

Q: Is the monetization rate done using a residential meter rate or commercial meter rate? - eg. WMECO rate for commercial metered system is much lower (.09/kwh last year, now .156/kwh)

A: Net metering credit values are determined by the utility rate class of the meter to which the solar facility is interconnected. In other words, if the meter was assigned a residential rate class, the credits it generates would be valued at the residential rate. Generally speaking, the utility meters for standalone solar projects (i.e., ground-mounted solar arrays not connected to a substantial existing load) are assigned a small commercial rate.

Q: Are there software systems available to administer these systems?

A: This question is not entirely clear, but there certainly are hardware and software systems available to track solar production remotely. These are referred to as data acquisition systems, and must be utilized by any solar facility over 10 kW DC that is seeking SRECs. As far as software solutions for tracking credit allocations, DOER is not aware of any such platforms. All credit allocations are performed via distribution company billing systems.

Q: On Schedule Z, do you allocate the net that isn't used onsite? Or do you allocate the entire amount generated?

A: The host of the project would allocate the net metering credits not used on site.

Q: Is there a consumer protection guidance brochure on CSS/PPA offers being made in Massachusetts?

A: There is not a consumer guidance brochure on CSS/PPA offers. However, DOER is working on a Massachusetts residential financing guide that will explain the differences, opportunities, and challenges of PPAs, loans, and leases.

Q: Can I set up a new service at a site with an on-site load and get net metering credits to allocate for most of the kWhs?

A: Yes, but you may need to first discuss with your local distribution company to make sure this arrangement makes sense from an interconnection perspective. This type of project would also very likely qualify under a lower SREC II market sector than a project connected to an on-site load.

Q: On slide 16, what is the difference between neighborhood solar on right of slide and the community solar being discussed?

A: Neighborhood net metering is a type of net metering facility defined in MGL Ch. 164 Sec. 140 and 220 CMR 18.00. It utilizes virtual net metering and is similar to the concept of community shared solar in many respects, but is not a model typically utilized by project developers interested in developing virtually net metered facilities.

Q: Concerning CSS net metering credits: When kWh are monetized that would be at a commercial service rate, but when they are applied to a residential service the value will be reduced due to the difference in rates. So one kWh credit will purchase perhaps as low as 65 percent of a kWh for the residential off-taker. Do you agree?

A: Credit values are not increased or reduced when applied to a meter with a different rate class. Credits that accrue to a net metering facility with a commercial rate class are calculated at that value and applied to a residential rate class as a dollar total.

Q: If a Community Shared Project is greater than 25 kW, does it still get full SRECs?

A: Yes, a community shared solar project can be greater than 25 kW and receive SREC-IIs. However, no project participants can receive more than 25 kW.

Q: Are net-metering caps for public entities combined for solar/wind projects?

A: Yes, they are.

Q: Is SREC income taxable?

A: Consult your tax professional on this matter.

Q: With net metering credits, why is excess expressed as a monetary value without kWh backup?

A: While net metering credits are calculated on a \$/kWh basis, they are carefully designed not to constitute a sale of electricity. Otherwise, all solar project developers selling net metering credits may have to register with the Department of Public Utilities (DPU) and obtain a license to operate as a competitive retail electricity supplier.

Q: Why was there a customer in Souix Falls, SC on the allocation? Is it just the customer address vs. the use?

A: That is just the customer's mailing address. The utility meter that the credits were being allocated to would need to be located in the same service territory and ISO-NE load zone as the project in order to be an eligible off-taker.

Q: How do we know net metering will remain the same as it is right now?

A: Net metering is capped in MA and is subject to statute. Changes to the current net metering rules would likely be implemented by the Legislature and be followed by a regulatory and/or fully adjudicated process at the Department of Public Utilities. As per Ch. 251 of Acts of 2014, Section 7 the DOER and DPU co-chair a net metering task force to review the long-term viability of net metering and develop recommendations on incentives and programs to support the deployment of solar generation facilities in the Commonwealth. Information on the task force work and public meetings can be found at: <http://www.mass.gov/eea/energy-utilities-clean-tech/nms-taskforce/>

Q: Where can I get sample documents for the participant ownership model?

A: There are sample documents for both the participant ownership model and the public lease model in the DOER Community Shared Solar implementation guide found here: <http://www.mass.gov/eea/docs/doer/renewables/solar/community-shared-solar-implementation-guidelines-with-contracts-032913.pdf>

Q: Has anyone gotten an IRS ruling for the residential federal tax credit applying to off site solar PV system?

A: At this time no.

Q: What are the state tax credits available for CSS?

A: The Department of Revenue can provide additional information here: <http://www.mass.gov/dor/individuals/filing-and-payment-information/guide-to-personal-income-tax/credits/residential-property-credits.html#Solar>

Q: Are there sample contracts for membership ownership?

A: There are sample documents for both the participant ownership model and the public lease model in the DOER Community Shared Solar implementation guide found here: <http://www.mass.gov/eea/docs/doer/renewables/solar/community-shared-solar-implementation-guidelines-with-contracts-032913.pdf>

Q: Does the public entity in Public Lease Model have to go through the 30B process for the site lease needed for the development?

A: Because there is an agreement between a local government and a vendor, the 30B process applies. Please refer to the state's guidance document on 30B procedures found here: <http://www.mass.gov/ig/publications/manuals/30bmanl.pdf>

Q: So can I have three off-takers for a 1 MW CSS project, or is it more like 27?

A: Yes, but it would not meet the SREC II definition of Community Shared Solar. Under this definition, a 1 MW project must have a minimum of 21 off-takers. This would include at least one (but no more than two) off-taker that receives 50 percent of the output and 20 or more off-takers that each receives a 25 kW or less share of the remaining capacity of the facility.

Q: Based on the experiences of CSS projects to date, what steps can municipalities take to be more supportive of CSS projects within their territories?

A: Municipalities can learn more about community shared solar by reviewing the two DOER community shared solar guides and determining what model may work best for them should the municipality or their residents be interested in community shared solar. They can also reach out to DOER staff to ask specific questions on projects and learn where and how to access available resources.

Q: Given the DOER supports CSS and recognizes the importance of virtual net metering (VNM) to the feasibility of CSS, does DOER also support the continuation of VNM to make access to solar through CSS for a greater portion of ratepayers?

A: As per Ch. 251 of Acts of 2014, Section 7 the DOER and DPU co-chair a net metering task force to review the long-term viability of net metering and develop recommendations on incentives and programs to support the deployment of solar generation facilities in the commonwealth. Information on the task force work and public meetings can be found at: <http://www.mass.gov/eea/energy-utilities-clean-tech/nms-taskforce/>

Q: To be clear, do the community shared solar terms for the loan program not work for off-takers who only have net metering contracts?

A: Community shared solar projects that will be eligible for a solar loan must be a net metering off-taker of 25 kW or less with an ownership in the solar project. Ownership can take the form of an LLC, cooperative, condo association or other collaboration.

Q: Do you have an update on the median household income levels?

A: The median household income information can be found on slide 12 of the solar loan program final design. The full design can be found at: <http://www.mass.gov/eea/docs/doer/renewables/solar/mass-solar-loan-program-final-design.pdf>

Q: Keep in mind, DOER said (in the summer/fall of 2014) that the solar loan program would launch in Q4...triggering the sunset of CS II at the end of the year. Is there consideration to re-enable CS II temporarily to prevent layoffs in residential solar industry sector?

Commonwealth Solar II is a program run by the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center. Questions regarding its status should be directed to the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center.