



Case No. IPC-E-16-14, Order No. 33569

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www.puc.idaho.gov

PUC taking comments through September 6 on Idaho Power community solar proposal

BOISE (August 17, 2016) – The Idaho Public Utilities Commission will take comment through September 6 on an Idaho Power Company application to build a community solar array southeast of Boise.

Idaho Power is proposing to build a 500-kilowatt community solar project, allowing up to 1,093 residential customers and 470 non-residential customers to buy one or more \$740 subscriptions (one subscription would be the equivalent of a 320-watt panel) for the 25-year life of the proposed project.

Several parties have intervened in the case including commission staff, the Idaho Conservation League, the Idaho Irrigation Pumpers Association, the Sierra Club, Snake River Alliance and the City of Boise.

Intervening parties will submit comments by September 1 and the commission will take public comments through September 6. Idaho Power will file reply comments on or before September 14.

To comment on the application, go to www.puc.idaho.gov. Under the “Consumers” heading, click on “Case Comment Form,” and include the case number, IPC-E-16-14, in your comments. Comments can also be mailed to the commission at P.O. Box 83720, Boise, ID, 83720-0074.

Under Idaho Power’s proposal, subscribers would receive a bill credit based on their level of subscription and the actual generation from their portion of the solar array. The monthly bill credit would be limited to no more than the participant’s monthly usage with excess production credited in a future month.

Idaho Power claims the solar array, proposed to be built near its Boise Bench substation on the southwest corner of Amity and Holcomb roads, will cost about \$1.16 million to build. Shareholders will provide about 15 percent of the cost, or about \$175,000, with the rest to be paid by subscribers. According to Idaho Power, the company will not earn a rate of return on

the project and there will be no expense borne by Idaho Power customers who choose not to participate.

Completion of the project, if built, is anticipated in June of next year.

Idaho Power said the proposed project was requested by customers who cannot install their own rooftop solar panels because they reside in rental properties or multi-unit dwellings, have aging rooftops, too much shading or an unsuitable rooftop orientation.

The company states the proposed pilot program will assist the utility in learning about the “complexities associated with offering community solar programs including: customer commitment, construction, contracting, interconnection, maintenance and billing.”

The proposed 500-kW project would be divided into 350-kW for residential customers and 150-kW for commercial customers. Subscriptions will be rewarded on a first-come, first-served basis until program capacity is reached. The first 60 days of the enrollment window would reserve 70 percent capacity for residential customers and 30 percent for non-residential customers. After that, if there is unsubscribed capacity reserved for residential customers, it may be opened up to non-residential customers and vice versa. If the program is approved, Idaho Power plans to launch a marketing program in hopes of having the project fully subscribed within 120 days. If less than 80 percent of the program is subscribed within 120 days Idaho Power does not expect it will build the project.

Idaho Power will retain ownership of the Renewable Energy Credits (RECs) and all other environmental attributes. The RECs would be retired by Idaho Power on behalf of subscribers.

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