



Western Alliance for Economic Development

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IDAHO PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

IPC-E-11-10

September 6, 2011

To: Idaho Public Utilities Commission

Attn: Commission Secretary

P.O. Box 83720

Boise, Idaho 83720-0074

RE: Interconnect Solar Development LLC – Project in Owyhee County

Gentlemen,

The Western Alliance for Economic Development is an entity representing two Counties: Owyhee and Canyon; and nine cities within those counties: Grand View, Melba, Marsing, Homedale, Wilder, Greenleaf, Parma, Notus, and Middleton. We focus on supporting, retaining, marketing, expanding existing Idaho businesses and assisting startup businesses. We also serve as a liaison to local, state and federal agencies as it pertains to issues concerning business.

It has come to the attention of the Western Alliance that over the last nine months Idaho Power and Interconnect Solar have been negotiating a Power Purchase Agreement for 20 Megawatts of electricity produced in Owyhee County through this project. The agreement between Idaho Power and Interconnect Solar LLC for the developer's electricity is for a set 10.5 cents per kilo watt hour to be leveled over 25 years. The Langely Gulch project, Idaho Powers newest gas fired plant was approved at the Idaho PUC at 12.0 cents.

Apparently, staff members at the Idaho Public Utilities Commission who have been deliberating about this case think 10.5 cents for Utility Scale Solar is too much when Idaho residential rate is 10.2. We feel it's a minimal cost increase for a "Carbon Free Energy Future" for the people of Idaho.

It has taken a long time to reach a decision that would provide reasonable terms to allow this project to continue. We understand a staff recommendation is due on September 9, 2011.

Bill Piske, Interconnect Solar's manager, stated that this project will bring \$52 million into the State of Idaho's economy and 50 jobs @15.00 per hour during the construction stage and 7 jobs for the life of the project. Isn't that what we have said that the great State of Idaho needs: \$ into the economy, jobs, and clean energy? Also, this new plant will increase the tax base of Owyhee County, which is greatly needed.

We need a positive recommendation from the PUC to make this a successful project and bring \$52 million into the economy for Owyhee County and the State of Idaho. Jobs are desperately needed for this area. **Time is of the essence** not only because of the pending decision by the Idaho PUC, but also because Interconnect Solar needs to install more than 1,000 steel poles to support the solar panels before the ground freezes this year so that the project can be completed by July 2012. We have seen for ourselves that this is a good move in respect to economics and job creation.

Thank you for your efforts to expedite this project as soon as possible.

Sincerely,



Lee Belt, Chair

Western Alliance for Economic Development

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