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Audrey Zibelman, Chair

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**PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION APPROVES NEW REGULATIONS TO INCREASE
SOLAR POWER INSTALLATIONS THROUGHOUT THE STATE**

**State Eases Interconnection for Utilities and Provides
Outreach Services for Developers and Installers**

ALBANY — The New York State Public Service Commission (Commission) today announced new regulations making it faster and easier for solar energy, microgrids and other distributed generation projects to connect to the electric grid and advance the development of renewable power under the state's new Clean Energy Standard.

"Today's action is another step in New York's long-term commitment to bringing clean, low-cost power to every corner of New York State," said Commission Chair Audrey Zibelman. "These new regulations will make it easier for distributed generation developers to work with utilities to find the best places to connect innovative solar power projects that will protect the environment, lower energy costs and improve the efficiency and reliability of the electric grid."

The Commission's order increases the size of distributed generation projects (from 2 MW to 5 MW) that may apply under the state's "standardized interconnection" process. In addition, under the previous regulations, interconnection developers had to pay the entire cost of interconnections up front. That up-front cost will now be cut to 25 percent, although construction will not begin until full payment is received, according to the new Standardized Interconnection Requirements (SIR) approved today. The Commission also amended its rules to enable utilities to more-easily process and analyze the large numbers of applications currently filed by solar and other DG power developers.

In developing today's order, the Commission took the comments and suggestions from industry developers, utility managers and environmental groups. For example, the Commission will now require the filing of a pre-application report that help utilities determine whether a proposed interconnection project is viable and located in the right geographical area.

"While other states have recently slowed solar development through regulatory actions, New York has strongly embraced the development of renewable power as it considers changes to encourage and promote the financing and installation of solar and other clean-power sources," said Chair Zibelman. "The overall goal for these SIR modifications is to enhance and speed up the interconnection application and review process, as well as the overall interconnection process. Given the significant increase in interconnection applications, improvements in the overall process are needed and further modifications may be needed as additional lessons are learned and technology evolves."

John B. Rhodes, President and CEO, New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA), said, "The dynamic growth of solar power under Governor Cuomo's NY-Sun initiative is helping New York transform its energy systems to utilize clean, renewable and sustainable energy, providing both environmental and economic benefits. The new standardized interconnection requirements, in conjunction with other actions taken by the State, will improve coordination between solar developers and utilities, and provide a smooth pathway for additional solar projects that can help achieve the Governor's energy vision."

From 2012 -2015, New York has seen an increase of 575 percent in the amount of solar power installed and in development, which has also generated a significant increase in the number of solar-related jobs across the State. According to a national report announced in February, New York's solar industry is now the fourth largest in the nation and currently employs more than 8,250 workers, an increase of more than 3,000 jobs since 2013. In 2016, double-digit job growth is expected to continue with another 1,000 additional jobs created as a result of the state's robust solar project pipeline.

This success is helping New York meet its ambitious target under the Governor's Clean Energy Standard which would develop enough renewable power to meet half of the state's electricity needs by the year ("50 by 30").

New York State is committed to taking additional steps to further advance the installation and interconnection of solar and other distributed energy resources. As part of these efforts, the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) and the Department of Public Service (DPS) will provide ombudsman services to assist developers and utilities with interconnection applications and new distributed generation projects. Each investor-owned utility has appointed an ombudsperson of its own to help manage interconnection applications.

The State has also created the New York State Interconnect Working Group, which is made up of representatives from DPS, NYSERDA, utilities, New York Solar Energy Industry Association, and a few individual installers. While the ombudspersons will work on issues regarding individual installations, the Working Group will work to solve technical interconnect problems that affect large numbers of projects.

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 15-E-0557 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.