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Ray Tretheway - Public Comment Item #6 of November 13 2019 business meeting

Additional submitted attachment is included below.



November 13, 2019

California Energy Commission

Dear Commissioners:

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~~The Sacramento Tree Foundation supports today's Consent Calendar agenda item #6: SMUD's Neighborhood SolarShares Program.~~

The option for off-site solar panels promotes the development of shade trees in residential neighborhoods while still ensuring the community reaps the benefits of clean, renewable energy from photovoltaic systems. Shade trees and solar panels are both proven energy conservation measures that should be complimentary, not conflicting, options.

New residential communities rarely have established tree canopies. For those homes, sunlight is abundant. Young trees and newly installed solar panels are not competing for sunshine. Twenty years from now, though, they might. That places homeowners in a difficult position.

To reap the benefits of rooftop solar, mature trees could not fully shade the home and would have to be severely pruned back, or worse, removed. To reap the benefits of shade, the homeowner would not be able to use rooftop solar to its full potential. The homeowner, it seems, would have to choose solar or shade, but not both.

It does not have to be that way, and we should not wait twenty years to try to solve this problem. Allowing developers to position solar offsite encourages homeowners to plant and cultivate shade trees now, so that one day, those mature trees will help cool their homes and neighborhoods naturally and reduce their dependence on electricity during peak summer hours.

The benefits of shade trees, of course, extend beyond the individual homeowner. When properly sited, planted and cared for, neighborhood tree canopy promotes public health, carbon sequestration and clean air, while combating the adverse effects of projected increase in hotter days, urban heat islands and heat waves.

Off-site solar development offers holistic, forward-thinking solutions. Though it might not be the perfect approach in every new development, it gives builders and homeowners options. As we work to solve complex environmental and public health issues facing our communities today, we need a diverse portfolio of potential approaches. A community solar program like SMUD's could be one of them. We strongly support SMUD's application.

Sincerely,

Ray Tretheway
Executive Director

spoke into

NAME ←