

Arcadia

19 November 2024

TO: Representative Beth Camp, Chair, House Energy, Utilities and Telecommunications Ad Hoc Committee on Community Solar

CC: Members of the House Energy, Utilities and Telecommunications Ad Hoc Committee on Community Solar

FR: Arcadia

RE: Ad Hoc Committee November 19th, 2024 Hearing- Community Solar Project Development

Chair Camp and esteemed Members of the Georgia House Energy, Utilities and Telecommunications Ad Hoc Committee on Community Solar:

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. I am James Feinstein, Director of Policy at Arcadia. Arcadia is a community solar subscriber manager, which gives us robust insights into the customer experience, which I look forward to detailing for you today.

Introduction to Arcadia

Arcadia is building the software necessary for everyone in Georgia to realize the full benefits of clean energy. Today, customers face a bewildering assortment of energy technologies – ranging from energy efficiency and renewable energy offerings to battery storage and electric vehicles – all of which have unique capabilities, costs, and user experiences. Arcadia’s software makes it possible for energy technology providers to delight their customers and move clean energy forward by enabling simple user experiences that save people money. Arcadia’s software has beneficially served the community solar industry since 2018. Arcadia currently manages more than 200,000 subscribers across 2 gigawatts of project capacity in fourteen states and the District of Columbia -- making it the largest manager of community solar subscribers in the United States.

Arcadia’s role in community solar

Community solar was established to offer the benefits of rooftop solar to the ⅓ of Americans who can’t access it. That includes renters, those with low credit scores, or anyone with a poor or shaded roof.

Arcadia is a community solar subscriber manager, which is distinct from the other panelists today. We neither own nor operate the projects. Rather, project owners hire us to handle all customer facing elements of the project.

We educate and enroll customers, walk them through signing subscriber agreements and disclosure forms which detail, in plain english, the customer terms including guaranteed

savings. We make sure customers pay their bills and receive their savings and handle all interactions between the customer and the utility.

The customer experience

To understand what it's like to be a community solar subscriber, I think it's most helpful to start with an example customer.

Let's imagine a Georgia Power customer with a \$100 power bill in a given month. If they're *not* enrolled in community solar, they would owe \$100 to the utility that month. If they *are* enrolled in community solar, however, we will do our best to match their monthly subscription to \$100. So that customer would receive a bill from Georgia Power with \$100 of usage and \$100 of bill credits, for a total of \$0. Of course, that customer doesn't get free power for the month. They get a discount on the credits generated by their subscription. Assuming they have a 10% discount, they will get \$10 off their monthly bill. So that customer will owe \$90 for their power bill that month. They spend \$10 a month *less* with community solar than without, all while supporting local distributed energy and local jobs.

This Arcadia single bill display of a community solar subscriber in Baltimore Gas & Electric illustrates the customer's total energy charges for the month. This customer had \$302.56 in usage for the month and that's what they would've paid without a subscription. However, because they were enrolled in a project they received \$10.06 in savings, reducing their total bill.

Consumer protections

Consumer protections should be a foundational component of a robust community solar program. Most importantly, programs should always have a guaranteed savings requirement, meaning that customers will always pay less with community solar than they would otherwise. This easily done by requiring that customer subscription fee to be lower than the bill credits generated. So if a customer's subscription generates \$100 in a given month, their subscription fee cannot be above 100% or above \$100.

That guarantee makes community solar unimpeachable, and every customer would be better off participating than not.

Additional consumer protections include prohibitions of early termination fees and credit checks for residential customers. Both of these have no bearing on project financial viability, and instead establish needless barriers to program access for many customers.

Conclusion

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I look forward to your questions.

/s/James Feinstein

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