



For Immediate Release: 01/24/17

Audrey Zibelman, Chair

Contact:

James Denn | James.Denn@dps.ny.gov | (518) 474-7080

<http://www.dps.ny.gov>

<http://twitter.com/NYSDPS>

17008/16-E-0560

New Rules Help Add More Community Solar Projects to the Electric Grid, Boosting Clean Power in New York

ALBANY — The New York State Public Service Commission (Commission) today updated the rules and requirements for interconnection to the electric grid applicable to solar power projects above 50 kW. The new rules are designed to clear out a backlog of inactive project proposals and allow well-developed projects to be completed.

“These new requirements will help determine whether a proposed solar project is viable and should move forward to construction, providing clean renewable power for customers,” said Commission Chair **Audrey Zibelman**. “Every proposal requires a lengthy, in-depth analysis to determine whether it is feasible and, too often, unrealistic projects have been getting in the way of workable proposals. We expect these new rules to have a tremendous impact on moving new net-metering, remote net-metering, and community distributed generation (DG) projects forward throughout the state.”

Jeff Cramer, Executive Director of the Coalition for Community Solar Access (CCSA), said: “We thank the Commission for its action to remove key hurdles to community solar development, and for creating a forum in which utilities and solar companies could work together effectively on solutions to advance clean energy development. This marks one of the final puzzle pieces in making New York’s much-anticipated community solar market a reality.”

More than 2,000 projects, sized between 50 kW and 2 MW, were proposed between April and December of 2016, leading to the current interconnection backlog. The new rules include fixed decision deadlines and cost-sharing requirements for the system upgrades that are necessary to safely connect a large solar project to the electric grid.

To remain in the queue, the new rules first require developers to demonstrate that they have obtained the property owner’s consent to develop their projects on that site. Developers are required to submit an executed form acknowledging that the property owner has consented to work exclusively with a particular developer or that the property owner and developer have signed a land-use agreement.

“This change should eliminate conflicts where two or more developers have filed applications seeking to interconnect projects on the same site,” Chair **Zibelman** added. “The disclosure requirement will also ensure that property owners are fully informed of proposals and activities that would affect their property.”

Once these documents are filed and any conflicts eliminated, the remaining developers will face specific deadlines for moving through the interconnection process. For example, projects that have completed a coordinated electric system interconnection review (CESIR) will be required to move forward to construction. A developer would prove his intent to build by paying 25 percent of the estimated system upgrade costs associated with the project and executing a standard interconnection agreement with the utility. These deadlines and payment requirements will also apply to projects currently undergoing a CESIR study and to more recent projects that have only had a preliminary review.

Those projects that fail to meet these deadlines will be removed from the queue, according to today's decision.

Other delays have occurred when localities impose moratoria on solar development. Under today's order, the interconnection process deadlines will be extended for projects in a locality that has passed a moratorium so long as the project developer pays the initial 25 percent cost of system upgrades identified in the CESIR study or signs the interconnection agreement.

Today's decision also establishes an interim cost-sharing requirement that will spread the cost of certain system upgrades to all the projects that benefit from them. The interim mechanism requires the first project that triggers the need for the upgrade to bear 100 percent of the costs, subject to reimbursement from later projects. Recognizing the limitations of this approach, the order directs DPS Staff to work with stakeholders on a long-term, comprehensive methodology for allocating the costs of shared system upgrades.

With today's action, Central Hudson Gas & Electric Corporation, Consolidated Edison Company of New York, Inc., New York State Electric & Gas Corporation, National Grid, Orange & Rockland Utilities, Inc., and Rochester Gas & Electric Corporation must file tariff amendments and updated interconnection requirements to comply with the new interconnection policy.

Ombudsmen in the Department of Public Service and the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority have been designated to assist developers and utilities in resolving project-level delays and disputes arising in the interconnection process.

Today's decision may be obtained by going to the Commission Documents section of the Commission's Web site at www.dps.ny.gov and entering Case Number 16-E-0560 in the input box labeled "Search for Case/Matter Number". Many libraries offer free Internet access. Commission documents may also be obtained from the Commission's Files Office, 14th floor, Three Empire State Plaza, Albany, NY 12223 (518-474-2500). If you have difficulty understanding English, please call us at 1-800-342-3377 for free language assistance services regarding this press release.

About Reforming the Energy Vision

Reforming the Energy Vision is Governor Andrew M. Cuomo's strategy to lead on climate change and grow New York's economy. REV is building a cleaner, more resilient and affordable energy system for all New Yorkers by stimulating investment in clean technologies like solar, wind, and energy efficiency and generating 50 percent of the state's electricity needs from renewable energy by 2030. Already, REV has driven 730 percent growth in the statewide solar market, enabled over 105,000 low-income households to permanently cut their energy bills with energy efficiency, and created thousands of jobs in manufacturing, engineering, and other clean tech sectors. REV is ensuring New York State reduces statewide greenhouse gas emissions 40 percent by 2030 and achieves the internationally-recognized target of reducing emissions 80 percent by 2050. To learn more about

REV, including the Governor's \$5 billion investment in clean energy technology and innovation, please visit www.ny.gov/REV4NY and follow us at @Rev4NY.