



Renewable Energy Stakeholder Meeting

October 10, 2024

Question and Answers

Below are the Questions and Answers discussed during the meeting; some have been edited for clarity.

Community Solar

Question:

What outreach will be done by BPU to provide community solar subscribers with confidence in the myriad of providers seeking clients? The current environment has too many scammers that prey on the consumers and keep many from participating due to lack of trust and validation by trusted sources. Especially given the information shared on solar companies that have gone out of business or are out of compliance.

Answer:

This has been a topic of concern among Staff and warrants some more coordination with the solar development community, Staff, and other advocates such as Sustainable Jersey. Staff will be addressing this shortly.

Question:

Utilities have a role now that if there is an underutilization in community solar they can step in to fill unreserved capacity. Are they held to the same economic standard. What is the process?

Answer:

Staff anticipate that the utilities' role will be very limited. The Board's CSEP rule proposal proposes that if the solar industry does not have enough projects to fill the capacity allocated in the program, the unused capacity will be rolled over into the following year's allocation. The utilities may then apply for projects up to that rollover capacity, though they may still be competing with other developers. Utility-owned projects must meet the same registration requirements as other projects.

Dual-Use Solar Pilot Program

Question:

Please re-state the date of the forum for the NJ Dual-Use Pilot Program. When will the BPU take up the Dual-Use Regs? Are there any changes to the Dual Use program straw proposal?

Answer:

Together with Rutgers Agrivoltaics Program (RAP), the Department of Agriculture, and Department of Environmental Protection, Staff is currently designing and developing the Dual Use Pilot Program. Information that has been shared with the public thus far may be found on the NJCEP website: <https://www.njcleanenergy.com/renewable-energy/programs/dual-use-solar-pilot-program>. Note that, since the stakeholder session was held, the Board has approved a notice of proposal for establishing regulations specific to the Dual-Use Pilot Program in addition to launching the Pilot Program. The Board's actions are described on the webpage listed above.

On Wednesday, February 5, 2025, at 9:30 am, RAP will be hosting a 2-hour Agrivoltaics session during the NJ Agricultural Convention and Trade Show in Atlantic City, NJ.

Question:

How can I find a developer to guide me through the application process for dual-use agrivoltaics projects? Is there a list of partners?

Answer:

At this time, there is no current list of specific Dual-Use partners, but anyone that is interested in a potential project in the Pilot Program might consider contacting the solar trade allies listed on the NJCEP website. The Rutgers Agrivoltaics Program (RAP) is also a source for technical information and can be contacted to discuss technical issues or questions. RAP's website is <https://agrivoltaics.rutgers.edu/>.

Question:

Question on Rutgers University Snyder Research.

Answer:

This is a specific case that would be better discussed offline rather than in this public forum. Information on the research being conducted at the Snyder Research and Extension Farm may be found online at <https://agrivoltaics.rutgers.edu/projects/project-sites/clifford-e-melda-c-snyder-research-and-extension-farm-rutgers-center-for-sustainable-agriculture/>. Questions about this research project and other research undertaken by Rutgers University for agrivoltaics should be directed to RAP.

Administratively Determined Incentive (ADI) Program

Question:

With 72 MW already subscribed in the residential category and 8 months left, how is the State planning to manage subscription levels?

Answer:

72 MW seems to be on pace with the capacity available within that tranche. We continue to monitor this and, if any concerns are identified, Staff will come up with recommendations for the Board to address that concern. At this time, Staff does not have concerns.

Question:

What is the timeline for approval to install?

Answer:

You will need to reach out to your utility company to determine the timeline for the issuance of your approval to install. The timeline for reviewing an ADI initial registration and issuing an ADI acceptance letter is currently approximately nine (9) days from the date the ADI registration was submitted if the registration has no deficiencies.

Question:

Can you provide any updates regarding potential changes to ADI incentive levels?

Answer:

ADI incentive levels are based on each Energy Year's capacity block and incentive value as established in the relevant annual Board Order. The Board Orders can be found on the Solar Proceedings page of the NJCEP website and on the Board's website

Question:

What is best way to withdraw an application?

Answer:

Upload a cancellation letter in the ADI registration portal that is signed by the customer and the listed SREC owner.

Customer Complaints

Question:

What happens with abandoned customers?

Answer:

TRC will issue letters to all parties associated with the ADI registration notifying them that the solar installer has ceased operations in NJ. The letter includes links to the NJCEP Trade Ally database and program documents, together with instructions on next steps for completing their ADI registration packets. In addition, there are two new Trade Ally categories that can be found

on the NJCEP website to assist abandoned/distressed customers 1) Solar: Assistance for Distressed Customers and 2) Solar: Operations and Maintenance.

Question:

Can TRC confirm the contact information used to alert solar contractors that a customer complaint has been received that requires response?

Answer:

If any solar contractor would like such emails sent to a specific email address, please send a request for same to the general email box at NJREINFO@NJCleanEnergy.com.

Question:

Have you done any research on why these solar installers are going out of business?

