

## Idaho Public Utilities Commission

Case No. IPC-E-14-09, Order No. 33039

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# Commission sets Wednesday hearing regarding Idaho Power solar application

**BOISE (May 19, 2014)** – The Idaho Public Utilities Commission will conduct a public hearing Wednesday night, May 21, on an Idaho Power Company request to temporarily suspend its obligation under federal law to sign new contracts to buy power from qualifying small solar-power producers.

Idaho Power is completing a study to determine its cost to integrate solar power into its transmission grid. If those costs are not included in solar power contracts, they are passed on to customers. The study is expected to be completed by mid-June.

Idaho Power claims that “dozens of solar projects” are either already under contract or attempting to obligate Idaho Power to buy up to 500 megawatts of electric capacity. To prevent “great and irreparable harm to customers,” Idaho Power is asking that its federal PURPA obligation be suspended or, in the alternative, the commission issue an order stating that future solar contracts include a provision for an appropriate integration charge to be determined at a later date.

PURPA, the federal Public Utilities Regulatory Policies Act, requires utilities to purchase power from qualifying small-power producers at rates published by state commissions or negotiated between the parties using a formula approved by the state commission.

The hearing begins at 6 p.m. in the commission hearing room at 472 W. Washington St.

The hearing will be limited to two questions: 1) whether the commission should issue an order temporarily suspending Idaho Power from its PURPA obligation to enter into contracts with solar producers and 2) whether the commission should issue an order directing Idaho Power to include a placeholder in contracts that will allow for an appropriate solar integration charge to be included at a later date.

The commission is interested in testimony regarding whether the need to suspend solar contract negotiations is immediate; whether expedited relief is truly necessary; and whether other interim measures are available that would allow solar negotiations to continue as the study is completed and presented to the commission for review. Debate regarding whether and what type of solar integration charge may be appropriate will occur at a later date in a subsequent proceeding.

Interested parties can also file written comment through May 21, which carries as much weight as oral testimony. Comments are accepted via e-mail through by accessing the commission's homepage at [www.puc.idaho.gov](http://www.puc.idaho.gov) and clicking on "Case Comment Form," under the "Electric" heading. Fill in the case number (IPC-E-14-09) and enter your comments. Comments can also be mailed to P.O. Box 83720, Boise, ID 83720-0074 or faxed to (208) 334-3762.

A full text of the commission's order, along with Idaho Power's application and other documents, is available on the commission's Web site. Click on "Open Cases" under the "Electric" heading and scroll down to the above case number.

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