

PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION OF OREGON
STAFF REPORT
PUBLIC MEETING DATE: July 22, 2014

REGULAR _____ CONSENT X EFFECTIVE DATE July 22, 2014

DATE: July 14, 2014

TO: Public Utility Commission

FROM: Adam Bless and Aster Adams

THROUGH: Jason Eisdorfer and Maury Galbraith

SUBJECT: OREGON PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION STAFF: (Docket No. UM 1538) Request by Synchro Solar and the Musician's Union for a waiver of the 12-month solar photovoltaic system installation deadline pursuant to OAR 860-084-0210(1).

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends the Commission grant the request by Synchro Solar and the Musician's Union to extend the 12-month deadline to install a solar photovoltaic (SPV) system under the Portland General Electric solar payment option program to August 31, 2014.

DISCUSSION:

Issue

On June 23, 2014, Synchro Solar requested a waiver of the 12-month deadline for installation of a nine kilowatt SPV system on behalf of its client, the Musician's Union. The project was enrolled in the Portland General Electric (PGE) program in June 2013, with an installation deadline of June 25, 2014. Synchro Solar requested an extension to July 30, 2014. In supplemental comments filed June 30, 2014, the Musician's Union requested that the new deadline be August 31, 2014. Synchro Solar filed supplemental comments on July 3, 2014, also requesting a deadline of August 31, 2014.

Rule

The applicable rule is OAR 860-084-0210(1), which states that a capacity reservation expires if the system has not been installed within 12 months of the reservation start date, unless a waiver is granted under OAR 860-084-0000(3). The evaluation criteria

set forth in OAR 860-084-0000(3) for waiver of Division 84 rules is "good cause" shown. The Commission has discretion to determine what constitutes "good cause."

Analysis

In its waiver request dated June 23, 2014, Synchro Solar explained that, due to difficulties obtaining financing, its client could not provide a signed contract until May 28, 2014. Since then, Synchro solar has procured all of the necessary equipment, arranged to have the interconnection work done, and scheduled the actual installation. In its additional comments on July 3, 2014, Synchro Solar noted that about \$14,000 in equipment and other costs are already invested and not refundable.

In its comments of June 30, 2014, the Musician's Union explained that they entered the lottery for the April 2013 enrollment window, but they were not successful. At the time, the Musician's Union did have financing arranged. PGE later informed them that capacity in the program had become available. The Musician's Union reserved this capacity, but by then their original source of financing was no longer available. It took several months to find new financing. The Musician's Union noted that finding financing is more difficult for a non-profit organization.

Synchro Solar states that this installation is a relatively standard one for them. PGE reports that the interconnection application was filed within two months of the capacity reservation date. Synchro Solar has previously installed two dozen projects under the PGE program and has completed all but one within the 12-month deadline.

In determining that "good cause" exists, Staff considered the fact that the Musician's Union originally had financing for this project, but was forced to find new financing on short notice. Staff also considered the fact that Synchro Solar has already spent over \$14,000 and proceeded quickly with the installation once it had a contract. Finally, Staff considered Synchro Solar's track record of successful project completion under this program.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The Musician's Union was unexpectedly forced to find new financing. Over \$14,000 is already invested in the project. Synchro Solar's prior track record suggests that they will likely complete the project if given the extension. Staff therefore recommends granting the new deadline of August 31, 2014.

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PROPOSED COMMISSION MOTION:

The request by Synchro Solar and the Musician's Union to extend the 12-month deadline to install a solar photovoltaic system under the Portland General Electric solar payment option program be granted, and the deadline extended to August 31, 2014.

Ca6-UM 1538 Synchro Solar-Musicians Union VIR waiver request