



CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE ALLIANCE

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New Rooftop Solar Program Builds Upon California's Advancements in Renewable Energy *California Public Utilities Commission Takes Major Step to Ensure an Equitable Energy Economy for All Californians*

San Francisco, CA | January 29, 2016 — The California Public Utilities Commission voted yesterday to extend net metering for solar customers indefinitely. With a 3-2 vote, the Commission firmly rejected proposals from the utilities to replace net metering with schemes that would have put solar out of reach for low-income communities and communities of color.

Under the proposed decision, the utility meter will continue spinning backward at full retail rates for solar customers when they are generating more electricity than they are using, but a new fee will partially offset the value of those credits. Solar customers will be required to pay increased charges for upkeep of the grid as well as public purpose programs like energy efficiency rebates and low-income bill assistance.

"We applaud the California Public Utilities Commission for fighting off attempts by the utilities to kill net metering," said Strela Cervas, Co-Director of the [California Environmental Justice Alliance](#). "After the signing of AB 693 (Eggman), which creates the nation's largest solar program for low-income renters, it's more important than ever to ensure our rooftop solar programs support our state's climate and clean energy goals and ensure access to solar for all. CEJA is looking forward to working with the CPUC in Phase II to develop renewable energy programs that will directly benefit disadvantaged communities."

Historically, customers in disadvantaged communities have not been able to enjoy the benefits of NEM due to several high barriers to participation, including high upfront costs of solar systems, difficulty obtaining low interest loans, and the lack of homeownership.

"It is heartening to see the Commission's decision acknowledge that programs for disadvantaged communities must be considered separately from the NEM successor tariff," said Tovah Trimming, Graduate Law Fellow at Environmental Law and Justice Clinic of Golden Gate University School of Law, who represents the California Environmental Justice Alliance. "I am also very pleased that the Commission will be considering a diverse set of program proposals for disadvantaged communities. The Commission's willingness to explore a variety of creative and innovative proposals should help overcome the major barriers to adoption of renewable energy programs in disadvantaged communities and provide real opportunities for these customers to directly benefit from clean, renewable energy."

The California Public Utilities Commission's decision to continue to make net metering available to build upon California's thriving rooftop solar industry will help more low-income families and communities of color participate in and benefit from a growing equitable energy economy for all Californians.

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California Environmental Justice Alliance is a statewide, community-led alliance that works to achieve environmental justice by advancing policy solutions. We unite the powerful local organizing of our members in the communities most impacted by environmental hazards – low-income communities and communities of color - to create comprehensive opportunities for change at a statewide level. We build the power of communities across California to create policies that will alleviate poverty and pollution. Together, we are growing the statewide movement for environmental health and social justice. www.caleja.org