

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2023

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SENATE BILL 710

Short Title: Community Solar Program Changes. (Public)

Sponsors: Senators Salvador, Woodard, and Meyer (Primary Sponsors).

Referred to: Rules and Operations of the Senate

April 10, 2023

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT TO REVISE THE SCOPE OF THE COMMUNITY SOLAR PROGRAM AND TO INCREASE THE NAMEPLATE CAPACITY OF COMMUNITY SOLAR ENERGY FACILITIES.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1. G.S. 62-126.3 reads as rewritten:

"§ 62-126.3. Definitions.

For purposes of this Article, the following definitions apply:

...

(1a) Affordable housing unit. – All housing units developed for households earning less than eighty percent (80%) of the Area Median Income, as set annually by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

...

(3a) Critical infrastructure. – Buildings designated by the State, county, or municipality as critical, including hospitals, urgent care facilities, emergency shelters, fire stations, and police stations.

...

(16) Tier 1, 2, or 3 counties. – North Carolina counties annually ranked by the Department of Commerce based upon the counties' economic well-being and assigned a Tier designation. The 40 most distressed counties are designated as Tier 1, the next 40 as Tier 2, and the 20 least distressed as Tier 3."

SECTION 2. G.S. 62-126.8 reads as rewritten:

"§ 62-126.8. Community solar energy facilities.

(a) Each offering utility shall file a plan with the Commission to ~~and~~ offer a community solar energy facility program for participation by its retail ~~customers.~~ customers in counties designated as Tier 1 or Tier 2, as annually determined by the North Carolina Department of Commerce, and affordable housing units in Tier 3 counties. So long as participating retail customers meet one such designation in the initial program year, they need not be recertified for subsequent program years. The community solar energy facility program shall be designed so that each community solar energy facility offsets the energy use of not less than five subscribers and no single subscriber has more than a forty percent (40%) ~~interest.~~ interest, except for community solar energy facilities that are connected to buildings designated as critical infrastructure and with the capability to support such buildings in the event of grid failure. Buildings designated as critical infrastructure may have up to a seventy-five percent (75%) interest in a community solar energy facility. The offering utility shall make its community solar



1 energy facility program available on a first-come, first-served ~~basis until the total nameplate~~
2 ~~generating capacity of those facilities equals 20 megawatts (MW) basis.~~

3 (b) A community solar energy facility ~~shall have a nameplate capacity of no more than~~
4 ~~five megawatts (MW).~~ must be interconnected to the offering utility's distribution system. Each
5 subscription shall be sized to represent at least 200 watts (W) of the community solar energy
6 facility's generating capacity and to supply no more than one hundred percent (100%) of the
7 maximum annual peak demand of electricity of each subscriber at the subscriber's premises.

8 (c) A community solar energy facility must be located in the service territory of the
9 offering utility filing the plan. Subscribers shall be located in the State of North Carolina and ~~the~~
10 ~~same county or a county contiguous to where the facility is located.~~ The electric public utility
11 may file a request for Commission approval for an exemption from the location requirement of
12 this subsection and the Commission may approve the request for a facility located up to 75 miles
13 from the county of the subscribers, if the Commission deems the exemption to be in the public
14 interest within the service territory of the offering utility.

15 (d) The offering utility shall credit the subscribers to its community solar energy facility
16 for all subscribed shares of energy generated by the facility at ~~the avoided cost rate.~~ a just and
17 reasonable rate as determined by the Commission.

18 (e) The Commission may approve, disapprove, or modify a community solar energy
19 facility program. The program shall meet all of the following requirements:

20 ...

21 (4) Include a program implementation schedule.
22 schedule to fully subscribe to the
23 program as soon as practicable.

24 ...

25 (7) ~~Hold harmless customers of the electric public utility who do not subscribe to~~
26 ~~a community solar energy facility.~~

27 (8) Allow subscribers to have the option to own the renewable energy certificates
28 produced by the community solar energy facility.

29 (f) Existing community solar energy facilities may participate in the community solar
30 energy facility program."

SECTION 3. This act becomes effective October 1, 2023.