

# UTILITY COSTS AND BARRIERS TO GOING SOLAR REMOVED BY REGULATORS

## *Going Solar Is Now Easier and Less Expensive*

Whoever said that all good things must come to an end never saw anything like the Arizona solar industry. With generous government subsidies, rapidly improving technology, and plenty of Arizona sunshine, the past decade has been a great time for homeowners to invest in solar power, and the reasons to go solar are about to get even better after some recent policy victories for energy customers go into effect this month.

Arizona's utility regulator, on November 9, issued a litany of rule-shredding orders to one of the state's largest power companies, resolving a number of longstanding disputes over burdensome restrictions on solar energy. A few of these orders make solar power even more economically beneficial than it already is.

Most importantly, the Arizona Corporation Commission ordered APS to eliminate the "grid-access charge" that it had imposed on owners of home solar systems. This fee, which totaled about \$100 a year per household on average, was based on a supposed need to recoup a shortfall in what solar customers contributed to grid maintenance.

But after a long debate, the commission found this need to be unsubstantiated and ordered it revoked. Solar-industry companies and their customers are celebrating the removal of this arbitrary financial burden, which promises to enhance the financial returns to an investment in solar.

"Arizona got rid of an unjustified and outdated charge that has been a drag on the Arizona solar economy," said Sara Birmingham, a senior policy director at the Solar Energy Industries Association, in a statement. "We are at a point in our country where we need to focus on deploying more clean energy, and unnecessary utility charges and

fees can be a major deterrent to potential solar customers. This change will more fairly recognize the benefits of local solar adoption and we hope we can expand solar accessibility to even more Arizonans. We commend the commission for reversing course on this harmful and discriminatory charge for residential solar customers in Arizona."

Two other rule revocations lift arbitrary restrictions on the size of customers' solar systems. APS had previously capped the productive capacity of residents' systems at 1.5 times their greatest energy demand, which APS calculated on the basis of one hour of peak usage in a year. Another scrapped rule had required customers with systems above a certain KW threshold to buy an expensive new electrical control panel, a mandate with no basis in either technological necessity or the electrical code. This will have the effect of reducing the cost to homeowners of larger system installations by up to \$3000.

These rule changes, which are effective this month, promise to make a good deal even better. By creating substantial cost savings, increasing home equity, and insulating homeowners from unpredictable fossil-fuel prices, solar power has already proven its ability to enhance Arizonans' financial security and independence. Now APS customers can maximize their energy freedom with fewer arbitrary restrictions on how much solar energy they can harness or how much financial benefit they can derive from it.

Solar pioneers are winning the fight for forward-thinking energy policy in Arizona. Have you considered taking advantage of the new opportunities that are opening up? If so, contact SunSolar Solutions today at 623-562-9009 to have a design prepared for your home free of charge.

## GO SOLAR

**NEW REGULATIONS  
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