

Diane Holt

From: welhjohn@isu.edu
Sent: Monday, March 5, 2018 3:06 PM
To: Beverly Barker; Diane Holt; Matthew Evans
Subject: Case Comment Form: John Welhan

Name: John Welhan
Case Number: IPC-E-17-13 83201
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Pocatello ID, 83204

Name of Utility Company: Idaho Power

Comment: My name is John Welhan, Research Professor Emeritus with the Univ. of Idaho, a retiree and Pocatello resident for 28 years. I thank the PUC for this opportunity to enter my comments into the public record.

Currently, ID Power's energy credit for net-metered customers is set at a 1:1 cost rate, but the Company contends that this shifts the financial burden of maintaining the electric grid onto its non-power producing customers. According to a LocalNews8 segment of Feb. 27, ID Power has gone so far as to call this a "wealth transfer from lower-income to higher-income customers." Apparently, only high-income customers install solar systems! Well, I'll be installing one on my roof this summer because of low financing rates and the long-term cost-savings of solar, but as a retiree, I am most certainly NOT a high-income customer, and really resent their contention that low-income customers don't carry our share. We carry more than our fair share! The brazen callousness of that statement about wealth transfer is that it comes at a time when more and more wealth in this country is being transferred from the 99% to the 1%, with corporations and Republicans in Congress doing all they can to bleed the middle class dry.

Net-metered customers represent only 0.3% of ID Power's current customer base, but they expect that proportion to grow rapidly as people wake up to the fact that we're no longer beholden to power brokers for all our electric needs. Clearly, this represents a threat to both their long-held monopoly and their profits. As the cost of rooftop solar installations continues to drop and the long-term savings of rooftop power generation become widely known, more and more residential customers will be financing solar power installations precisely because it makes good economic sense, and because we want to be energy efficient. On top of that, we are investing in and helping to diversify Idaho's energy future. This is exactly the opposite of what ID Power would have you believe – that we don't carry our fair share.

How do you justify rewarding IdaCorp and its wealthy owners at the expense of ordinary tax-paying citizens? The corporation has finally woken up to the fact that its business model is failing, and they're scared. So this proposal before us today is only the first of many stop-gap measures to come, intended to prop up a short-sighted utility that only now is waking up to the fact we've entered a new era of energy conservation and on-site energy production. A utility, I might add, that expects customers to pay for its lack of foresight. I call that a failure of leadership. And what sort of political system rewards failure? An oligarchy.

As if clutching at straws, ID Power's latest annual report even goes so far as to drag in the threat of terrorism and disruptions to the power grid as an argument to prop up their position. That argument, however, conveniently ignores the fact that decentralized power generation – exactly what rooftop solar delivers – is what utilities rely on to minimize the impact of outages, by shunting power produced in one part of the grid to meet demand in other parts during a disruption.

If ID Power were truly concerned about terrorism, it would be encouraging on-site power generation rather than attempting to penalize us for adopting it. More than anything, this bald argument exposes their real agenda: to do everything they can to maintain their revenue stream as their monopolistic hold on Idaho's energy future crumbles in the face of the on-site solar and wind power trends.

So, if the PUC truly represents the public good, my question to you is: Why should net-metered customers be penalized for conserving energy and generating more green power? Remember, during the 2000-2001 western energy crisis, the PUC ordered this utility to focus more on energy efficiency, not less. So, I ask, who is really at the helm, here? IdaCorp, or the state of Idaho? Or does that old joke about Idaho being the only state named after a power company have more truth behind it than humor? Let's face it, on-site solar and wind power generation benefits everyone – including the utilities, if they'd just wake up to the fact and adapt to a changing energy future rather than expect customers to bail them out.

Finally, I would ask you to consider that net-metered customers won't be the only ones penalized by this proposal. In its Annual Report, ID Power proclaims its support for state-led efforts to "promote economic development with an emphasis on attracting industrial and commercial customers." If the company is truly sincere about attracting new businesses to Idaho, then the PUC must consider the impact this proposal will have on slowing the growth of rooftop solar power in the state and the number of new businesses that may not locate here because of that.

So, in conclusion, which side of history do we choose to be on? That of a short-sighted corporation slapping band-aids on business practices that no longer work as they once did? Or a comprehensive, forward-looking economic growth strategy for the entire state that considers more than just the myopic interests of a utility that continues to operate like it did a century ago? I urge you to put Idaho's long-term interests ahead of the panicked proposals of a corporation bent on prioritizing its profits to the exclusion of everything else.

