

SAVE WYOMING ROOFTOP SOLAR OPPOSE SENATE FILE 16

Senate File 16 seeks to overhaul Wyoming's laws for rooftop solar and backyard wind (customer-generated systems) by repealing the current statutes for net-metering.

WHAT IS NET METERING?

Net metering is a billing mechanism that allows homeowners and businesses that generate their own electricity to deliver power they do not use back into the grid and receive full credit. These credits can then be applied to future utility bills. Credits and energy savings allow solar owners to receive a payback on their solar panels whereby over a period of time, they can break even on the investment. For nonprofits and local governments, the payment received is especially important as it helps free up funding for other community services.

HOW WILL SF16 IMPACT NET METERING?

- 1) As of July 1, 2021, utilities will no longer need to follow the existing net metering compensation structure for new solar customers. The Public Service Commission (PSC) must have new rules ready for implementation by Jan 1, 2022. This leaves a *six month* period where a prospective solar owner will have no certainty of fair compensation for their investment.
- 2) The bill also sends the issue of net metering to the PSC to remove "subsidies" or also known as "cost shifts" for solar in the electricity rate structure. This review will be rushed and will almost certainly result in a bad deal for solar customers.
- 3) Though this bill attempts to grandfather current net-metered solar systems, repealing the law means that both current and prospective solar owners face uncertainty on whether they will be able to get a return on their solar investment.

KEY TALKING POINTS:

- **Wyoming should focus on supporting one of the nation's fastest growing industries, not disabling it.** We need to diversify our economy, and the solar industry is a key piece to our energy future.
- **The current law provides a level regulatory system across the state and across utilities.** SF16 creates regulatory uncertainty for solar owners, solar businesses, solar installers, and people who are considering buying solar.
- **Legislative policy should encourage customer savings.** The largest solar owners are local governments, businesses, and nonprofits. Net metering provides value to the Wyoming economy that goes beyond the fixed costs of the utility.
- **Rooftop solar produces sales tax income for the counties in which the projects happen and for the state.** Property valuation increases when solar is added to a home, ranch, or business. That increases long-term property tax income.
- **The solar industry provides jobs and employment opportunities to people in Wyoming,** including people losing their jobs in Wyoming's struggling mineral industries.
- **The cost-shifting argument unfairly targets Wyoming's small-scale solar customers.** Cost shifting is not unique to rooftop solar. The legislature needs to formally study cost-shifting before making these changes to the statute. Importantly, the uncertainty created by this bill will encourage solar customers to go off-grid, resulting in a much more problematic cost shift for utility customers.