

UM 1930 – Community Solar Program

Request for Public Comments on Proposed Extension of Project Pre-certification Pause in Order No. 19-392

December 13, 2021

Staff requests public comment on the proposed extension on a pause to the Pre-certification process for the Community Solar Program (CSP or Program). Per Order No. 19-392, the pause would take effect in the instance that the amount of Program capacity, subscribed and billing, does not reach levels sufficient to recover the Program’s ongoing costs within 24 months of the launch of Pre-certification.¹ This pause was intended as an opportunity for the Commission to evaluate Program costs and to serve as an “off ramp” if Program costs became unsustainable. Pre-certification launched on January 21, 2020, and the CSP will not be able to support ongoing costs by the two-year deadline of January 21, 2022, thus triggering a pause of Pre-certification.

Staff’s 2019 recommendation to the Commission initially proposed setting administrative fees at levels that aimed to make the Program self-sufficient in the initial capacity offering (initial offering or interim offering). To reduce the administrative costs for individual participants, the Commission chose to spread the ongoing costs of the CSP over the full 160 MW of Program capacity. Because the full 160 MW capacity is needed to support the Program’s ongoing costs, and only 82 MW of capacity was allocated in the initial offering per Order No. 19-392, the CSP is unable to support ongoing costs without the Tier 2 capacity offering.

In Order 21-317, the Commission authorized opening the remaining capacity in the CSP, permitting opening of the remaining 79 MW of capacity in Tier 2 of the Program. The launch of this additional capacity is scheduled to occur in Q1 of 2022. Staff believes that this additional capacity will permit the Program to support its ongoing costs within an additional 24 months.

Staff Proposal:

In January 2022 Staff intends to update the Commission on the Program’s progress towards supporting its ongoing costs. At that time Staff will recommend that the Commission end the Pre-certification pause and approve another 24 months for the amount of CSP capacity subscribed and billing to reach levels sufficient to recover the Program’s ongoing costs.

¹ Order 19-392, Appendix A. p. 21. The capacity transition level is the point at which the ongoing administrative fees for participants and Pre-certification applicants reach the level required to recover ongoing costs.

To Submit Public Comment:

Stakeholders can submit written comments on Staff’s proposal by email to puc.filingcenter@puc.oregon.gov by December 29, 2021. Staff will consider stakeholder comments in its recommendations the Commission at a public meeting in Q1 of 2022.

Please email puc.hearings@puc.oregon.gov to be added to the UM 1930 docket service list and receive notifications in the UM 1930 docket.