Unique Identifier: 205.185.79.140

Diane Holt

From: jan@brinkerhoff.net
Sent: Monday, March 5, 2018 3:34 PM
To: Beverly Barker; Diane Holt; Matthew Evans
Subject: Case Comment Form: Jan Brinkerhoff

Name: Jan Brinkerhoff
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Name of Utility Company: Idaho Power

Comment: Idaho Power's decision to segregate rooftop solar generators into a special rate class certainly feels like preparation for simple rate adjustments/charges on those who choose, for whatever reason, to generate energy from the sun. This may be a fools errand on the part of Idaho Power as smarter, larger and more affordable home batteries start to come online. Heck, the largest EV maker in the U.S. is now installing 100kWh batteries in their cars and a German car maker just announced a 111kWh battery in their newest offering. Who's to say if/when you can use your EV car to power your house at night? This group that Idaho Power targets is likely to be early adopters of new energy storage technologies and will simply disconnect from the grid and walk away from Idaho Power if promoted to do so. Then what? A charge for not being connected to the grid in an attempt to somehow make it fair? Doesn't sound right to me. Perhaps other comments are correct in suggesting Idaho Power do a little more to understand what is going on, it's effect and why. Perhaps Idaho Power's future is more a power distributor than a power generator? I don't know. I'm certainly no expert. I just think it is a huge mistake to alienate and segregate a growing population who choose tap the sun's energy, and perhaps a bigger mistake to discourage others from doing so. I urge the commission to reject this request unless and until Idaho Power comes up with a more holistic approach to the subject. I've always thought Idaho Power was a great company, doing great things, in a unique roll that they've always seemed to understand. I hope that continues.

Unique Identifier: 24.117.129.200

Diane Holt

From: leah.leavitt@saintalphonsus.com
Sent: Monday, March 5, 2018 4:09 PM
To: Beverly Barker; Diane Holt; Matthew Evans
Subject: Case Comment Form: Leah Leavitt

Name: Leah Leavitt
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Name of Utility Company: Idaho Power

Comment: Idaho Power has not completed a cost-benefit analysis of rooftop solar, so the PUC cannot make an informed decision about cost-shifting. Rooftop solar is increasing in Idaho bringing more and more jobs to Idaho and another source of clean energy. Idaho Power's new rate class threatens Idaho's solar industry and customers.

Unique Identifier: 170.232.227.220

Diane Holt

From: laurie_kuntz@hotmail.com
Sent: Monday, March 5, 2018 4:14 PM
To: Beverly Barker; Diane Holt; Matthew Evans
Subject: Case Comment Form: Laurie Kuntz

Name: Laurie Kuntz
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Name of Utility Company: Idaho Power

Comment: I am a net metered solar customer who believes that solar power is and will be a huge benefit to Idaho, and we should be proactive in producing solar power at all levels to minimize future economic and environmental risks.

Idaho Power is proposing policies that would unfairly discriminate against customers who produce part of their own energy from rooftop solar panels. This would stifle the growth of Idaho's booming clean energy economy. Idahoans must continue to have the right to offset their energy use through generating their own electricity, just like customers have the right to pursue energy efficiencies.

Idaho Power alleges that customers who produce part of their own energy from rooftop solar panels are not paying for their fair share of the electrical grid infrastructure. The company has asked state regulators to approve a plan to put these customers into their own customer class -- a first step towards charging rooftop solar customers different rates.

While many net metering programs around the nation have been shown to actually save ratepayers money, Idaho Power has yet to conduct any comprehensive cost-benefit studies. Creating a new rate class for net metering customers right now is premature and discriminatory.

Thank you.

Unique Identifier: 72.29.46.27

Diane Holt

From: jackswaim46@gmail.com
Sent: Monday, March 5, 2018 4:26 PM
To: Beverly Barker; Diane Holt; Matthew Evans
Subject: Case Comment Form: Jack Swaim

Name: Jack Swaim
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Eagle ID, 83616

Name of Utility Company: Idaho Power

Comment: Dear PUC,

Idaho Power should be encouraging solar panels on roof tops, not proposing to charge higher rates for those with solar panels!

Investment by homeowners in solar panels reduces the need for investment in infrastructure by Idaho Power, and also improves air quality.

Thank you for listening.

Unique Identifier: 63.155.11.101