



Fact Sheet

Utilities want to stop California's solar progress. Don't give up your solar power.

California is a solar state where the sun belongs to everyone. Popular policies like net metering are helping millions of middle and working class Californians tap into the sun's power to save money and clean up our air.

Big utilities like PG&E see solar as competition and are lobbying state officials to make it more expensive for everyday people to get solar. On November 10th, the CA Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) proposed to drastically reduce the credit new solar users would receive for selling excess power back to the grid.

If adopted at their scheduled meeting on December 15th, the CPUC's proposal will cut the growth of solar in half and shut millions of working Californians out of the benefits of rooftop solar and batteries.

This is a big utility profit grab at the expense of the public and planet that is out of step with California's clean energy goals. We are asking Governor Newsom to support rooftop solar for the public and stop the utility profit grab.

Take action today! Visit SaveCaliforniaSolar.org to sign the petition to Governor Newsom.

.....

The Sun Belongs To Everyone

- Over 2,000 schools, 1,000 farms, 300 apartment buildings and over a million homes are powered directly by the sun. [1]
- Every day, 400 new consumers plug into the sun to save money and do their part to reduce air pollution and stop climate change. [2]

Keep the Lights On With Sun-Charged Batteries

- Increasingly, consumers are adding a battery to their solar system to provide reliable energy for their home or business.
- California has more than 30,000 sun-charged batteries that can instantaneously provide pollution-free electricity when California needs it most – late summer afternoons and early evenings when our electric grid is most stressed. [3]
- Rolling blackouts like those that occurred on August 14 and 15, 2020 are avoidable if California builds more sun-charged batteries where people live, work, pray and play.

Rooftop Solar Reduces Utility Bills For Everyone

- Maximizing rooftop solar could save ratepayers \$120 billion over the next thirty years. [4]

- In 2018 alone, rooftop solar and energy efficiency prompted the state to scale back more than 20 power line projects, saving \$2.6 billion. This trend has continued since. [5]

The CPUC's Rooftop Solar Proposal Will Put Solar Out Of Reach For Working Families

The CPUC's most recent proposed decision is extreme, and puts utility profits ahead of the needs of everyday people. [6]

- **It would send solar off a cliff.** The proposal would cut by 75% on average the credit that new solar users get for sharing surplus solar energy with the grid (from an average of thirty cents per kilowatt hour to about five cents) [7]
- **This has happened before.** Everywhere in the country where similar cuts have been implemented, solar adoptions have plummeted by half or more. [8]
- **This will make solar unaffordable for millions of working families,** churches, schools and businesses, right when just under half of all new solar is going into working and middle class neighborhoods. [9] Over 150,000 solar roofs serve customers in the CARE discount program. [10] Last year, an additional 30,000 rental units serving more than 100,000 people at multifamily affordable housing projects are under development due to net metering, and another 200,000 families in affordable multi-family homes are projected to get solar by 2030. [11]
- **This will also ruin thousands of small, locally-owned solar businesses and threaten over 60,000 jobs.** [12]
-

The Utility Profit Grab Impedes the State's Clean Energy Plans

- The California Energy Commission estimates California will need three times as much solar - both large-scale and rooftop - to meet its clean energy and climate change goals. [13]
- By building solar panels on roofs, instead of converting open space to utility-scale solar farms, California can also help protect open space. For every gigawatt of rooftop solar built on rooftops, almost 5,200 acres of land can be protected. [14]
- Today's one million solar systems produce nearly 13 billion kilowatt hours (kWh) of clean energy each year, avoiding 5 million metric tons of CO2 annually - the equivalent of two coal-fired power plants. [15]

Utilities Care About Profits, Not Equity

- Long-distance power lines and "wildfire mitigation" are what's actually driving up our electricity bills. Consumers pay an estimated \$9 billion a year related to long-distance power lines. [16]
- Utilities get a guaranteed profit of 8-10% from every dollar they spend building and maintaining those power lines. [17]
- Utilities have lobbied against every major proposal to help more working communities adopt solar and battery storage. [18]

We should keep solar growing, and make it more equitable

The State of California should keep rooftop solar and battery storage growing, and to make it more equitable so that millions of working class households and communities including renters have the opportunity to get solar in the next few years. [19]

Endnotes

- [1] California Solar & Storage Association: [Shovel Ready for Recovery](#)
- [2] California DG Stats. <https://www.californiadgstats.ca.gov>.
- [3] See note 1
- [4] Vibrant Clean Energy: [Role of Distributed Generation in Decarbonizing California by 2045](#)
- [5] See [Utility Dive](#) summary of this CA Independent Systems Operator (CAISO) 2018 report, with link to the actual report. CAISO's [most recent 2020-2021 report](#) continued to credit rooftop solar and efficiency for reducing transmission line spending, *"Load forecast growth continues to remain relatively flat, resulting in part from continued statewide emphasis on energy efficiency and behind-the-meter generation... Consistent with past studies, this transmission planning cycle did not reveal the need for major transmission expansion to achieve the 60 percent RPS goal set out in SB 100 for 2030.."* (p.1)
- [6] CPUC Revised Proposal for NEM3 released November 10, 2022, revised December 14, 2022.
- [7] [More details about the proposal](#).
- [8] [Environment California, Rooftop Solar at Risk](#)
- [9] Neighborhood level adoption data: The Berkeley Lab: [Solar Demographics Tool](#) and [Income Trends among U.S. Residential Rooftop Solar Adopters](#)
- [10] [CARE data](#)
- [11] See note 2.
- [12] The Solar Foundation: [National Solar Jobs Census](#)
- [13] California Energy Commission: [SB 100 Joint Agency Report Summary](#), p. 10
- [14] Environment California Research & Policy Center: [The Environmental Case for Rooftop Solar](#)
- [15] See note 1
- [16] CA Public Utilities Commission: [Utility Costs and Affordability of the Grid of the Future](#) \$4B in transmission costs in 2021 on p. 3; \$5B in wildfire mitigation costs in 2019 on p. 60; \$4.336 in 2021 transmission spending and rate of increase p. 36
- [17] CPUC's "Utility Costs and Affordability of the Grid of the Future: The Averch-Johnson effect described on page 26; The state's investor-owned utilities charged ratepayers nearly \$20 billion in transmission line projects between 2010 and 2019 (pp. 39, Table 11); Utilities collected more than \$20 billion in profits over a similar time period (utility 10-K filings, [itemized here](#)).
- [18] Partial list of initiatives utilities lobbied to kill or defang: Affordable housing solar incentives ([AB 693](#) - Eggman, 2015); Low-income feed in tariff ([AB 1990](#) - Fong); Community solar ([SB 843](#) - Wolk, 2013; [SB 43](#) - Wolk, 2013; CPUC implementation); Microgrids ([SB 1339](#), CPUC implementation)
- [19] Coalition for Environmental Equity & Economics, [Equity Statement](#) and [Path for more solar equity](#)