

Clean Energy Advisory Board

October 29, 2020

1:00 pm – 2:30 pm

Meeting Minutes (FINAL)

The meeting was called to order by Chair Hannah Coman at 1:04pm. Chair Coman conducted a roll call. KC Bleile, Sam Towell, Janaka Casper, Hannah Coman, Susan Kruse, Toni Ostrowski, and John Warren were present. There was a quorum of Clean Energy Advisory Board members present. Carrie Hearne of DMME read the required electronic meeting notification. A motion was made to establish the meeting as an electronic meeting by John Warren and seconded by Sam Towell. All members voted in favor of certifying the electronic meeting. It was noted by Chair Coman that Bill Greenleaf, Katharine Bond, and Will Reisinger were not present.

Chair Coman moved to the next item of business which is to approve the CEAB minutes from the September 9, 2020 meeting. A motion to approve was offered by Sam Towell, seconded by John Warren. The September 9 meeting minutes were approved by unanimous vote of Boardmembers present.

DMME staff: Carrie Hearne, Daniel Farrell, Nam Nguyen, Larry Corkey, and Al Christopher

Office of the Attorney General: Grant Kronenberg

Next order of business was to discuss and finalize CEAB comments on the proposed regulations for shared solar programs in Virginia. Shared solar comments. Chair Coman gave an overview of the intent of shared solar programs, which in general is to broaden access to solar energy for renters, residents of multi-family buildings, low-income and fixed-income residents. CEAB submitted initial comments to the SCC on July 20. SCC issued proposed regulations on September 20, with a deadline for public comments of November 2. Regulations must be finalized by January 2021 so this process is on a fast track. CEAB draft comments are publicly-available at:

Using the webinar platform, the Board and attendees were able to review the proposed comments. Chair Coman noted a number of deficiencies in the proposed regulations, including no requirement for a stakeholder working group, and lack of specifics on low-income resident participation. There are concerns noted with subscriber experience, such as cap or rollover of bill credits limited in such a way as to not be advantageous to customers.

Hearne noted that virtual net metering (being able to bank credits when solar production is high, to use when production is low) is not what's being discussed here. Transferability and portability of subscriptions if resident moves are important considerations, which is different from what the proposed regulations allow (as proposed, regulations allow shared solar providers to re-enroll customers after they have moved).

Chair Coman noted other non-profits (besides Groundswell) such as GRID Alternatives and Power 52 that are developers in this space. She mentioned that when public comments period opens if there are other companies that should be mentioned here attendees should feel free to mention them.

Chair asked for comments from Board members. Hearing none, discussion moved on to the Multi-family program comments. Would be available to Dominion Energy and Old Dominion Power customers.

Chair noted rules as written preclude MF building owners from subscribing on behalf of residents. They would also exclude (or seems to be unclear) as to if non-profits that own/manage affordable housing projects would be eligible to participate. Minimum bill requirements should be different between MF and Dominion programs. Hearne noted size differentiation (Dominion program would allow for larger systems, up to 5 MW). There are transferability and portability issues with this language. A change to the definition of subscriber organization to not inadvertently exclude non-profits from being shared solar providers should be considered.

Coman summarized the Board recommendations as reflected in the proposed comments:

- Include a stakeholder process to facilitate low-income customer and low-income service organization participation in the program as required by law.
- Include a mechanism to ensure low-income enrollment and work with DMME to achieve this statutorily mandated goal.
- Include a framework to verify low-income eligibility as originally outlined in the Board's July Comments or reference in the regulations that such framework will be developed through a stakeholder process.
- Include requirements and approval processes for low-income subscription plans.
- Revise to specify that bill credits carry-over every month for a twelve (12) month period.
- Revise language to allow for the transferability and portability of subscriptions as required by law.
- Revise licensing requirements in regulations to allow for smaller companies and non-profits to participate as subscriber organizations as contemplated by the law.

Public Comment:

- Some discussion of Pay As You Save (PAYS) and on-bill financing as possibility for financing LMI solar projects. Comments/clarification added on PAYS by Karla Loeb, Sigora Solar.
- Olivia Nedd, Vote Solar – Suggests target arrearages and reduction of energy burden. Discussion of Percentage of Income Payment (PIPP) program. Karla mentioned Virginia Assembly special session legislation to deal with arrearages was unsuccessful.
- Brandon Smithwood with Dimension Renewable Energy: Brandon feels CEAB comments are Thoughtful and in-depth. Shared solar references manageable minimum bill this could benefit from more emphasis, makes the low-income portion of program more viable. Costs need to be reasonable and justified. Not clear what effective date of July 1, 2023 means as written. Projects take two year to develop and construct. Needs to be clear that SCC will license developers and utilities will take shared solar projects into the development queue well ahead of July 1, 2023. Market requirements are inappropriate for MF.

Board announcements from Carrie Hearne: Senate Rules Committee will meet in mid-November to make CEAB appointments which should include Solar energy professionals (as recommended by MDV-

SEIA) and electric cooperative representatives. Working with Delegate Aird's office to move forward on House appointments. MDV-SEIA made one recommendation for solar industry representatives to both House and Senate. Speaker of the House appointments to include EJ Council members, MDVAEC representatives, Attorney licensed in Virginia and one other.

Chair Coman supports adding reference to COVID-19 so that it clarifies that low-income residents are at risk of arrearages and that shared solar can benefit these customers. Other board members were unanimously in support of including this language.

Motion to approve comments to proposed shared solar comments and file on Monday November 2nd: Motion by Susan Kruse, seconded by Toni Ostrowski, all voted in favor. Redline will be sent to the Board for their reference. See separate files.

Motion to approve comment to proposed MF shared solar regulations. Motion by KC Bleile, seconded by Will Reisinger, Bill Greenleaf and Katharine Bond were not attendance and did not vote on the comments.

Next Board meeting is Tuesday November 10 from 10am – Noon. This will include representatives of Dominion Energy for a discussion on how the utility can inform low income customers on ways to save on electric bills through access to solar energy. Public is welcome to attend.

Chair Coman adjourned meeting at 2:38 pm.