critical eye to the utility's latest rate increase request and its related "Compliance Filing", which also occurred on November 9, 2016.

UCARE's position on the current net metering rate change proposal is that to permit a rate schedule modification before thoroughly examining documents offered as substantiation would reverse the discovery process and set a troubling precedent for future rate setting. We urge the Commission to put PacifiCorp's Advice No. 16-13 proposal on the same investigatory track that was set for Docket 14-035-114 in the Commission's "Scheduling Order" issued on November 18, 2016. UCARE's planned challenges to PacifiCorp's "Compliance Filing" have relevance to Advice No. 16-13.

PacifiCorp has introduced new assumptions and data as justification for the net metering rate increase. The assumptions, such as the utility's concern about the impacts of solar net metering customers' "exponential growth", bear closer scrutiny. UCARE questions whether the penetration of rooftop solar across Rocky Mountain Power's service area warrants the alarm PacifiCorp is sounding and the need for urgent actions so drastic as those proposed in Advice No. 16-13. We doubt that there is a legitimate crisis that justifies such radical measures.

UCARE members have been informed by Utah solar industry representatives that the announcement of PacifiCorp's rate increase request has, by itself, had a chilling effect on their businesses. The tariff proposal has put prospective rooftop solar customers on notice that their investment will likely yield "zero economic benefit" over the life of their solar panels and may result in a net loss of several thousand dollars. This would certainly put a clean energy alternative out of reach for middle and lower income families who want to reduce their dependence on fossil fuels.

We trust that your decision against PacifiCorp's move to establish a 'rate-in-limbo' Schedule 135A will send a clear signal to consumers that Utah's solar industry is still open for business after December 9th. We believe that Utah's solar energy future holds great economic potential, and that solar energy jobs should not be imperiled by a monopoly utility seeking to protect its fossil fuel assets by promoting uncertainty in the market for clean, renewable resources.

UCARE appreciates the importance of the Commission's statutory mandate to set "just and reasonable" utility rates under Utah Code 54-15-105.1. We believe that PacifiCorp's request for a transitional net metering rate schedule, 135A, is premature, without clear evidentiary foundation, and would unjustly and unreasonably burden a targeted segment of the utility's customer base. We therefore respectfully urge the Commission to deny the utility's request.

Sincerely,

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Signing for Utah Citizens Advocating Renewable Energy (UCARE)