

DOCKETED

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Comment Received From: Claire Ann Warshaw
Submitted On: 2/24/2020
Docket Number: 20-BUSMTG-02

2020_02_24 20_BUS_02_Business Meeting held last week on Thursday, February 24, 2020

Monday, February 24, 2020

RE: Business Meeting held last week on Thursday, February 24, 2020

California Energy Commission Staff:

Thank you for hosting another business meeting open to the public and comments. I appreciated this meeting especially seeing the number of cities working to become more energy efficient, using cleaner, more sustainable energy systems (Agenda Item #6, Local Ordinance Applications {19-BSTD-06}). I hope Sacramento and surrounding cities soon become involved in such actions. Sacramento state agency meetings, such as this one, seem to have Sacramento-ans in high attendance numbers. I am not certain why our city and county has not yet put forth similar efforts, yet.

At a previous business meeting, I seemed to remember, Commissioner Karen Douglas state that the 2019 Integrated Energy Policy Report was worth reading (Agenda Item #5, 2019 Integrated Energy Policy Report {IEPR} {19-IEPR-01}). Because of that comment, I attempted this. Afterwards, I agree. I would suggest that everyone in California interested in energy issues, read this document. One could give this document as a homework assignment. Better yet, if the CEC Staff has the strength, I would suggest making a movie out of this; there is abundant material to read and older eyes get tired. Many citizens are busy with their own lives and would not dare to attempt to review a document over 300 pages, which would sap their time and energy. This gets to be a problem. California has energy workers who are too tired, busy and invested in other parts of energy work and personal life, to read a document like this. Many do not understand or want to understand why anyone would change a process, building codes, believe in climate change and/or invest in renewable energy.

Some IEPR facts “ such as California’s current reliance on natural gas usage (a theme throughout the IEPR), population versus gross state product, energy and growth (page 12), astounded. In addition, I wonder about CO2 and other emission comparisons “ as when we compare transportation to building emissions - not being as evident, but realize how complex it must be to evaluate, produce data for the public to assimilate, especially for these parameters. I appreciate that California “ the California Energy Commission, the California State Air Resources Board, and the California Public Utilities Commission “ has done this work and shares it publicly.

For future IEPRs, I suggest that our state agencies help us figure out how to enroll aviation, defense and space industries in goal-ling low to zero emissions machines as

soon as possible. I also believe that California ought to harness their grey water for re-use immediately, and goal more in-pipe existing water and sewage energy generation.

I did not stay for the afternoon session discussion and adoption of agenda item 11 (Agenda Item 11, Sacramento Municipal Utility District {SMUD} Community Solar Program, {19-BSTD-06}). However, I had, after reading the item's background material details, posted my opinion in an article to Linked IN, Facebook and Twitter the evening prior. I did this after attempting to post this to the 19-BSTD-06 docket. My attempt did not "take"; I am not sure why.

I know that I am not personally invested, at the moment, in this item's vote, than those who are currently investing in building, roofing, solar and utility businesses. I know though, that people who leave a position, such as I did in leaving SMUD, probably have more time than many people who are currently working, to actually read and analyze some of these issues. I left a position at an agricultural genetic engineering business in 1988. I regret not being involved in posting opinions about that industry until I joined Linked IN, in 2012. I regret my coworkers not posting opinions about that industry too. It seems there are a lot of people who guess on big issues, not fully understanding what is involved. Because of that feeling, whether the CEC and others think it valid or not to care, I am posting what I wrote here, now and late, in the business meeting docket instead. I know it does not matter. I have a slightly different perspective after listening to everyone speak. I think Commissioner McAllister ought to be commended for tackling this, in the present moment. Policy making is also different than I originally conceived, before attending CEC business meetings. I imagine, even the commissioners, cannot possibly have known some of the problems with this decision. That said, I know, all will be well and they likely made the best decision. They listened and read probably more material than anyone else, and they were advised by staff who did the same.

So, even though it less matters, here is what I wrote and posted to social media the night before:

Wednesday, February 19, 2020

California Energy Commissioners:

I worked in SMUD's Design and Construction department as an Engineering Designer, designing infrastructure for new subdivisions. I also live at a townhouse complex in Sacramento County, where several years ago I subscribed to a SMUD's Solar Shares program. The program was designed to allow SMUD customers to direct their electric payments to be of more renewable energy. Eventually, the program was no longer available. Through gossip channels I heard that the solar farm housed turkeys, an additional function to the property. I also heard that the program was extremely popular and sold out. Initially, when I heard about SMUD's new Solar Share program, last year at a CEC Business Meeting, I was surprised to notice stakeholder controversy. However, I am not surprised after reading more.

