



## Renewable Energy Committee Meeting Notes

March 24, 2016

NJBPU, 44 S. Clinton Avenue, Trenton, NJ

### **Disclaimer:**

*This RE Committee is an opportunity for stakeholders and other interested parties to have open and frank discussions regarding policy and issues confronting the renewable energy community that are within the jurisdiction of the Board. These meetings are intended to address issues of general concern. Staff cannot comment on or provide specific answers to questions about pending applications or petitions. Ultimately, information provided and positions developed during these meetings may or may not form the basis for Staff recommendations to the Board. By law, statements made by Staff cannot bind the Board in its decisions. Only the Board can make decisions on these matters at its Open Public Meetings. While attendees may choose to record or take notes of the meeting, please refrain from interrupting the flow and/or tenor of the discussion with questions that pertain to your note-taking.*

### **I. Introductions**

Mike Ambrosio asked the participants in the room and those on the phone to introduce themselves. Scott Hunter then read the disclaimer above. Mike also thanked Honeywell (and specifically Charlie Garrison) for their support in managing the renewable energy program since 2007.

### **II. Updates of Filings, Board Orders and Regulatory Items**

Marisa Slaten reported that the Board recently approved the new structure for the LGEA program which has TRC providing the energy audits. They will begin to work through the pipeline of applications received. There is a notice being issued today regarding the budget modifications to the Residential New Construction program and the enrollment modifications. A request for comment will also be issued regarding the Direct Install Program and NJ energy code changes. The Combined Heat & Power program is continuing to work through the pipeline of applications with a goal of re-opening the program to new applications by May or June. Scott noted that comments are being accepted regarding RPS rule amendments through May 6. He also noted there may be another subsection t project on the April agenda; and he anticipates that the results of the EDC Finance Program third solicitation will be presented with recommendations in April as well.

Regarding the transition, Mike reported that the SRP portal was launched on March 1 and the initial reaction has been positive. The applications submitted via the portal will likely be processed faster than the paper copies, however teams are working on both. Installers are encouraged to submit a Withdrawal form if they intend to submit an online application to replace a paper copy previously submitted, and the paper copies will be mailed back. The goal is to have sufficient resources in place to eliminate the backlog and keep current with submissions. The data from Honeywell is being uploaded to AEG today, and that will allow us to focus on processing the Final As-builts with a priority on the over one megawatt projects.

### **III. Update on the Solar Act**

- a. Subsection q – Scott reported that several projects have been completed in advance of the 5/31 deadline for EY15 approvals. One EY14 project successfully appealed and received an extension to May 31st. Eight projects for 50MW or so are anticipated in the next traunch of completions.
- b. Subsection r – Scott reiterated that provisions to implement Subsection r is in the proposed RPS rulemaking and that the public comment period is open through May 6. Staff anticipate implementing an interim process potentially including stakeholder process and will provide instructions for all stakeholders on how to proceed.
- c. Subsection t – Staff continues to accept applications and as described above anticipates presenting a recommendation to the Board on a pending application for conditional certification.
- d. Subsection s – Scott stated that the first of five Subsection s deferred projects recently came on line and with the remainder making their way through the construction and Final As-built process.

### **IV. Program Updates**

#### **NJ Solar Market Update (Charlie Garrison)**

*(Previously distributed as Presentation #1)* Charlie reported that installed solar capacity in the state as of February 29, 2016 was approximately 1,644 MW, with 20.3 MW installed in February. As of the end of February, there were 43,822 solar installations in the state. The solar pipeline contained an additional 11,175 projects totaling approximately 393 MW. He also reported on the Subsection (q), (s) and (t) grid supply projects installed and those in the pipeline. He also provided a breakdown of behind-the-meter vs. grid supply installations, SREC activity and trading prices.

Charlie emphasized that there is a more significant delay in Final As-builts than ever before; therefore the statistics reported show a pronounced delay. Charlie will release reporting as of February 29, 2016 but will not report on January activity.

### **Operations Update (Tammy VanBlarcom)**

*(Previously distributed as Presentation #2)* Tammy reported that 1,176 acceptance letters were issued from the period March 1-23, as a result of 489 registrations submitted via the portal and 687 submitted via paper. She also reviewed the overall volume of submitted registrations inherited in paper, withdrawn and submitted via the portal. She also provided data on behind-the-meter vs. grid supply projects and residential vs. non-residential acceptance and certification letters.

### **Biopower (Mike Ambrosio)**

Mike reported that there is nothing to report; there is a proposal pending review with Staff and as soon as we get some direction there will be an update. Scott added that Rutgers Eco-complex is sponsorship a Food Waste to Lower Carbon Energy Conference on April 27&28 and information can be found on the NJCEP website.

### **Electric Storage (Katie O'Rourke)**

Katie reported that the renewable electric storage rebate program launched on March 1 and has received eight applications. One was denied for not meeting criteria and the remaining seven are in the review process. Questions can be submitted via [storage@NJCleanEnergy.com](mailto:storage@NJCleanEnergy.com) and responses are posted on the NJCEP website on a regular basis for clear and consistent communication.

## **V. Interconnection Issues (John Teague)**

John shared that Atlantic City Electric has recently launched a tool which allows customer and installers to apply for interconnection online and also track the progress of the submission. Webcasts will be offered on April 4 & 7 to provide instruction; more information can be found at [www.atlanticcityelectric.com/nemeducation/](http://www.atlanticcityelectric.com/nemeducation/).

John also noted Staff has seen an increase in billing complaints regarding PPA providers (third party solar owners) overstating what the installed solar systems can produce. Customers are confused when they receive both the EDC bill and the third party bill as they believed they would not be receiving ANY bills for electricity. When complaints involve contractual disputes or false and misleading advertising, Staff refers customers to the Division of Consumer Affairs for follow up. Scott noted this appears to be a systemic practice, and cautioned third party owners and PPA providers to not misrepresent their offerings. Jim McAleer of Solar Electric NJ noted that it is often a misinterpretation by the customer versus intentionally misleading sales practices. Scott emphasized that education is critical to set expectations correctly. Josh Cadoret of ACE advised they are developing a tool in which the customer can enter information such as average energy use, whether they are buying outright or leasing, etc. and the system will show them what their expected energy bill may be. Mike Ambrosio will look at developing FAQs or other information to put on the website to address this issue.

**VI. RPS Issues (R. Jackson)**

- a. RPS Rulemaking - Ron reiterated that comments are due on May 6 regarding RPS rule amendments.
- b. RPS EY15 Compliance Update – Ron is still reviewing the compliance report data and hopes to have preliminary data to share at the next committee meeting.
- c. Out of State MSW Class II REC Update – In November there were eight out of state MSW to energy facilities that were notified of the requirements to be recertified as compliant with NJ environmental standards by February 1. Four of the eight facilities did submit for recertification for the period starting in EY17 and Staff will respond to these facility representatives prior to April 1. If the remaining four facilities do not submit acknowledgements of the requirement to satisfy the recertification of environmental compliance determinations they will not be certified for out of state class 2 REC generation for EY17. Once everyone is notified Ron will share the names of the facilities.

**VII. Other Topics/New Business**

The next meeting is scheduled for April 12 in Trenton.