



Agenda Date: 3/29/19
Agenda Item: 8E

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
Board of Public Utilities
44 South Clinton Avenue, 3rd Floor, Suite 314
Post Office Box 350
Trenton, New Jersey 08625-0350
www.nj.gov/bpu/

CLEAN ENERGY

IN THE MATTER OF THE COMMUNITY SOLAR)
ENERGY PILOT PROGRAM)

ORDER

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) DOCKET NO. QO18060646

Party of Record:

Stefanie A. Brand, Esq., Director, New Jersey Division of Rate Counsel

BY THE BOARD:

This Order implements provisions of the Clean Energy Act of 2018 ("Clean Energy Act"), P.L. 2018, c. 17, which directs the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities ("Board" or "BPU") to adopt rules and regulations establishing a Community Solar Energy Pilot Program ("Pilot Program") within 210 days.

BACKGROUND

On May 23, 2018, the Clean Energy Act was signed into law, directing the Board to adopt rules and regulations establishing a Pilot Program within 210 days. This Pilot Program will enable utility customers to participate in a solar energy project that may be remotely located from their properties and receive a credit on their utility bills for their participation in the community solar project. Community solar will therefore enable access to local clean energy for utility customers currently unable to place solar generation directly on their own properties. The BPU is particularly interested in ensuring that low-and moderate-income ("LMI") customers are able to access community solar, and that community solar development is pursued without materially compromising the preservation of open space or protected lands in New Jersey. The Pilot Program will provide necessary experience and lay the groundwork for the development and implementation of a full-scale Community Solar Energy Program within 36 months, in conformance with the Clean Energy Act.

On July 6, 2018, the BPU released a Request for Comments which provided an opportunity for interested stakeholders to provide input on the design of the Pilot Program. A public meeting was held on July 24, 2018. Written comments were solicited with a deadline of receipt by the Board of July 31, 2018. On August 29, 2018, the Board approved the Proposed Rules for the Pilot Program.

The Proposed Rules were published in the New Jersey Register on October 1, 2018 and subject to a 60-day public comment period, which closed on November 30, 2018. Additionally, the BPU held two public hearings on the Proposed Rules on November 8, 2018.

Additional stakeholder engagement was solicited as part of the development of the Pilot Program's Application process. A draft Application Form was published on November 28, 2018, along with drafts of the Community Solar Subscriber Organization Registration Form and the Community Solar Subscriber Disclosure Form. Written comments were received until December 21, 2018. Three public meetings were held on December 6, December 13, and December 17, 2018.

With strong support for the Proposed Rules and no substantive changes, the Board adopted the Community Solar Energy Pilot Program on January 17, 2019. The adopted Rules were filed with the Office of Administrative Law and published in the New Jersey Register on February 19, 2019. The final Rules provide the framework necessary for the development and implementation of community solar in New Jersey.

At the stakeholder meetings, Board staff requested comments on potential measures to ensure an effective and streamlined interconnection process for community solar projects. Board staff met with the Electric Distribution Companies ("EDCs") to further discuss interconnection-related issues. Additionally, Board staff reviewed the comments received from community solar stakeholders, including trade organizations, developers, PJM, and the EDCs on interconnection issues. The majority of comments suggested that projects approved for participation in the Community Solar Energy Pilot Program should be interconnected under the existing EDC Level 2 or Level 3 interconnection procedures established at N.J.A.C. 14:8-5.

RECOMMENDATIONS

After reviewing the stakeholder feedback from community solar trade organizations, developers, and the EDCs, Board staff recommends that community solar projects approved by the Board for participation in the Pilot Program apply for interconnection through the EDCs, pursuant to the provisions set forth at N.J.A.C. 14:8-5. This will enable the Pilot Program to proceed under established interconnection standards and therefore provide experiences and lessons regarding the interconnection of community solar projects in New Jersey to help inform the development of the full-scale Community Solar Energy Program.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

The Board has carefully reviewed the recommendations of Staff and the provisions established at N.J.A.C. 14:8-9.9(a), to wit: "community solar projects shall comply with all current and future applicable interconnection requirements applicable to each EDC, as set forth in N.J.A.C. 14:8-5 and shall be processed by the EDCs following normal interconnection procedures." In furtherance of N.J.A.C. 14:8-9.9(a), the EDCs are **HEREBY DIRECTED** to apply the interconnection standards set forth in N.J.A.C. 14:8-5 to ALL community solar projects approved by the Board for participation in the Pilot Program. Furthermore, the EDCs are **HEREBY DIRECTED** to modify their Interconnection Application forms to allow for an applicant to identify a project as being a community solar project.

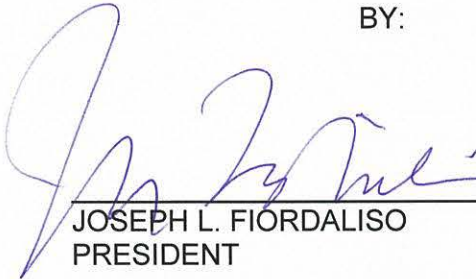
This Order applies only to interconnection sought by projects that are approved by the Board for participation in the Community Solar Energy Pilot Program. The issue of interconnection of community solar projects will be reassessed in the development of rules and regulations for the full Community Solar Program.

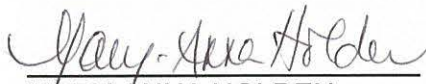
The Board **FURTHER DIRECTS** Board staff to work with stakeholders when developing the interconnection rules or standards for the full Community Solar Energy Program.

The effective date of this order is April 8, 2019.

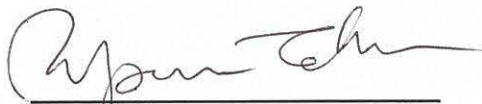
DATED: 3/29/19

BOARD OF PUBLIC UTILITIES
BY:

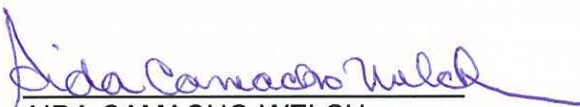

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I HEREBY CERTIFY that the within
document is a true copy of the original
in the files of the Board of Public Utilities.

IN THE MATTER OF THE COMMUNITY SOLAR ENERGY PILOT PROGRAM

DOCKET NO. QO18060646

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