



**STATE OF NEW JERSEY**  
**Board of Public Utilities**  
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[www.nj.gov/bpu/](http://www.nj.gov/bpu/)

CLEAN ENERGY

IN THE MATTER OF THE COMMUNITY SOLAR ENERGY PILOT PROGRAM	)	ORDER
	)	
	)	DOCKET NO. QO18060646
	)	
IN THE MATTER OF THE COMMUNITY SOLAR ENERGY PILOT PROGRAM YEAR 2 APPLICATION FORM AND PROCESS – CONSOLIDATED BILLING EDC REPORT	)	
	)	
	)	DOCKET NO. QO20080556

**Parties of Record:**

**Stefanie A. Brand, Esq., Director**, New Jersey Division of Rate Counsel  
**John L. Carley, Associate General Counsel**, Rockland Electric Company on behalf of the New Jersey Electric Distribution Companies

BY THE BOARD:

This Order addresses the current deadline for delivery of a report on community solar consolidated billing by the four Electric Distribution Companies (Atlantic City Electric Company, Jersey Central Power & Light Company, Rockland Electric Company, and Public Service Electric and Gas Company, collectively the “EDCs”).

**BACKGROUND**

On May 23, 2018, the Clean Energy Act, L. 2018, c. 17, was signed into law, directing the Board of Public Utilities (“Board”) to adopt rules and regulations within 210 days establishing a Community Solar Energy Pilot Program. This Pilot Program enables New Jersey electric utility customers to participate in a solar energy project that may be remotely located from their properties and receive a credit on their utility bills. Community solar therefore enables access to clean energy generation for utility customers currently unable to place solar generation directly on their own properties. The Board is particularly interested in ensuring that low- and moderate-income (“LMI”) customers are able to access community solar, and that community solar development is pursued without materially compromising the preservation of open space or protected lands in New Jersey. The Pilot Program is designed to provide the necessary experience and to lay the groundwork for the development and implementation of a full-scale Community Solar Energy Program within 36 months of the signing of the Clean Energy Act.

The Board adopted the Pilot Program rules on January 17, 2019, following stakeholder engagement. The adopted rules were filed with the Office of Administrative Law and published in the New Jersey Register on February 19, 2019. The rules provide the framework necessary for the development and implementation of community solar in New Jersey during each of the Pilot Program's three (3) Program Years. Program Year 1 was held in 2019, leading to the award of 45 community solar projects on December 20, 2019, representing almost 78MWdc. On July 9, 2020, the Board issued a request for comments regarding lessons learned from Program Year 1. A stakeholder meeting on Program Year 1 lessons learned was held on July 27, 2020, and written comments were received by August 10, 2020. Throughout this proceeding, several stakeholders noted the importance of consolidated billing in the context of community solar. In particular, many noted that a proposed "opt-out" model of subscriber acquisition would be better implemented with consolidated billing. Staff agreed with those stakeholders that stated that consolidated billing is an important feature of the continued growth of community solar, including as a pre-requisite to further discussion of an "opt-out" model. Staff therefore recommended that the Board direct the EDCs to work with Staff to implement consolidated billing for community solar, building upon the existing consolidated billing mechanisms employed for Third Party Suppliers when relevant.

On October 2, 2020, the Board approved the Program Year 2 Application Form and Process. In the same Order, the Board directed the EDCs to work with Staff to develop options to implement consolidated billing for community solar, including considerations of what is currently done by other state affiliates. The Board ordered the EDCs to present actionable recommendations for consolidated billing implementation in a report to the Board, no later than February 26, 2021.<sup>1</sup>

On January 7, 2021, in response to a Motion for Reconsideration of the October 2, 2020 Order, the Board expanded on its directive to the EDCs, specifying that the EDCs should work with Staff and ensure that the report consider multiple options for the implementation of consolidated billing and incorporate a robust stakeholder process.<sup>2</sup>

### **EDC EXTENSION REQUEST**

On February 22, 2021, the EDCs submitted a joint letter to the Board Secretary containing an update on the consolidated billing report and a request for an extension of time to submit the report. The letter states that the EDCs have been working diligently with Board Staff to draft a proposed Stakeholder Notice (including questions) seeking stakeholder input on community solar consolidated billing. The EDC letter indicates that more time will be required to prepare a meaningful report on consolidated billing due to the timing of preparing and issuing the Notice soliciting stakeholder input; the time required to conduct a robust stakeholder process; the complexity of consolidated billing (including the need to coordinate the EDCs information technology efforts); delays caused by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic; and the cost of implementing consolidated billing. Accordingly, the EDCs collectively requested that the current February 26, 2021 due date for submission of the Consolidated Billing Report be extended to May 28, 2021, and the Board provide adequate time for stakeholder input and for the preparation of a detailed and informative report on consolidated billing.

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<sup>1</sup> In re The Community Solar Energy Pilot Program, BPU Docket Nos. QO18060646, QO20080556, Order dated October 2, 2020, p.9.

<sup>2</sup> In re The Community Solar Energy Pilot Program, BPU Docket Nos. QO18060646, QO20080556, Order dated January 7, 2021, p.6.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS**

As stated by the EDCs in the joint letter to the Board Secretary, Staff and the EDCs have been working together on the development of a Stakeholder Notice and Request for Comments. Staff and the EDCs jointly issued a Stakeholder Meeting Notice and Request for Comments on March 11, 2021. A stakeholder meeting on the topic of consolidated billing for community solar is scheduled to take place on March 25, 2021, and written comments are due on April 9, 2021. In light of the EDCs' and Staff's ongoing efforts and the complexity of the issue, Staff recommends that the Board grant the requested extension of time to May 28, 2021.

**FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

The Board has considered the EDCs' letter and Staff's recommendations regarding the requested extension to the deadline for the community solar consolidated billing report. In light of these ongoing efforts, and the importance of conducting a robust stakeholder process and incorporating stakeholder feedback into the report, the Board **HEREBY GRANTS** an extension and **ORDERS** the EDCs to provide a complete and comprehensive report with options and actionable recommendations for consolidated billing implementation no later than May 28, 2021.

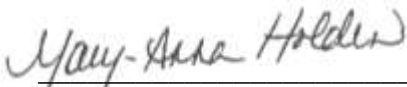
The effective date of this order is April 3, 2021.

DATED: March 24, 2021


BOARD OF PUBLIC UTILITIES  
BY:



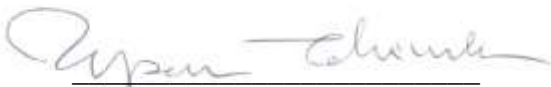
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AIDA CAMACHO-WELCH  
SECRETARY

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IN THE MATTER OF THE COMMUNITY SOLAR ENERGY PILOT PROGRAM YEAR 2 -  
APPLICATION FORM AND PROCESS - DOCKET NO. QO20080556

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