

**BEFORE THE
PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF OHIO**

In the Matter of the Commission’s Review)
of Chapter 4901:1-22 Ohio Administrative)
Code Regarding Interconnection Services) Case No. 12-2051-EL-ORD
)
)

**SUPPLEMENTAL REPLY COMMENTS OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL LAW & POLICY
CENTER, THE OHIO ENVIRONMENTAL COUNCIL, THE SOLAR ENERGY
INDUSTRIES ASSOCIATION, AND THE VOTE SOLAR INITIATIVE**

In a January 16, 2013 Entry, the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (“PUCO” or “Commission”) outlined further proposed revisions to Chapter 4901:1-22 of the Ohio Administrative Code, the Commission rules regarding interconnection services, and requested supplemental comments addressing these issues. The Commission directed that supplemental comments be filed by January 31, 2013 and supplemental reply comments be filed by February 7, 2013.

The Environmental Law & Policy Center (“ELPC”), the Ohio Environmental Council (“OEC”), Solar Energy Industries Association (“SEIA”), and the Vote Solar Initiative, collectively “Solar Advocates,” filed supplemental comments on January 31 supporting Staff’s proposed interconnection rule changes in their entirety.¹ The modifications proposed by Staff will help create a more efficient and streamlined interconnection process without sacrificing safety or reliability, and will be especially valuable as the amount of interconnected solar PV and other distributed generation continues to grow in Ohio. As noted in the comments of the

¹ Although the Solar Advocates did not take a position on Staff’s questions regarding standby tariffs for distributed generation, ELPC generally supports the responses filed by the Energy Resources Center and hopes that the Commission will consider the impact of standby tariffs on distributed generation and cogeneration facilities when selecting an appropriate tariff design.

Interstate Renewable Energy Council (“IREC”), the Staff’s interconnection proposals are supported by recent technical reports published by the National Renewable Energy Laboratory and reflect an approach put forward in a recently issued Notice of Proposed Rulemaking by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. (IREC Supplemental Comments at 2-3). The technical screens proposed by Staff are consistent with reforms implemented in California, and proposed in Hawaii and at FERC. (*Id.* at 3).

Some of the utility commenters supported various parts of Staff’s proposed revisions and others suggested some alternative approaches. In some cases, the utilities suggested that the existing process is working well, so there is no need to change it. For example, with respect to Staff’s proposed “pre-application reports” (Paragraph 7), the FirstEnergy companies submit that “the most effective information dissemination is for developers simply to call the Companies’ designated personnel and ask for the desired information.” (FirstEnergy Supplemental Comments at 6).

Staff’s proposed modifications have several advantages over the various utility proposals. First, the modifications are forward looking and will prepare Ohio for a future in which distributed generation becomes much more prevalent. In that future, for example, it likely will not be effective or efficient to require project developers to call utility personnel for desired information. By implementing these modifications now, Ohio can avoid the bottlenecks and choke points that are creating problems in markets that are experiencing higher penetrations of distributed generation. Second, the Staff’s proposed modifications will create a uniform state process to replace case-by-case negotiations and utility-specific approaches to supplemental review. The transparency of a statewide approach has great value, and will become even more valuable as the number of interconnection applications rise. Finally, Staff’s proposals are

aligned with national trends and emerging best practices. By adopting the proposed revisions to Chapter 4901:1-22, with Staff's proposed supplemental revisions, Ohio will be prepared for the future and will avoid the need to return and update these rules again in the near future.

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CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that a true copy of the foregoing *Supplemental Reply Comments* submitted on behalf of the Environmental Law & Policy Center, the Ohio Environmental Council, Solar Energy Industries Associations, and Vote Solar was served by electronic mail, upon the following Parties of Record, this 7th day of February, 2013.

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Summary: Reply Comments of the Environmental Law and Policy Center, Ohio Environmental Council, Solar Energy Industries Association, and Vote Solar Initiative electronically filed by Mr. Nicholas A. McDaniel on behalf of Environmental Law and Policy Center and Ohio Environmental Council and Solar Energy Industries Association and Vote Solar Initiative