

**RESPONSE TO DRAFT LONG TERM RENEWABLE ENERGY RESOURCES
PROCUREMENT PLAN ON BEHALF OF SUMMIT RIDGE ENERGY**

Summit Ridge Energy (“Summit Ridge”) appreciates the opportunity to respond to the Long-Term Renewable Energy Resources Procurement Plan for public comment dated August 15, 2019 (“LTRRPP”).

While Summit Ridge does recognize and support many of the comments from The Solar Energy Industries Association, the Coalition for Community Solar Access, and the Illinois Solar Energy Association (collectively “Joint Solar Parties” or “JSP”), Summit Ridge desires to distinguish their position on various aspects of the LTRRPP from the positions of the Joint Solar Parties. In considering the LTRRPP published for public comment by the Illinois Power Agency (“Agency”) Summit Ridge Energy maintains specific portions of the LTRRPP are in need of individual consideration apart from the Joint Solar Parties.

COMMENTS

I. Waitlist Management/ Project Selection for the Adjustable Block Program

Under the Illinois Power Agency Act, the allocation of the blocks were specifically set forth as follows:

- 25% for systems up to 10 kW¹;
- 25% for systems greater than 10kW and up to 2,000 kW²;
- 25% for photovoltaic community renewable generation³; and
- 25% to be allocated by the Agency.⁴

Under their interpretation of the Illinois Commerce Commission’s Order in Docket No. 17-8038, with respect to the allocation of Block 4⁵. After the administration of the IPA Lottery on April 10, 2019 there were 1571 MW of capacity on the waitlist for Community Solar⁶. As of August 13, 2019, there were 121.6 MW of Remaining Available Capacity between Small DG and Large DG projects from the Adjustable Block Program (“ABP”).

¹ These projects are generally known and will otherwise be referred to as Small DG.

² The projects are generally known and will otherwise be referred to as Large DG.

³ These projects are generally known and will otherwise be referred to as Community Solar.

⁴ 20 ILCS 3855 1-75(c)(1)(K)

⁵ See LTRRPP p. 112

⁶ IPA Lottery Results, April 10, 2019.

A. The Agency should not keep the current waitlist as the means for prioritizing projects

In reviewing the IPA Lottery on April 10, 2019, the mechanism for operating the Lottery lead to potentially inaccurate results. On April 11, 2019 the Agency investigated the algorithm that was used to produce the Lottery results after allegations it did not operate properly or provide intended program safeguards to correctly allocate Projects⁷.

On April 25, 2019 a correspondence was submitted to the Illinois Commerce Commission alleging the defects in the computer program used to produce the results of the IPA Lottery⁸. As suspicions remain that the algorithm used did not properly apply certain methods set forth for the Lottery, the results should not be maintained without adjustment. Therefore, the waitlist order should not be maintained. In the interest of relieving the Projects from the flawed Lottery results, the Agency should consider alternative means to prioritize projects that were not awarded contracts under the April 10, 2019 Lottery.

B. The Agency should adopt criteria for re-ordering priority between waitlisted projects

Under the current Adjustable Block Program, there are 812 Community Solar projects on the waitlist⁹. Currently the Agency is seeking comment on the best means for handling the waitlist¹⁰. The Agency acknowledges that maintaining the waitlist as determined in the IPA Lottery may not be the best practice for increasing diversity in projects or addressing qualitative differences between the projects¹¹.

As acknowledged by the Agency, an alternative approach to handling the Projects currently on the waitlist would be to eliminate the waitlist and provide priority to projects based on the date of their original Interconnection Agreement¹². This approach does not give priority to more mature projects, as several parties would represent via their comments, but rather prioritizes projects based on filing an early application.

In proposing the criteria set forth below, we recommended a selection process comprised of a points system in which each project begins with a baseline score. A project's score could then be

⁷ IPA Announcement – Certification Regarding Application of Developer Cap in April 10, 2019 Adjustable Block Program Lottery dated April 12, 2019.

⁸ Soltage Letter to ICC on Illinois Power Agency Lottery dated April 25, 2019.

⁹ See Table 6-4 on p. 135 of the LTRRPP, as of August 13, 2019 812 Community Solar Projects are on the waitlist representing 1571 MW of capacity.

¹⁰ LTRRPP Section 6.3.3.

¹¹ The simplest and most straightforward approach would be to simply maintain the existing waitlists and accept projects in that order off as additional capacity becomes available. However, this approach would not recognize the potential for the Agency to consider additional criteria for community solar projects that could help increase the diversity of projects being developed, nor would it address any potential qualitative differences between applicant projects (LTRRPP at p. 114).

¹² LTRRPP at p. 114

increased per presentation of specific, project level factors that are commonly used in other C&I solar market such as Massachusetts, Maryland and New Jersey to award solar program capacity.

In an effort to provide the Agency with an actual implementable approach, with objective criteria, as requested in the LTRRPP, Summit Ridge proposes that priority for projects on the waitlist be reviewed based on the following criteria (which is not necessarily exhaustive):

1) The Project is currently on the Waitlist

After the IPA Lottery on April 10, 2019 a waitlist was produced to address the oversubscription of Community Solar¹³. As the Agency seeks an established set of criteria for determining the priority of Projects on the waitlist, the first criteria should be that the Project is currently on the waitlist. Due to the current waitlist of 1571 MW¹⁴, the first criteria for determining priority of project selection should be that the Project was placed on the waitlist as a result of applying to the Adjustable Block program.

This will provide a preference to projects in which significant investments of time and money have been made, while not stifling development of high-quality located in areas beneficial to the grid.

