

Production Meter Requirements for Solar Projects and the Electrical Subcode

Recently, the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities (BPU) adopted new rules requiring that a revenue-grade meter (RGM) must be installed by November 30, 2012 so that all solar energy systems eligible to earn solar renewable energy credits (SRECs) can report system production. Credits are earned based upon readings obtained from a RGM measuring the system output.

Some of you may be thinking, isn't the system's inverter capable of displaying accumulated kilowatt-hours? This is true, however the accuracy of the inverter meter typically does not meet the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) Standard C12.1-2008 accuracy standards required by the NJ Clean Energy Program and therefore cannot be used for the purpose of generating SRECs.

So what does a RGM (aka, production meter) mean to you Mr. Electrical Subcode Official? It means, this meter is (1) in addition to the electric meter installed by the local utility to measure the home or business' electric consumption and (2) subject to the requirements of the Uniform Construction Code.

As mentioned earlier, the meter is required to meet the accuracy standard of the ANSI C12.1-2008 and is to be installed per the manufacturer's installation instructions. Even though a UCC permit will be issued for the meter's installation, the Department has determined that the listing/labeling requirements per Sections 90.7 and 110.3(B) of the electrical subcode would not be applicable. Therefore, when a RGM is installed in a new or existing solar energy system, the electrical subcode official only needs to verify that the RGM meter meets the ANSI standard and that it is compatible with the listed meter socket cabinet.

The BPU has provided two lists (see links below) intended to assist you in identifying a RGM that meets these accuracy requirements. These lists are not to be considered as being all-inclusive. The first link is from the New York State Department of Public Service and the second link is from the California Energy Commission:
http://www.njcleanenergy.com/files/file/Renewable_Programs/REIP/Approved_%20Meter_%20List.pdf
http://www.gosolarcalifornia.org/equipment/system_perf.php

If you have any further questions regarding this matter, please contact the Code Assistance Unit at (609) 984-7609.

Source: Ken Verbos
Office of Regulatory Affairs