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Diane Holt

From: joey@adaclubs.org
Sent: Tuesday, November 20, 2018 11:10 AM
To: Beverly Barker; Diane Holt; Erik Jorgensen; Matthew Evans
Subject: Case Comment Form: Joseph Schueler

Name: Joseph Schueler
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Name of Utility Company: Idaho Power
Comment: Dear Commission,

My wife and I purchased a 24 panel solar array to offset our power consumption on our primary residence in Boise, ID. We invested \$38,000 of our own capital and will see a return on this investment in roughly ten years. We understand that we have sacrificed opportunity investments that those funds could have been used for, including paying down debt that would immediately result in savings that would benefit us more directly. Why then did we invest, you may ask? We sleep better at night is my response. This is the type of attitude and investment in our environment you should be promoting, not making more difficult so please keep that in mind when assessing this issue. We are proud of this investment and wholly support the continued advancement of solar generation in every possible manner that results in lowered carbon emissions. To that end, ensuring on-site solar generating residences have the ability to make this private investment for a public good is critical to our nation and our planet in ensuring a healthier and more sustainable future for those who will follow us. I would like to comment on a couple reasons why as follows:

1. Every resident must run a cost benefit analysis on some level when considering whether solar production is right for their finances, their long term planning, and even the logistical feasibility of such a development on their home with many factors diminishing their return. The direction their house or roof line faces, adjacent foliage or neighbor obstruction, access to power, condition of roof, etc. all factor in. We have passed the time when the question of benefits to solar power generation are being discussed. It is now a necessary part of our energy production that we encourage solar and is in fact past the time when we should have made major investments in this technology. Most residential customers won't due to cost and the time it takes to realize a gain. When so many hurdles already stand in the way of this positive development, any finding of this commission to diminish the returns and period for net benefits to private investors in solar will have a detrimental and damaging effect on an outcome Idaho needs and everyone desires, even enough to personally invest their own hard earned money into furthering this noble cause. If you raise rates on solar power generators, you effectively diminish the possibility of any solar power generator realizing their return on investment while deterring massive numbers of people from doing the same healthy investment in our power grid system. I hope the absolutely ridiculous and damaging effects of raised rates on solar power generators above that of traditional utility consumers and how it will inhibit future solar power generation is also be factored into this study. Whether your findings suggest a benefit to a public utilities company, who is not the beneficiary of Idaho utilities, but the company contracted to service all Idaho citizens over independent energy producers or not, your decision will invariably improve solar power generation or deter it and that, to me and hopefully to you, is equally if not more important than how a for profit contract company manages its finances for the reasons that follow.
2. The death rate currently sits at seventy nine in the devastating California wilderness fires and that death count is rising with close to a thousand still missing or unaccounted for. This most recent example is sadly not the exception, but is more and more becoming the rule when faced with natural disasters in virtually every quadrant of our nation. Massive earthquakes, the accompanying tsunamis, record number and intensity hurricanes, unheard of blizzards,

drought and deforestation, wilderness fires in every western state depleting federal and state fire suppression coffers, bug infestations and mud slides. I could go on, but I think these examples and the impending increased frequency, duration, and magnitude of their effects in coming years is more than an ominous warning. We must do more about how we produce, consume, and manage energy in the United States and solar is perhaps one of the most viable solutions, especially when funded by individual consumers to offset their own consumption. We ought to be training our nation to manage our own production and consumption. To somehow disconnect our actions right here in Idaho from the effects that energy consumption has on adjacent populations is not only short sided; it is dangerous. I love how Idaho Power harnesses sustainable water energy, yet that too has it side effects and negative impacts on the environment. How has your salmon fishing and native Idaho angling been going in recent years? I believe the commission is already aware of the damaging impacts on native river habitat and ecology resulting from the use of dams. Wind power is yet another excellent investment in sustainable wind power. Yet, that too effects migratory bird patterns, kills invaluable bird species at high rates, and has long term repair and maintenance costs not observed by solar power generation when a private financed option. We maintain and repair our own systems at no cost to tax payers or other utility consumers. Both dams and wind power are commonly seen as a necessary evil, yet here we have a viable and sustainable alternative that is relieving some of those effects while improving our fossil fuel energy independence and a public utility company wants to detract from its success for what reason again? Oh yeah, so they can own the utility supply and produce their own solar for us to buy from them at whatever rate they choose. Hubris, I say. Good business acumen, but flawed in its original principle; that we work for the utility company instead of the utility company working for its consumers and their innate right to free choice in the market of energy production. They have a monopoly on the market and have benefited greatly from the production of utility supply and I appreciate their work greatly, but never forget who the utility rights belong to. They belong to the public, not the contract holder of the production agreement. Open the gates to independent solar generation and even incentivize it and allow this state to develop a widely patterned and sustainable source of independent energy that feeds the grid while mitigating long term repair and replacement costs while also distributing the power grid thereby mitigating the effects of a large scale environmental disaster that could occur on any one large scale energy producing system. Maybe a little competition will help them keep their rates low for once.

3. We've been on the net meter now for about four months. In that time, our system has helped us lower our utility bills a great deal. It has also encouraged us to be more aware of our consumption while watching our production as well. By the end of the first year, we will have a very stable picture of both aspects of what a good consumer should be aware of. Units in and units out. Independent solar generation naturally accomplishes what the utilities commission should see as a goal for all Idaho power consumers. We developed our 24 panel array as a 90% offset of our current consumption. The reason we chose not to invest in 100% energy offset is we didn't want to spend more money to result in overages that did not return to us in the current system, as we do not get paid out for any net energy provided to Idaho Power. That does not mean we will not end up helping power the grid. Besides our generation through non peak energy production periods, we are now incentivized to lower our footprint to ensure that former 90% production meets today's 100% energy consumption needs. The result is us finding new efficiencies in our home, our lighting, our insulation, our windows and doors, when we turn our lights on and off, our thermostats, and the list goes on and on. We can carve out 105 of our energy use to be entirely energy independent by 2020. How many traditional consumers do you know who have that type of incentive to be better with their energy? I'm sure they are out there, but how many invested \$38,000 just to try and also save costs on the demand side? You see, when passion is there to make a positive change, nothing will stop it. Please incentivize what results in hope and opportunity and economic activity to far more than just utilities. It drives commerce, trade, and long term home valuation investments that prepare Idaho for the energy needs of the 21st Century.

I could continue and am unsure what the word count limit is here, but as shown above, there are too many benefits that offset costs to the public to in any way detract from independent solar power generation. We could afford to do this by the skin of our teeth and have tightened the belt as well just to ensure we could realize this return in 10-20 years. I'd happily continue to share the many reasons this is needing your support and do not hesitate to contact me for any further comments or questions regarding this very important issue for Idaho.

Respectfully,

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