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Sent: Monday, August 19, 2024 10:43 AM
To: PUC: Clerks Office <ClerksOffice@puc.nh.gov>
Cc: Governor Sununu <governorsununu@nh.gov>; Chicoine, Jared <jared.s.chicoine@energy.nh.gov>; EllmsJr, Christopher J <Christopher.j.ellmsjr@energy.nh.gov>
Subject: Public Comment on Docket DE 22-060

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I have recently learned that the PUC is considering a change to New Hampshire net metering policy that will affect how homeowners are reimbursed for excess power put onto the grid. In 2018 I installed a 9 KW solar array at my home in Shelburne, NH. It powers between 20 and 50% of my home energy needs behind the meter, and the rest is put onto the grid for later use by myself and my neighbors.

I am against any devaluing of net metering primarily for three reasons:

1) The installation cost of a solar array is high, even after the federal tax credit is accounted for. My current estimate is that the payback period for my system is about 12 years. This payback period is even longer if I account for the appreciation that capital would have had if it had been put into prudent investments. Devaluing net metering will further discourage home and business owners from investing in solar just as our grid is tottering on the brink of collapse as power needs in our state are growing exponentially.

2) Speaking of increased power needs, I recently purchased an electric vehicle. This vehicle is mostly charged at home, resulting in a large increase in my power consumption. Fortunately, my home EV charger is set up to only charge when my solar array is generating sufficient power to support the charge. This means that instead of further stressing my local grid, I am using clean power with no grid impact. As electric vehicle use continues to grow in New Hampshire, is it wise to encourage homeowners to further stress our grid? We'll see the same issue arising as homeowners switch their heating systems to more efficient and cost effective heat pumps. I've already switched my oil-fired water heater to a heat-pump technology that is saving me money and reducing my carbon impact. Perhaps a better course of action is to develop net-metering policies that encourage homeowners to install solar in order to save money, reduce carbon impact, and destress the grid.

3) I've noticed that our grid resiliency seems to have declined lately with the increased frequency of large storms. Blackouts have become more common. When I installed my solar system, I also installed a solar battery both to provide immediate power in the event of a blackout, and to allow solar power to remain available when grid power is down. I have taken advantage of this battery system many times in the last few years. Our energy policy makers should be thinking about how solar batteries can be used to increase grid resiliency, both in the event of blackouts and when power demand spikes, forcing utilities to search for reasonably priced alternative power sources.

Please carefully consider the impact that changes to net-metering policy will have on homeowners, businesses, and the New Hampshire solar industry. I encourage you to think toward our energy future, and not dwell on short-term political exigencies.

Dr. Michael Prange

Shelburne, NH