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From: Eric Lamb [REDACTED] >
Sent: Monday, December 30, 2019 8:20 AM
To: City Council
Subject: Form submission from: Write a Letter to Council



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Submitted values are:

Date Monday, December 30, 2019
To His Worship the Mayor and Members of City Council
First Name Eric
Last Name Lamb
Email [REDACTED]
Address [REDACTED]
City Saskatoon
Province Saskatchewan
Postal Code [REDACTED]
Name of the organization or agency you are representing (if applicable)
Subject Electricity Net Metering Program
Meeting (if known) SPC on Environment
Comments
Eric Lamb
[REDACTED]
Saskatoon, SK

December 30, 2019

To:
Ms. Gersher, Chair, Committee on Environment, Utilities, and Corporate Services
C.c. Ms. Block, Councilor, Ward 6.

Dear Ms. Gersher,

I am writing to you to express my concerns about the proposed alterations to the solar net metering program as outlined in your November committee meeting minutes. I am a homeowner with near net-zero house supporting a 7.5 KW net metered system in the Haultain neighbourhood. Our system has been connected to Saskatoon Light and Power for more than four years. I am a strong proponent of such systems and think that they should be encouraged for every homeowner.

I understand that the daily dynamics of power pricing and SaskPower's rather abrupt policy changes on solar have created financial challenges for Saskatoon Light and Power, and an updated policy is required. Rather than mirroring SaskPower policy, I would hope that the City could craft a policy response that does not effectively end home solar installations.

A summary of my reasons for supporting small-scale solar:

1. It is abundantly clear that there is an urgent need to aggressively decarbonize all sectors including the

electrical sector if we are to avoid catastrophic climate consequences.

2. Small scale solar is a necessary component of such a transition, and one of the few areas where individuals can make substantive personal contributions.
3. The net metering program has been effective in encouraging small solar installations as evidenced by the high rate of uptake; I am very concerned that such a successful program would be halted so abruptly.
4. Many Saskatoon residents are voting with their wallets to help the transition to renewables. My family, for example, spent \$21,000 (after the SaskPower rebate) to install our system. Every person who installs such a system putting substantial personal dollars behind a general transition of the provincial power generation portfolio.
5. Many small businesses have invested in solar installation capacity. Cutting the demand for solar installations has been devastating for these businesses in the short term, and in the long-term will reduce the capacity of these businesses to meet future demands.

Previous SaskPower policy has been for heavy subsidy via the generous net-metering rates and 20% rebate on system installation. A sudden shift to very limited subsidy is, simply put, a very poor policy approach. I would hope that the City of Saskatoon could do better than simply mirroring this ill-considered policy shift. Below I list suggestions that could be a part of a more nuanced and effective policy:

1. It is important that the city maintain momentum in investment in solar energy. This is critical in the long-term for electrical system decarbonization. Currently the City is making the investment through generous net metering rates to system owners. Alternative avenues for using these dollars to support a transition to clean energy could include:

- a. Investment in power storage infrastructure to offset expensive peak evening power costs.
- b. Grants to low-income homeowners or non-profits to support solar installations by those who cannot afford the up-front costs
- c. Solar installations on city-owned facilities

2. Set net metering rates in a way that encourages further installations. The suggested policy to grandfather the current (attractive) rates for existing systems will not encourage new installations and may generate resentment against solar in general. I have encountered this personally in the comments from people walking by my house about how “ugly” solar panels can be. Rather, all systems, new and old, should be treated equally in terms of power sale rates. Such a policy would likely be supported by many current system owners if point 1 (continued investment via other avenues is implemented. Rate options could include:

- a. Implement a declining return rate over a 3-5 year period (e.g. a 10% drop in the credit rate per year).
- b. Set net metering rates as a percentage of current electricity rates rather than as a fixed dollar per Kwh to provide certainty in the face of rising electricity rates.

3. Any policy needs to explicitly address how rates would be determined for system expansions. Our system, for example, was designed to accommodate a 50% expansion (intended to occur when we replace one of our existing vehicles with an electric vehicle). Certainty on the rate structure is critical for this decision.

Thank you for your time and consideration for this matter. I am not asking to speak to the committee, but would be happy to discuss any aspect of this issue in person if you so desire.

Eric Lamb
Attachments

The results of this submission may be viewed at:

<https://www.saskatoon.ca/node/398/submission/354762>