

Residential Solar Stakeholder Meeting
Thursday, November 12, 2009
Town Lake Center Assembly Room
Minutes

Karl R. Rábago [Vice President, Distributed Energy Services]: No budget amendments planned to the Solar Rebate budget. No more rebates will be issued at \$3.75 per watt.

What is the current budget of fiscal year 2010?

- \$700,000 residential released now
- \$400,000 residential released later
- \$100,000 commercial released with new program launch
- \$50,000 solar water heater

Long-term goal is a program without rebates. Solar Program rebate phase out plan. Future funds are requested in the budget proposal.

[Contractor]: GreenChoice® premium to fund renewable energy on rooftops? Could a GreenChoice® program work for local distributed energy?

[Contractor]: Suggests Austin Energy have regular updates, such as a phone conference or a website to check for budget information and current [program] status. It could also link to generation plan.

J. P. Novak [Austin Solar Power Company]: Competitive Reserve Fund? What exactly is it? Can we use some for this situation?

Karl Rábago [Austin Energy]: We'll look into that.

Brandon [Solar Community]: Austin should set standards for design criteria for solar, lead the way for more uniformity, minimum standard developments.

[Texas Solar Power Company]: Austin Energy bulk purchase panels to dispense for projects. (They are 80% cost of install.)

Karl Rábago [Austin Energy]: Long-term maybe aggregated proposal.

[Texas Solar Power Company]: What are initial capital issues, liability, House Bill 1937?

[Contractor Suggestion]: Rebate levels tied to price of panels.

[Contractor Suggestion]: Show geographic location (GIS) of installations for education & marketing purposes.

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[Customer Suggestion]: Post Resource Management Commission and [Austin] City Council reports on Austin Energy web, too hard to locate on City of Austin web site.

[Customer Suggestion]: Give a market sensing of what program changes will happen when goal targets are reached.

[Customer Suggestion]: Research Best Practices for Rebate programs, look across the globe for examples.

[Customer Suggestion]: Contractor log-in for Austin Energy website to keep up to speed on any relevant announcements so contractors can be ahead of public on program details.

[Customer Suggestion]: Align incentives with Austin Energy staff and working contractors.

[Customer Statement]: What are AE's incentives so that contractors can align?

[Customer Statement]: Moving from Rebates towards new financing plans, looking at other programs the allotted money goes very fast.

[Customer Statement]: Two types of customers, those with upfront cash on hand are OK with Feed-In Tariff (FIT), those without prefer rebates or long-term financing plans.

General Discussion:

- Grid parity is long-term goal
- FIT pricing should align with grid parity
- Long-term investment comparisons
- Solar = risk (holes in roof, hail damage, maintenance cost, etc.) break even is not enough. We want to see solar as a long term, relatively stable investment option, give customers the ability to take part in an Austin-based Green Program for local solar distribution. Break even will never be enough.
- PACE – insurance issues

Karl Rábago [Austin Energy]: No cost to tax payers.

General Discussion:

- Austin Energy electricity is too inexpensive compared to rest of world, payback too long with low electric cost.
- What is our measurable goal?
- Why 100 MW? How much distributed, how much large scale?

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- Local production (distributed) benefits are inclusion of customer dollars and federal dollars.
- Customer wants to see NPV +

Dusty [Harshman]: “Goals can be measured by budget or capacity but should also be measured by customer value.”

General Discussion:

- Who is involved in Energy Efficiency Services, energy efficiency programs, give contact information to contractors to help integrate programs?
- EE requirement, remove as much friction as possible and have transparency in the process
- Issue bonds
- House Bill 1937 - Certificate of Obligation – micro certification per system
- Tiered rates
- Share current thinking with contractors, more staffing for new programs. With new customer financing options, can we separate efficiency requirements?

[Customer Suggestion]: Beware of following California models; we don't want to be in California's situation financially.

[Customer Suggestion]: Coordinate goals with the shape of the city.
Social Equity

[Customer Suggestion]: Don't under scale bond amount so that it is gone in 90 minutes!

[Customer Question]: Property tax re-payment cost deductible?

Karl Rábago [Austin Energy]: No, I don't think so. Not a tax, a loan on a tax bill