Rubin Solar Collaborative Workgroup

Public Session -- October 30, 2017

On June 19, the process of soliciting input regarding Virginia solar programs and policies began with a public meeting held at Virginia Commonwealth University. More than 80 members of the public participated in that conversation. They, and others, were invited to participate in subsequent subgroup meetings which took place leading up to a public session to be held October 30, 2017 in the Patrick Henry Building in Richmond. Based on conversations within those groups, the topics for conversation on October, 30 will cover the areas described in this document. It should not be construed that consensus has been reached or that any of these areas are final recommendations of the Rubin Solar Collaborative Workgroup. Each of these topic areas are provided in advance for discussion purposes only.

Net Metering

- Remains a complex issue in Virginia and nationwide; constructive dialogue continues on several key issues as we continue to leverage feedback from participants
- Better data collection and analysis will benefit future conversations around policy and rate design; the analysis requires advanced metering technology not currently deployed widely in Virginia.
- Currently, there is no specific legislative proposal pending to be introduced in the 2018 General Assembly session, but there is conceptual support for a broad deployment of AMI technologies that is not targeted or limited only to solar customers, but rather all jurisdictional customers.
- We expect to continue our net metering discussions when the Rubin Group process reconvenes in the Spring of 2018.

Land Use

- Unless a local zoning ordinance provides otherwise, a large scale solar project could combine the substantial accord determination with a special or conditional use request for a large solar facility.
- Create a new code Section to say that a homeowner has the right to put a solar array on their roof or in their yard to serve the electricity needs on their property, and the residential dwelling unit is not subject to a condo or property owner's association that otherwise regulates such installation. Residential solar arrays are still subject to setback provisions, historic areas, etc.
- Create a new section to say that unless a local zoning ordinance provides otherwise, an owner of an agricultural zoned property has the right to put a solar installation on their property to serve the electricity needs on their property.
- Create a new section to say that unless a local zoning ordinance provides otherwise, an owner of a property zoned for commercial or industrial uses has the right to put a solar installation on their property to serve the electricity needs on their property.

Large Companies with Renewable Energy Goals

- Utilities will host discussions with large customers and advocacy groups regarding renewable energy offerings. The first workshop is scheduled for the last week of November.
- The most recent voluntary green tariff proposal decision reached by the Commission took approximately 17 months from the time of filing. The long lead time creates uncertainty for customers, developers, and utilities and can delay the deployment and addition of solar infrastructure in the Commonwealth.

Community Solar

- Dominion Energy utilized input from stakeholders in the design of an RFP issued for community solar. The RFP closed on October 23.
- Discussions are ongoing about how best to involve low income customers and overall program design.
- Anticipate filing an application with the SCC later this year or early 2018.

Large-Scale Solar Projects

- Potential clarification and increasing of the number of MW of solar in the public interest.
- Discussion about deployment timeline, process for project approvals
- There could be a combination of policy and programmatic reccomendations.

IRP Filing Terms

- Although somewhat outside the scope of a pure solar discussion, participants raised the possibility of returning to alternating years for utility Integrated Resource Plan filings.