

Sara E. Statz Hartzheim & Matthew Hartzheim
356 W Hidden Meadow Way
Middleton, ID 83644
September 20, 2022

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IDAHO PUBLIC
UTILITIES COMMISSION

Idaho Public Utilities Commission
11331 W Chinden Blvd, Building 8, Suite 201-A
Boise, ID 83714

RE: Denial of net metering grandfathering period following solar array loss due to fire on 5/17/22
Idaho Power Account: [REDACTED]
Interconnection Date: 6/20/19

I am formally filing a complaint as we believe Idaho Power is unfairly applying the rules set forth by the Idaho Public Utilities Commission (IPUC) regarding the grandfathering clause as it applies to customer solar generation.

Our family began generating solar power at our home in 6/19 with the installation being performed by Intermountain Wind and Solar. The interconnection process was completed by Idaho Power on 6/20/19. This places our solar array well within the grandfathering period set forth by the IPUC.

Unfortunately, on 5/17/22 our family experienced an electrical fire which destroyed our home and with it our solar array. In the immediate aftermath of the fire all utility companies were contacted to alert them of our situation and be asked that our accounts be placed on hold for the time being. When I spoke with Idaho Power, I was told we would lose our grandfathering status if our solar generation system did not come back online within six (6) months. As we had just lost our entire home to fire getting our system back up within six months seemed impossible.

I later followed up with Shawn Lovewell on 6/9/22 from Idaho Power's Customer Generation group. She informed me that there was nothing Idaho Power could do to make an exception as Idaho Power was governed by the IPUC's rules and regulations.

After taking time to gather ourselves following the fire, I later reached out to the IPUC directly for more guidance regarding this matter. An online complaint was submitted on IPUC's website on 9/14/22. Chris Hecht, Utilities Compliance Investigator from IPUC, responded to my request via email on 9/16/22. Mr. Hecht agreed to speak with his Manager at IPUC and reach out to Idaho Power directly.

On 9/20/22, Mr. Hecht later informed me that Idaho Power had denied my request for an extension of time to get our solar array back online citing IPUC case IPE-E-18-15, order no. 34546.

Order number 34546 cites four (4) basic criteria for grandfathering by system:

- 1) A customer who moves into a property with a grandfathered net-metering system gets to "inherit" the grandfathered status of the system. Likewise, when a customer moves from a property with a grandfathered system, that customer does not get to take the grandfathered status of the system with them to their next property.*
- 2) If a system is offline for more than six months, or it is moved to another site, the grandfathered status of the system is forfeited.*

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- 3) *To allow for the replacement of degraded or broken panels, the customer may increase the capacity of the grandfathered system by no more than 10% of the originally installed nameplate capacity or 1 kW, whichever is greater.*
- 4) *Grandfathered status terminates December 20, 2045*

Respectfully, we disagree with the application of this IPUC order in our case. I will outline my argument in greater detail why we disagree with the application of this IPUC order.

The first criteria does not apply as we are not attempting to move the system or take it with us to our new home. Our family will be rebuilding our home, and our solar array, at the same location. Our building plans are in the process of being submitted to the City of Middleton for approval. Once approval is granted, we will begin the building process immediately.

Criteria two is the point our family is contesting. While we can see the intention of the IPUC order, frankly it is overbearing and punitive to enforce in situations such as ours. Our family did nothing wrong. Our system was well maintained and would have still been operational today had it not been for the housefire. No attempts have been, nor will they be made to move our system to another location. We are in the process of rebuilding our home at the same service address (356 W Hidden Meadow Way, Middleton, ID 83644) and fully intend to reinstall our solar array.

The third criteria regarding the replacement of degraded or broken panels is unapplicable in our scenario. All of our panels were irrevocably destroyed by the fire of 5/17/22. We are not able to simply restore our system by increasing the capacity by 10% or 1 kW- the entire system needs to be rebuilt. Since there is no home to place the solar panels on, this must be completed once the house is rebuilt.

The fourth criteria does not materially affect our complaint to the IPUC. While we are losing time with our solar generation system, we understand the IPUC may not be able to extend the grandfathering period by that time. Although, it would be appreciated to have the IPUC consider extension of the grandfathering period in our case by the amount of time our system will be offline. It is likely we will be unable to generate power from 5/17/22 to approximately 8/1/23 while we have been displaced by the fire and our home is being rebuilt.

I humbly asked the IPUC and Idaho Power to fully consider each of these arguments in our case as it does not appear anyone considered catastrophic damages and losses such as these when developing the grandfathering order.

Sincerely,



Sara E. Statz Hartzheim & Matthew Hartzheim
Homeowners