Answer:

We have not conducted any formal research into the issue, but the readily available information would suggest that the cause is a nationwide contraction of the solar market driven by a number of factors.

Question:

Can solar contractors provide the Program a specific contact person(s) to ensure the appropriate staff members are being made aware of any complaints filed and to avoid notifications being lost in a general inbox?

Answer:

Yes. Solar contractors are requested to send any contact information to the general email box at NJREINFO@NJCleanEnergy.com.

Remote Net Metering

Question:

Will there be a remote net metering stakeholder meeting held in the future? More specifically will there be an opportunity to provide stakeholder feedback on the design of the program and component of the ADI Program?

Answer:

Staff issued a Request for Information (RFI) on the remote net metering component of the ADI Program and on the specific design of the program with public comments due on 8/27/2024. Staff is currently reviewing those comments and incorporating appropriate edits into the current design of the program. Rules for this program will be promulgated in the future and before the rules are finalized, they will be subject to formal public comment; there may also be additional opportunities for less formal stakeholder and public input once the program is implemented.

Question:

Will the Board consider including an exemption to the siting criteria for remote net metering?

Answer:

The Remote Net Metering Program is currently under development. The restrictions are specified under the statute: RNM projects may not be sited on land preserved under the Green Acres Program; land designated as freshwater wetlands or coastal wetlands as these lands are defined by the relevant statutes; forested lands, as defined by the board in consultation with the Department of Environmental Protection; or prime agricultural soils and soils of Statewide importance. To conform the RNM Program siting restrictions with those statutorily set for the Dual Use Program, the Board may also prohibit RNM projects on the preservation area of the pinelands area and land designated as forest area within the pinelands comprehensive management plan.

Energy Storage

Question:

What are the latest updates for Battery Energy Storage System incentive programs?

Answer:

As indicated in the slide presentation, the Energy Storage Program is currently under development. On November 7, 2024, the NJBPU released the 2024 New Jersey Storage Incentive Program (NJ SIP) Straw Proposal and the associated draft rules. A stakeholder webinar is scheduled for Wednesday, November 20, 2024. The Public Notice and registration link for the webinar can be found [here](#).

The NJ SIP is designed to accommodate all energy storage technologies and is not limited to Battery Energy Storage systems.

Question:

Do you have a sense of the timing of the incentive program starting?

Answer:

The first phase of the program is expected to launch in 2025.

Question:

For Energy Storage Program, will two applications be needed if installing solar and battery at the same time, or would one application cover both incentives?

Answer:

The applications for the Energy Storage Incentive Program and the Competitive Solar Incentive (CSI) Program, the Board's current incentive program open to grid supply solar generation facilities and solar generation paired with energy storage, will be kept separate. Information on the CSI Program can be found on the Clean Energy webpage and at <https://csisolar.nj.gov/>

In the CSI Program, a grid supply solar generation facility may bid for and receive an SREC-II adder for paired energy storage in the same solicitation. This is a two-part bid: One bid for the solar

generation facility incentive, and a bid for an adder for up to 4MWh of paired storage. In the CSI Program, the storage adder is added to the SREC-II payment for all hours of solar production. Grid supply solar facilities looking to add storage later could qualify for the to-be-established Storage Incentive Program.

Question:

What are the special priorities for projects to get battery back -up systems?

Answer:

As previously stated, this program is still in development, and no priorities have been established yet. Staff recommends that you submit any comments on this topic during future formal or informal rulemaking for the Energy Storage Program.

Other Topics

Question:

Any updates on Solar for All?

Answer:

At the moment, Staff is not in a position to share any further updates regarding Solar for All. For background and information about Solar for All, please refer to the [State's press release issued in April 2024](#) and EPA's website: <https://www.epa.gov/greenhouse-gas-reduction-fund/solar-all>.

Questions:

Issues with closed circuits in Atlantic City Electric (ACE) territories.

Answer:

Staff has been working with ACE on this issue. Among other things, the Board has approved a plan from ACE that addresses some of these areas with upgrades to the distribution system and Staff will continue to track the progress to improve upon these areas. We encourage you to participate in the ongoing Grid modernization proceedings, including working groups, all of which have the explicit objective of opening up more capacity for distributed energy resources like solar. Although participation in the working groups is limited to invited experts, each working group has a Board docket number in which information on developing discussions will be periodically posted and may be reviewed by the public. The greatest opportunity for public involvement will come when a formal rulemaking process is begun.

Question:

What is the appeal process to challenge interconnection estimates? Interconnection estimates are unreasonable.

Answer:

There is currently no specific appeal process for this issue. This issue would be a good one to raise in the grid modernization proceedings during one of the working groups.

Question:

What is the timeline for net metering proceedings?

Answer:

The Board is committed to creating a solution to enable the solar industry to thrive in the state while managing cost to ratepayers and trying to avoid distorting the market mechanisms of the energy market. To this end, the Board has retained a consultant to assist in analyzing updates to net metering. The Board will host an informational stakeholder meeting on November 19, 2024 [[link for Notice](#)] to begin this stakeholder process.