

FILE: PUCofS.D.#01
DATE: 08-05-2021
TIME: 3:00P,

REFERENCE: DOCKET #EL21-011

South Dakota P.U.C.
% Mr. Chris Nelson, Chairman
Capitol Building, 1st Floor
500 E. Capitol Ave.
Pierre, South Dakota 57501-5070

RECEIVED

AUG 09 2021

**SOUTH DAKOTA PUBLIC
UTILITIES COMMISSION**

Mr. Nelson, and other concerned persons:

My name is Dick Merklin; I live in Cheyenne, Wyoming. My electric power utility is Black Hills Energy. The reason for this letter is quite simple. I am taking a keen interest in the above referenced Docket number, as the decision your Commission makes, concerning this very contentious issue, will have a definite impact on those of us who have privately owned, solar generating systems, on our properties, in the state of Wyoming. I realize the decisions you make are for the citizens of South Dakota; BUT, when a power utility (BHE) makes a proposal to "amend its' rates" (to the PUC) for privately owned solar generated energy systems in South Dakota, it will eventually spill over into the adjoining states, such as Wyoming, where it could reap dire consequences (with a negative decision) to the citizen owners of these privately owned solar generating systems! IF you pass this, in South Dakota, it won't take BHE very long, to bring it to Wyoming, where it will be fought tooth and nail!!!

The proposed request, of a "buy all, sell all" is completely ludicrous!!! This concept has been run up the flag pole (in Wyoming), at least twice, since September, 2019. The last time was this past legislative session, in March of 2021. Both times, "it" never made it out of committee!! This kind of thinking will be the absolute "death knell" for the Solar industry in South Dakota, as well as Wyoming!!! Who, in their right mind is going to shell out tens of thousands of dollars, to have one of these systems, installed on their property, only to be required to pay the "retail rate" (for the electricity produced by their systems, for their own use), to the power utility who owns the grid, they are tied into????!?!?! No one, that's who!!! And then, adding more insult to injury, the utility (in this case BHE) would pay a "paltry" few cents per kWh back to the owner, of the private system!!! There would be absolutely no "incentive" to make the kind of investment required, for one of these solar electrical systems!!! NONE!!! You can say goodbye to the Solar Industry, good paying jobs, fees and taxes (permits, sales taxes, property taxes on these systems, diminished property values, and basically an albatross around the neck of every property owner, that had installed a system, on their property).. This is absolutely insane!!!

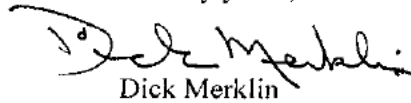
There's an old adage, that goes likes this: IF IT AIN'T BROKE, YA DON'T NEED TO FIX IT!!

An analogy here, then I'll close: Let's say you pay a few thousand dollars to have a building put up on your property (maybe to store your lawnmowers, garden tractor, garden tools, etc.). You get it done, and get ready to put your equipment in it; you open the door, only to find your neighbor's equipment in it, instead. What a deal, huh?? You go find him and ask him what's going on and to get his stuff out of "your building". He tells you, he isn't removing "his" stuff, and on top of that, he tells you that you are going to pay him, for his stuff to be, in YOUR building!!! You wouldn't like that very much, would you???? It's kinda the way that "communism" works (er, socialism, excuse me)... Same principle here!! It isn't right, ethical, OR moral!!!

BHE brings in many millions of dollars, each and every month in "Service /Meter fees", before any thought is given to the kWhs, Kw or Mw used during the billing cycle!! Every customer (1.3 million of them) pays "these" fees.. Those of us who have Solar generating systems, help to reduce the amount of "Carbon emissions" for these utilities, and the storage facilities they are going to be required to build before too long!! We also help them with their energy line losses, help avoid costly new infrastructure expenses, help with contract talks and is a hedge against price spikes, integration costs, and helps improve our air, our health, and protecting

us against climate change, plus the solar industry and owners of these systems, help to provide for jobs, economic activity and tax revenues, in the communities they are in... Again, it don't need fixed, as it ain't broke!

Sincerely yours,



Dick Merklin

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cc: Governor Kristi Noem