2) Job Trainee Commitment

Under both the IPA Act¹⁵ and the Illinois Public Utilities Act¹⁶, the Legislature provided mechanisms by which job trainees supported by the ComEd job training programs participated in the installation of photovoltaic projects supported by the program¹⁷. As a criterion for changing a Project's placement on the waitlist, a Project Owner should be able to indicate to the Agency and ComEd that their EPC contractor will engage a minimum number of job trainees to assist with a project's installation. The Project Owner, in their implementation of this criteria shall be able to agree to the services of up to nine (9) or more job trainees as part of the installation. By agreeing to utilize job trainees, the Project would demonstrate an ongoing commitment to the overall initiative of renewable energy in Illinois. This commitment should be an objective criterion used by the Agency in determining selection priority.

3) Off Take profile

When determining priority that should be given to Projects on the waitlist, the commitment of the Project to serve all demographics and Illinois citizens, regardless of socioeconomic status, should be considered by the Agency.

In support of this goal, Projects currently on the waitlist that allocate ten percent (10%) or more of their available generation to serving Critical Service Providers¹⁸ will earn additional points.

¹³ LTRRPP at 135.

¹⁴ Id.

¹⁵ 20 ILCS 3855/1-56(b)(2)

¹⁶ 220 ILCS 5/16-108.12(a)(1)

¹⁷ 20 ILCS 3855/1-56(b)(2), 220 ILCS 5/16-108.12(a)(1).

¹⁸ As defined in the LTRRPP on p. 192 Objective 4

Additionally, a Project that subscribes twenty-five percent (25%) or more of its capacity to subscribers that would meet the criteria for low-income subscribers, as defined in the LTRRPP (“Low-Income Subscribership), shall earn additional points.

4) Weight of Criteria and Determining Priority

The intent of establishing these criteria is to afford Projects the opportunity to receive future program capacity based on factors that have the highest societal impact as opposed to a random lottery selection process used as a stop gap.

As a baseline, each Project currently on the waitlist shall be given a score of 10 Project Points. This score shall represent equal placement of these projects before the application of any adders.

Each of the criteria set out above shall be associated with a set number of adder points, based on the Projects proposed commitment to the criteria. The Points Scale for the criteria should be as follows:

- Criteria 1: The Project is currently on the Waitlist.
 - In the event that a Project is currently on the Waitlist, there shall be 3 adder point awarded.
- Criteria 2: Job Trainee Commitment
 - A project that utilizes five (3) or more job trainees for a portion of the Project’s installation work will be awarded one adder point, up to a maximum of three adder points if the project uses 9 or more job trainees.
- Criteria 3: Off Take Profile
 - Commitment to provide priority subscribership to Low-Income Subscribers
 - 3 points for 25% or greater
- Criteria 4: Commitment to allocate a portion of generation to Critical Service Providers
 - 3 points for $\geq 10\%$

As the same opportunity is afforded to all Projects currently on the waitlist, each Project Owner could elect to provide a proposal addressing all criteria. Should the Agency be in a position where two or more Projects’ proposals equate to the same amount of points, the default of the Agency should be that the priority of those projects shall be based on their Project’s Interconnection Service Agreement Date.

II. New Programs or Developments under the Adjustable Block Program

A. Support of Adjustable Block Program

Based on the success of the current initiatives in Illinois for Solar Energy, the Agency has already implemented various programs, including the Adjustable Block Program, modeled on separate programs which have demonstrated success in other markets. The Agency’s adaptation of these programs demonstrates a well-reasoned approach to renewable energy. In the interest of supporting program integrity, these Comments suggest changes to the Adjustable Block Program

while supporting the overall structure of the Program. These comments are not intended to advocate for a competitive solicitation process, which could unnecessarily jeopardize the integrity of the program.

B. Allocation of available MW

Under the IPA Act, the Illinois Legislature indicated that the allocation for the Blocks under the Adjustable Block Program as:

- 25% for systems up to 10 kW;
- 25% for systems greater than 10kW and up to 2,000 kW;
- 25% for photovoltaic community renewable generation; and
- 25% to be allocated by the Agency.¹⁹

Through the implementation of the Adjustable Block Program, and the IPA Lottery, both Small DG and Large DG did not utilize their entire allocation of MW. Community Solar; however, was oversubscribed by ten times the allocation of their MW.

In the interest of serving the Solar Initiative as a whole under the Adjustable Block Program, the Agency should be able to objectively allocate the MW allotment using a formulaic approach, as necessary to best serve the demands of the market and each category under the Adjustable Block Program. Therefore, the Agency should implement the policy for all future blocks that discretionary funds should be directly used by the Agency to reduce the amount of oversubscription in any applicable categories mathematically calculated basis.

C. Differentiation of Rooftop Projects and Greenfield Projects

In considering the feasibility of new projects moving forward under Community Solar, there should be separate preference and allocation for projects that are staged on building rooftops (“Rooftop Projects”) as opposed on ground solar farms (“Greenfield”). Currently several other States provide a separate allocation for Rooftop or Parking Lot Canopy projects from Community Solar Projects.

In reviewing the viability of these programs, the Agency should separately allocate a portion of the MW in each new Block to Rooftop Projects. These projects require a different set of resources than Greenfield Projects and thus should be treated separately from the Greenfield Projects.

D. No Exclusivity for Waitlisted Projects

In consideration of the comments provided by the Joint Solar Parties, Summit Ridge disagrees with the notion that there should be an exclusive time period under any new Blocks for applications from waitlisted projects. In the event that there is an opportunity for new development within Community Solar, a Project’s placement on the waitlist should be of no bearing to their ability to apply for the next block.

¹⁹ 20 ILCS 3855 1-75(c)(1)(K)

E. Criteria for New Projects

In reviewing all new potential Community Solar Projects, which are not currently on the waitlist, the Agency should proceed with project selection based on, but not limited to, the criteria set out above.