Western Commercial & Residential Solar Customers Now Protected for 20 Years Due to CPUC Decision

RIVERSIDE, Calif. – Western Municipal Water District, as part of the Net Energy Metering Public Agency Coalition (NEM-PAC) – consisting of nine California cities, water districts, school districts and private businesses represented by the law firm of Best, Best & Krieger, commends the California Public Utilities Commission March 27, 2014 for ruling to protect all existing solar, biogas and wind customers under their current net-energy metering (NEM) contracts for a 20-year grandfathering period.

“This CPUC ruling provides an important protection for the District’s significant investments in solar energy at our Operations Center and WRCRWA, which helps offset operational costs while benefiting the environment,” said John Rossi, Western general manager.

The 20-year period will be calculated from the date of interconnection and will only be available for NEM customers who had taken service before the earlier date of July 1, 2017 or when their utility reaches an existing statutory cap on eligible renewable projects. After the 20-year grandfathering period and after July 1, 2017 (or when their utility reaches an existing statutory cap on eligible renewable projects), NEM customers will be subject to new NEM rules that will be established by the CPUC in a separate proceeding.

This decision is significant as it impacts all entities and individuals with rooftop or carport-mounted solar, wind or biogas installations that are net-energy metered, such as big box retailers, companies, schools, cities, special districts, and other customers (including residential). Net-energy metering is an important state-wide program which allows renewable energy customers (“customer-generators”) to receive full retail credit for the excess energy they produce and feed into the grid; allowing them to “net” out the energy produced versus that which is later consumed. Because of the intermittent and variable nature of solar, net-energy metering is particularly beneficial to solar customers, allowing them to use the utility grid as a “battery,” rolling their meters backwards during the day and then using the energy credits produced during the day later on at night or during cloudy days.

Western Municipal Water District provides water supply, wastewater disposal and water resource management to the public in a safe, reliable, environmentally sensitive and financially responsible manner.

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