

February 18, 2015

Honorable Paul Kjellander  
Honorable Marsha Smith  
Honorable Mack Redford  
Idaho Public Utilities Commission  
472 West Washington Street  
Boise, Idaho 83702

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IDAHO PUBLIC  
UTILITIES COMMISSION

**Re: IDAHO POWER --PETITION TO MODIFY TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF  
PROSPECTIVE PURPA ESA, IPC-E-15-01**

Dear Commissioners:

I am entering comments in this docket as one who has had experience with utility-scale solar in Idaho. I was the Corporate Communications Director with Alternative Power Development, Northwest, LLC, the developer of the 80MW Grand View solar project.

While I appreciate the challenges Idaho Power currently declares in integrating the large amount of solar projects in the queue, I do not approve of their request to shorten PURPA contracts from 20 years to 2 years. And the Idaho Public Utilities Commission's quick interim solution to limit PURPA contracts to 5 years is equally damaging.

Idaho Power has been aware of coming solar projects for a very long time and has had ample time to prepare. This is the future they have been afraid to face. Their request to shorten PURPA contracts is an attempt to kill future solar in Idaho.

As evidenced by the 143 letters of support for the Grand View project, and close to that many for the Boise City Solar project, there is a groundswell of public support for solar in Idaho. Two state legislators, two mayors, a former governor, county commissioners and a director of economic development all weighed in to support these solar projects. The Public Utility Commission did not receive a single letter of opposition to these projects.

What concerns me are the lost opportunities for economic development that result from the shortened PURPA contracts. A solar developer must seek financing for solar projects, and lenders need a longer guaranteed period of operation to recover their investment and to make the profit they expect. Two year or five year contracts will scare away project investors; new solar developments under these shortened contracts will not be constructed.

And solar project construction is a boon for the Idaho economy. I can speak in specifics for the 80MW project approved for Grand View. Construction will begin this spring, and the project will directly employ over 300 local workers, hiring low-skilled installers, highly-trained electricians and engineers. They will work throughout the entire length of the project, until it is finished in July, 2016. In addition, the project will employ local fencing contractors, road builders, and other supporting trades. These workers will bring added business to Elmore County during the construction period—restaurants and

hospitality services in Mountain Home, Grand View, and even in Boise will feel the positive effect of this solar project.

In addition, Elmore County will receive \$400,000 each year in property taxes from this project. The landowner will receive lease payments as well. This is the measurable, positive impact such a project has on the economy of Idaho. And it was for these reasons that so many city, state and county officials endorsed this project.

Shortened PURPA contracts will kill such future economic development in Idaho. I urge the Public Utilities Commission to rethink their interim decision and return to the practical longer-term contracts that helped create the economic opportunities that this state needs.

Also, I request a public hearing for this docket; I know that there is great public interest in ensuring solar projects continue to be built in Idaho.

Thank you,

Robert Sandberg