I agree with this part of an opinion, given by another docket contributor:

It's my personal opinion that solar shares be limited to only multi-family properties (due to inadequate roof sizes per unit), or properties that have insufficient solar access due to shading beyond their control. Community Solar like Solar Shares in these two cases, gives developments a path to compliance when they simply cannot comply with on-site PV installation. Therefore, Solar Shares IS a great idea for these two use cases. It puts PV on the grid that would otherwise have no benefit if it were forced to be installed on a shaded rooftop (which it wouldn't). I applaud the idea. However, it is a slippery slope when you open this option to virtually any development at the discretion of the builder when the result locks in the future resident who may want to do more than the bare minimum. And make no mistake, you allow one "Solar Shares" program, you will end up allowing them throughout the state. □

Agreeing with that, I might guess that having abundant solar farms created by new developments, throughout the state would not be a bad concept, if the lands used were selected for specific, detailed environmental reasons, and possibly could have additional functions, i.e., farming. I believe this might not be bad.

Our large subdivision developers seem to have more financial abilities than many other building groups. California is said to need much more affordable housing. However, the new Solar Rooftop mandate is not designed, if properly designed, to hinder that effort. If the new Solar Rooftop mandate hinders affordable housing, home maintenance and reliable renewable energy, than this is a different, crucial problem to re-think about.

Not having tall trees contribute to the environment, because of solar roof requirements, may make our communities more desert like. These new communities will likely be using less water and vegetation maintenance. It might be time for this change. However, I know the tall trees shading my townhouse probably have reduced my summer energy bill substantially.

I believe it is difficult for the building industry to change, as well as everyone else. It is probably true that the building industry cannot see rooftop solar as a good idea because it forces them to seek new vendors, make new budgets, review safety measures, timelines, material orders, plus embrace some challenging new processes. I encourage the California Energy Commission, SMUD and other stakeholders to continue to revise and adopt more stringent, exception-like parameters for SMUD's new Solar Share propositions, OR re-review the recently adopted Solar Rooftop Mandate.

Sincerely,
Claire Warshaw □

Two thoughts post meeting:

1. I am sad that SMUD's new Solar Share program is not offered to all SMUD

customers. I understand that SMUD, especially their Design and Construction department, relies upon new funds, due to new construction projects, to create continued steady employment and now, better energy ideas. When I participated in SMUD's older Solar Share program, I was working at SMUD. I probably had to pay a higher utility rate to participate. I am not working now, and would not be excited about paying a higher utility rate at all, being low-income currently and barely able to figure out how my funds will survive me, even if it contributes to renewable energy. However, I would want to do so. Given today's "climate" (literally), younger population and their influences on everyone, I am guessing many SMUD customers would also be interested in the old Solar Share program, if it could be reintroduced.

2. The new SMUD Solar Share version, unlike the old one, is only for new buildings. I think (but am unsure) this "on the ground" solar system happened because of past bad rift between young start-up solar panel roofing businesses, their customers, utilities, utility workers, and the California Public Utilities Commission. Even though that past happened, would it still not make complete sense for new homes and commercial with large roof space to be required to use their roofs for solar generation for the Solar Mandate? Although maintenance is "trickier" being on roof, like any home maintenance especially on a large roof, it is achievable. It is likely a solar panel cleaning option can be easily achieved. For example, where I live, in a townhouse complex, our homeowner's association pays a contracted crew (or person) to clean our roof gutters and downspouts. I was surprised the Golden One center did not have solar panels all over it. I understand they put solar on their roof afterwards, but the center is mostly energized by an off-site solar farm. I am glad that is successful, but surprised that we want this to be a major type of solar energy building model. The idea involves distant property, and likely energy line losses. I am glad it is now an official option, but I hope our designers, architects, roofers, housing investors, maintenance workers, residents, utility workers and others involved can "wrap their heads" around more solar on rooftops as soon as possible. If it is a matter of time, for new solar roofing and housing industries to blend well, then perhaps this new approval ought to have a timed transition period. The move is not towards net zero autonomous properties. It makes more sense (to me), if our societies could figure out how to build new construction that can sustain itself and perhaps contribute to the grid, though I realize that is not possible yet and might never be for certain situations. The option will be appreciated.

Again, thanks for being there, hosting monthly business meetings to the public.
Best wishes on all of your topics.

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