



Press Release

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Utah Makes the Grade for Solar and Distributed Renewable Energy

Solar Salt Lake Partners help Utah earn an 'A' for net metering policies

In the school of distributed solar and renewable energy, Utah is moving to the head of class, thanks to the efforts of Utah Clean Energy, the Solar Salt Lake Team, the Interstate Renewable Energy Council, and numerous supporters. In a recent report published by the Network for New Energy Choices, *Freeing the Grid: Best and Worst Practices in State Net Metering Policies and Interconnection Procedures, 2009*, Utah received a distinguished 'A' grade on the state net metering report card (redeeming itself from the 'F' and 'D' it received in the 2007 and 2008 reports, respectively). This annual report evaluates each state's distributed generation policies and regulations and highlights state efforts to enact best practices and encourage the adoption of renewable energy. Additionally, IREC's legal team of Keyes & Fox placed Utah in its [list of top four states](#) that deserve high fives for their interconnection and net metering best practices. After years of hard work and perseverance, Utah is finally making the grade and getting noticed.

Leading Utah's solar and renewable energy efforts is Solar Salt Lake Partner, Utah Clean Energy, a local 501c3 non-profit organization (est. 2001), that partners to build the new clean energy economy. Well aware of the policy and regulatory barriers to renewable energy, Utah Clean Energy is determined to advance the solutions and help make distributed renewable energy a viable option for Utahns.

"We kept hearing from numerous individuals, businesses, solar installers, and local governments that there were significant barriers to the adoption of distributed renewable energy resources in Utah, and net metering was at the top of the list," said Sara Baldwin, Senior Policy & Regulatory Associate with Utah Clean Energy. "We knew that addressing net metering was not going to be easy, but that it was absolutely necessary if Utah had any chance of growing our clean energy market."

Following several technical conferences hosted by the Utah Public Service Commission (PSC), it was determined that a legislative change would be needed to improve net metering. Utah Clean Energy worked closely with Salt Lake County, Rocky Mountain Power (Utah's only investor-owned utility), the Utah Rural Electric Association and numerous supporters to dispel common misconceptions and concerns surrounding distributed generation and net metering. Thanks to their efforts, the Utah legislature adopted SB 84 – Net Metering Provisions (2008), which increased the commercial system cap size to 2 MW and made other improvements, while deferring some key decisions to the PSC. When the PSC opened a net metering docket, the Interstate Renewable Energy Council (IREC), represented by Keyes & Fox, LLP, stepped up to provide their expertise and assistance. "With IREC's knowledge and assistance, we were able to deliver a compelling argument to show that distributed generation is valuable to the utility grid and net metering is in the best interest of Utah ratepayers," said Baldwin. Utah Clean Energy garnered support from over 30+ businesses, local governments, organizations, and citizens who submitted comments in support of best practices for net metering.

In the end, the Commission sided with the net metering supporters and adopted the following measures: a one-to-one kilowatt-hour (retail) credit for excess generation; a system-wide capacity equal to 20% of Utah's Investor Owned Utilities 2007 peak demand (representing nearly 1 GW); clarification that customer-generated Renewable Energy Credits stay with the customer; and allowing large commercial customers to choose the most favorable means to credit their excess generation in an innovative attempt to address the disparity among commercial customers with high demand charges. In the end, the PSC's landmark decision removed critical barriers to distributed renewable energy generation and helped Utah make the grade for net metering.

Simultaneous to the net metering proceedings, the PSC was undertaking a comprehensive review and revision of interconnection standards, which are expected to be finalized sometime early 2010. The PSC draft interconnection standards under consideration also reflect best practices with respect to key interconnection issues, such as aggregate meters, disconnect switch requirements, and appropriate levels and fees for different system sizes. Once adopted, Utah's interconnection procedures will hopefully bestow Utah with top honors for net metering and interconnection in the next *Freeing the Grid* report.

In addition to progress on these fronts, Utah Clean Energy and partners continue their mission to remove remaining barriers to distributed renewable generation, especially solar. They are currently working to enable third-party financing, encourage consideration of smart grid standards and technologies, expand the utility solar rebate, and adopt Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) legislation. To stay informed of Utah Clean Energy's activities on this front or learn more, please visit www.utahcleanenergy.org.

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About Utah Clean Energy

Utah Clean Energy is a non-profit public interest organization partnering to build the new clean energy economy through policy, regulatory, and educational initiatives. Utah Clean Energy advances renewable energy, energy efficiency, and clean energy technologies in Utah and the West. www.utahcleanenergy.org

About Solar Salt Lake

The Solar Salt Lake Project is led by a partnership among [Salt Lake City](#), [Salt Lake County](#), [Utah Clean Energy](#), and Kennecott Land whose goal is to significantly drive the use of solar energy throughout Salt Lake Valley over the next eight years and beyond. www.solaramericacities.energy.gov/cities/salt_lake_city

About Interstate Renewable Energy Council

IREC identifies difficult renewable energy issues and brings together the right team of technical and policy experts to produce innovative solutions. Through education and outreach, stakeholder coordination, technical assistance, workforce development, the adoption and implementation of uniform guidelines and standards, or consumer protection, IREC's team builds networks, shares experiences and produces exemplary materials through easy access information channels. IREC has teamed up with the Database of State Incentives for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (DSIRE), the North Carolina Solar Center, and Keyes and Fox, LLC. www.irecusa.org

About Keyes & Fox, LLP

Keyes & Fox, LLP represents clients in state utility commission rulemakings related to renewable energy policy development and implementation, including work on net metering rules, interconnection standards, community solar programs, feed-in tariffs and incentive programs. <http://keyesandfox.com/>