

**PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION OF OREGON
STAFF REPORT
PUBLIC MEETING DATE: March 10, 2020**

REGULAR X **CONSENT** **EFFECTIVE DATE** March 10, 2020

DATE: March 2, 2020

TO: Public Utility Commission

FROM: Jill Goatcher

THROUGH: Michael Dougherty and JP Batmale **SIGNED**

SUBJECT: OREGON PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION STAFF:
(Docket No. UM 1930)
Portland General Electric Company Advice No. 20-04, Community Solar
Program Interconnection and Power Purchase Schedule.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

The Oregon Public Utility Commission (OPUC or Commission) should suspend Portland General Electric Company (PGE) Advice No. 20-04 for 90 days for further investigation under ORS 757.215.

DISCUSSION:

Issue

Whether the Commission should suspend PGE's tariff regarding Community Solar Program (CSP) project interconnection and contracting for further investigation.

Applicable Law

ORS 757.386(2)(a) directs the Commission to establish a program that provides electric customers with the opportunity to share the costs and benefits of solar generation. Under ORS 757.386(2)(a)(D) and OAR 860-088-0140, PGE must enter into contracts for the procurement and purchase of energy from CSP projects. Under OAR 860-088-0120(4), an electric company must obtain Commission approval of any applicable tariffs required by the Community Solar Program rules.

ORS 757.205(1) provides that “[e]very public utility shall file with the Public Utility Commission, within a time to be fixed by the commission, schedules which shall be open to public inspection, showing all rates, tolls and charges which it has established and which are in force at the time for any service performed by it within the state, or for any service in connection therewith or performed by any public utility controlled or operated by it.”

Commission Order No. 20-038 directed PGE “to file a tariff formalizing their CSP interconnection process and a proforma Interconnection Agreement for the February 25, 2020, Public Meeting.”

ORS 757.215 authorizes the Commission to suspend tariffs filed by utilities for further investigation. The filed tariffs are not effective during suspension.

Analysis

Background

On February 18, 2020, PGE filed Advice No. 20-04 to establish “standards for interconnection of Community Solar Program (CSP) Projects to PGE’s transmission and distribution system and contractual terms for the CSP Power Purchase Agreement.”¹ PGE made its filing in response to Commission Order No. 20-038 directing the utilities to submit tariffs and pro forma contracts that would govern interconnection between CSP projects and under ORS 757.205, which requires the utilities to file tariffs regarding any jurisdictional service they provide. The jurisdictional service includes the utilities entering into contracts with CSP projects for the procurement and purchase of energy under the CSP.

On February 19, 2020, the Renewable Energy Coalition (REC) filed comments identifying several concerns the Coalition had with PGE’s proposed tariff and contract language. On February 24, 2020, Oregon Solar Energy Industries Association, Coalition for Community Solar Access, Bonneville Environmental Foundation, Verde, Renewable NW, and Spark NW filed comments noting their support of REC’s February 19, 2020, comments.

Staff recognizes the importance of time with respect to review of PGE’s filing. The CSP has started to accept applications for CSP project pre-certification. It is important to finalize the CSP tariffs and contracts to allow projects to move toward project certification. However, Staff believes it is necessary to allow additional time for stakeholders to engage on PGE’s tariff and draft contracts and for Staff to conduct further investigation.

¹ See Portland General Electric Advice No. 20-04 at P 1.

Staff does not anticipate a lengthy process and plans to submit a recommendation to the Commission regarding PGE's filing by April 2020. To ensure there is sufficient time to accommodate the investigation, however, Staff asks for a suspension of 90 days from the date of the Commission's order.

PGE's filing is subject to ORS 757.205 and ORS 757.215, and will become effective before the next regularly scheduled public meeting unless it is suspended. Accordingly, Staff recommends that the Commission suspend PGE's Advice No. 20-04 for a period of 90 days to allow time for investigation.

Conclusion

Staff believes that further investigation of PGE's tariff and draft contracts is necessary, which requires temporary suspension of PGE's filing under ORS 757.215.

PROPOSED COMMISSION MOTION:

Suspend Portland General Electric Company Advice No. 20-04 for further investigation under ORS 757.215.