



Idaho Public Utilities Commission

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C.L. Butch Otter, Governor

Paul Kjellander, Commissioner
Mack A. Redford, Commissioner
Kristine Raper, Commissioner

Case No. IPC-E-15-18, Order No. 33342

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www.puc.idaho.gov

Idaho Power seeks commission order declaring 10 Wood River area solar projects are one project

BOISE (July 30, 2015) – Idaho Power Company is asking state regulators to declare that solar projects proposed in the Wood River Valley are actually one, large project rather than 10 smaller projects.

Site Based Energy claims that ten, 100-kilowatt projects are separate projects with different owners. The projects are seeking power purchase agreements with Idaho Power under the provisions of the Public Utility Regulatory Policies Act or PURPA. The federal act requires utilities to buy output from qualified renewable projects at an “avoided-cost rate,” or the rate the utility avoids by not having to generate the power itself or buy it from another source.

Idaho Power claims Site Based Energy is trying to qualify for the Idaho Public Utilities Commission’s published avoided-cost rate for small, intermittent renewable projects 100 kilowatts or smaller. Intermittent projects (primarily wind and solar) larger than 100 kilowatts must negotiate with the utility for a rate.

Idaho Power is asking the commission to issue an order finding that the projects “are actually a single one-megawatt project ‘disaggregated’ into ten, 100-kW projects.” If the commission grants Idaho Power’s request, the project would negotiate with Idaho Power for a rate rather than receiving the commission’s published rate. The determination may also impact the length of the proposed contract. Published rate contracts are for 20 years, while negotiated contracts would be for five years, or whatever maximum contract term the commission determines in another case pending before it.

Idaho Power said the request comes from the same developer, John Reuter of Site Based Energy. “These ten projects are all located at the same site, on the same contiguous property, and divided into ten sections,” Idaho Power claims. “Each application appears to be nearly identical, except for the differing name of facility and the corresponding GPS coordinates for each project.”

Site Based Energy claims the projects are all stand-alone projects with separate ownerships with common ownership of interconnection equipment. Site Based claims the projects are individual projects seeking economies of scale by purchasing and building together.

The commission is taking comments on the application through Aug. 14. Comments are accepted via e-mail by accessing the commission's Website at www.puc.idaho.gov and clicking on "Case Comment Form," under the "Consumers" heading. Fill in the case number (IPC-E-15-18) and enter your comments. Comments can also be mailed to P.O. Box 83720, Boise, ID 83720-0074 or faxed to (208) 334-3762.

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