



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

PUBLIC UTILITIES REGULATORY AUTHORITY

CONNECTICUT DISTRIBUTED GENERATION POLICY WORKING GROUP

MEETING MINUTES

Monday, March 22, 2021

9:00 AM – 11:20 AM

9:00 AM – 9:15 AM Introduction

Members (Updated):

- Noel Lafayette, SHR Energy, nlafayette@shrenergy.com
- Mike Trahan, Solar Connecticut, mtrahan@solarconnecticut.org
- Mike Farrell, Trinity Solar (Alternate), Mike.Farrell@Trinity-Solar.com
- Carl Nowiszewski, Eversource, carl.nowiszewski@eversource.com
- Dave Ferrante, Eversource (Alternate) David.Ferrante@eversource.com
- Joe Marranca, UI, Joseph.Marranca@uinet.com
- Mark Kirschbaum, UI (Alternate), Mark.Kirschbaum@uinet.com
- Amanda De Vito Trinsey, Couch White, LLP, adevito@CouchWhite.com
- JR Viglione, OCC, John.Viglione@ct.gov
- Dave Thompson, OCC (Alternate), Dave.Thompson@ct.gov
- Raagan Wicken, BETP, Raagan.Wicken@ct.gov
- Bob Snook, BETP (Alternate), Robert.Snook@ct.gov

Attendees as of 9am:

- Joseph Marranca, UI
- Mike Trahan, Solar Connecticut
- Amanda De Vito Trinsey, CIEC
- Michael Farrell, Member of Solar Connecticut Board
- Mark Kirschbaum, UI
- Kerry Schlichting
- Bob Snook, BETP
- David A Ferrante, Eversource
- Noel Lafayette, SHR Energy
- JR Viglione with OCC
- Ray Furse, Solar Developer and Member of Solar Connecticut Board

Joe Marranca (DER Manager at UI) was identified as UI's primary representative, Mark Kirschbaum was identified as UI's alternate representative. David Ferrante was identified as Eversource's alternate representative.

Facilitators

- Zak Alexander, PURA, Zachary.Alexander@ct.gov
- Christian Fehrenbacher, PURA (facilitator), Christian.Fehrenbacher@ct.gov

9:15 AM – 9:45 AM

Review Meeting Process and Schedule

Process

- Meeting Frequency
- Tracking of Action Items
- Website Information

Meeting Schedule and Minute Keeping

- Tuesday, April 27, 2021
 - *Noel Lafayette or designee to take minutes*
- Tuesday, May 25, 2021
 - *Mike Trahan or designee to take minutes*
- Tuesday, June 29, 2021
 - *Carl Nowiszewski or designee to take minutes*
- Tuesday, July 27, 2021
 - *Mark Kirschbaum or designee to take minutes*
- Tuesday, August 31, 2021
 - *Amanda De Vito Trinsey or designee to take minutes*

The person responsible for taking minutes may bring another person for assistance in taking minutes. Please send minutes to Zak or Christian.

9:05 Introductions

9:18 Housekeeping

- Working Group will meet on monthly basis for now, may less frequently in the future based on what works best
- Agenda will be posted on website
- We'll review draft minutes and then post on website (week lag time)
- Rotate responsibility to keep minutes (above)
- Priority topics identified last year (below)

Pre-Identified Priority Discussion Topics:

- Conduct review of interconnection guidelines and forms
- Make distribution system interconnection queues public
- Identify Best Uses of Hosting Capacity Maps
- Establish and Make Public Reporting Requirements
- Investigate cost allocation methodologies
- Review of (LREC/ZREC) Program Solicitations on Interconnection Process.

