

§3474. Determination of public policy; state solar energy generation goals

1. Encouragement of solar energy-related development. It is the policy of the State in furtherance of the goals established in subsection 2 to encourage the attraction of appropriately sited development related to solar energy generation, including any additional transmission, distribution and other energy infrastructure needed to transport additional solar energy to market, consistent with all state environmental standards; the permitting and financing of solar energy projects; appropriate utility rate structures; and the siting, permitting, financing and construction of solar energy research and manufacturing facilities for the benefit of all ratepayers.

[PL 2013, c. 562, §1 (NEW).]

2. State solar energy generation goals. When encouraging the development of solar energy generation, the State shall pursue cost-effective developments, policies and programs that advance the following goals:

A. Ensuring that solar electricity generation, along with electricity generation from other renewable energy technologies, meaningfully contributes to the generation capacity of the State through increasing private investment in solar capacity in the State; [PL 2013, c. 562, §1 (NEW).]

B. Ensuring that the production of thermal energy from solar technologies meaningfully contributes to reducing the State's dependence on imported energy sources; [PL 2013, c. 562, §1 (NEW).]

C. Ensuring that the production of electricity from solar energy meaningfully contributes to mitigating more costly transmission and distribution investments otherwise needed for system reliability; [PL 2013, c. 562, §1 (NEW).]

D. Ensuring that solar energy provides energy that benefits all ratepayers regardless of income level; [PL 2013, c. 562, §1 (NEW).]

E. Increasing the number of businesses and residences using solar technology as an energy resource; and [PL 2013, c. 562, §1 (NEW).]

F. Increasing the State's workforce engaged in the manufacturing and installation of solar technology. [PL 2013, c. 562, §1 (NEW).]

[PL 2013, c. 562, §1 (NEW).]

3. Interconnection rules. The commission shall adopt rules related to the interconnection of renewable capacity resources, as defined in section 3210-C, subsection 1, paragraph E, using solar power, referred to in this subsection as "solar resources," and energy storage systems, as defined in section 3481, subsection 6, whether or not colocated with solar resources, to investor-owned transmission and distribution utilities, as defined in section 3201, subsection 11-A, in a manner that supports the goals in this section and ensures:

A. The State's interconnection rules reflect nationally recognized best practices, which may include, but are not limited to, those established by the Interstate Renewable Energy Council, or successor organization, and prioritize interconnection of solar resources and energy storage systems owned by customers of investor-owned transmission and distribution utilities and used to serve an on-site load; [PL 2023, c. 307, §5 (AMD).]

B. Customers affected by deficiencies in the rules are able to access timely resolution processes that do not place an undue burden on the customer; and [PL 2021, c. 264, §1 (NEW).]

C. Investments in investor-owned transmission and distribution utility distribution upgrades related to load are coordinated with utility infrastructure upgrades required for the interconnection of renewable capacity resources using solar power and energy storage systems. [PL 2023, c. 307, §5 (AMD).]

Rules adopted under this subsection are routine technical rules as defined in Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A.

[PL 2023, c. 307, §5 (AMD).]

4. Interconnection ombudsman; fund. The interconnection ombudsman appointed pursuant to section 107, subsection 1 shall assist persons seeking interconnections governed by rules adopted under subsection 3. The commission shall appoint an interconnection ombudsman who possesses technical expertise related to interconnection and interconnection procedures.

A. The duties of the interconnection ombudsman include but are not limited to:

- (1) Tracking interconnection disputes;
- (2) Facilitating the efficient and fair resolution of disputes between customers seeking to interconnect and investor-owned transmission and distribution utilities;
- (3) Reviewing investor-owned transmission and distribution utility interconnection policies to assess opportunities for reducing interconnection disputes;
- (4) Convening stakeholder groups as necessary to facilitate effective communication between interconnection stakeholders;
- (5) Preparing reports that detail the number, type, resolution timeline and outcome of interconnection disputes; and
- (6) Any other technical or regulatory work involving public utilities. [PL 2023, c. 643, Pt. WWW, §1 (AMD).]

B. The commission by rule shall establish a fee to be paid by persons seeking interconnections to fund the interconnection ombudsman. Notwithstanding Title 5, section 8071, rules adopted under this paragraph are routine technical rules as defined in Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A. [PL 2023, c. 307, §6 (NEW).]

C. The interconnection ombudsman fund is established within the commission as a nonlapsing fund for the purposes of offsetting costs for interconnection-related activities undertaken by the interconnection ombudsman. The commission shall deposit all fees collected under this subsection into the fund and all money in the fund must be used to fund the interconnection ombudsman. In addition to the fees established in accordance with this subsection, the fund may accept federal money and contributions from private and public sources. [PL 2023, c. 643, Pt. WWW, §1 (AMD).]

Any activities undertaken by the interconnection ombudsman pursuant to paragraph A, subparagraph (6) must be funded in accordance with section 116.

[PL 2023, c. 643, Pt. WWW, §1 (AMD).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2013, c. 562, §1 (NEW). PL 2021, c. 264, §1 (AMD). PL 2023, c. 307, §§5, 6 (AMD). PL 2023, c. 643, Pt. WWW, §1 (AMD).

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