~9:45 AM – 11:20 AM Discuss Priority of Topics

- *Start with developers, what works well in other states*
 - Solar Connecticut Report on Interconnection Best Practices
 - Submitted to PURA (into record for 17-12-03RE06), addresses hosting capacity maps, ombudsmen, streamlining issues, interconnection queues.
 - More and more states are coming up with answers simply by using processes that worked in other places; we don't want to reinvent the wheel.
- Information sharing/Privacy Issues. What information would developers be willing to share?
 - Identify Best Uses of Hosting Capacity Maps
 - EDCs can't always share project information with other developers, can sometimes notify developer on project of the option to contact other developers – This process had some success for developers in MA
 - CA and NV have a lot of information available
 - Issue of sharing information without violating privacy rights – ombudsman a potential solution – EDCs are currently facilitating this exchange
 - Technical working group will have presentation on possible upgrades to capacity maps such as wire size and station locations. EDCs looking to rollout system wide priority map
 - Public Queue has room for improvement and room for more information to be shared, within reason
 - If information is public, there's potential for developers to poach customers who have expressed interest with another developer. Presently, if there are two customer-signed applications with separate developers regarding the same house, the EDC will assume the customer wants the most recent application moved forward.
 - The Green Bank requires written confirmation from the customer before canceling a project and shifting to another. Developers believe that better communication with a specific person at the EDCs could also solve some of these problems.
- Investigate cost allocation methodologies
 - Current setup requires developers to take some economic risk.
 - Developers have to conservatively estimate cost of transmission and upgrades, pay for the impact study and wait 90 days.
 - CA waives transmission upgrade cost if the project is under one megawatt

- Further discussion on whether developers should have to pay for upgrades if they want to interconnect; EDCs own grid and pay for distribution costs, but multiple parties benefit from DG. Still, distribution upgrades are needed for interconnection. There needs to be a balance of cost between developer costs and (ratepayer) costs
 - Per developers: for smaller projects the issue is more about the large cost to determine economic risk than an issue with privacy. How much money is justified to find out if the project is viable? Paying for a study doesn't make sense for smaller projects.
- According to CIEC, for Large mixed-use projects, the process is not streamlined and takes a long time – a standardized list to check off against would help. A steady linear track reduces financial risk.
 - Example: some of these projects involve equipment that has a warranty limit one year after purchase. By the time the equipment is online, the warranty has expired.
 - Large customers see lack of coordination between EDCs and developers as barrier
- Review of (LREC/ZREC) Program Solicitations on Interconnection Process.
 - (State) programs can cause tremendous stress on the interconnection process.
 - The process is not designed for a varying number of solicitations, i.e., large batches of applications at once.
 - LREC/ZREC solicitations can cause stress on EDC interconnection processes.
 - Policy needs to be in sync with the process, which highlights potential of this working group.
 - There has been doubling of residential applications
 - Stakeholders should be more involved in legislation before it is proposed to identify potential issues with implementation – example being natural gas rollout in CT, adoption was not as widespread as predicted because it wasn't financially feasible for customers until majority of street converted
 - Utilities in NY (UI sister utilities) proactively implementing a mechanism for working with the developer community to initiate capital projects on the EDC side that would be geared toward increase hosting capacity in a given area.
 - LREC/ZREC project and other DG projects and developers living in different silos; potential ways to bridge that gap.
 - Addressing issue of who pays for the transformer upgrade could potentially bridge gap, but that would be separate from the residential installations – They are two different processes.
 - LREC/ZREC tends to clog up the queue (up to 150 applications in summer) before the LREC/ZREC deadline and there is no way EDC's can meet the review timelines.

- Clusters of applications cause stress on process. CT did a better job with rollout of LREC/ZREC than neighboring states even though it was spread out over a number of years. Whereas Massachusetts had a bunch of large projects coming in at once, it added more stress to the EDC interconnection team.
- Areas of distribution system currently needing or will soon need upgrades to transmission system that are being triggered by solar or DER
 - There are projects currently in eastern CT that will cause distribution issues. There are substation transformers currently back-feeding onto the distribution system that will soon cause a huge stress on the distribution system and need upgrade.
 - Similar issue in parts of Massachusetts and Rhode Island
- Issue for further discussion for future meeting(s): Has the administrative burden of the EDCs been relieved in states like CA or NY that allows for interconnection of small installations? What have been the benefits for meeting those states energy policy goals? Has this made life for the EDCs and developers easier?
 - For residential, CT incentives are geared toward large systems so at the 10-kW threshold, some projects were being screened out. Larger kW projects make transmission exceed the capacity of the line more easily, triggering a needed upgrade. Should screen be revised?

Action Items:

1. Review and discuss Solar Connecticut Report on Interconnection Best Practices
2. Review IREC reporting requirements

Potential future discussion topics (and unanswered questions)

- Establish and Make Public Reporting Requirements
- Would upgrading a transformer for solar also be sufficient for handling a future in which EVs and EV charging becomes widespread?
- Discuss the benefits of making report requirements public (various timelines applications in the queue, project information and study screen data, construction information).
- Has the administrative burden of the EDCs been relieved in states like CA or NY that allows for interconnection of small installations? What have been the benefits for meeting those states energy policy goals? Has this made life for the EDCs and developers easier?