

As we discussed, before you were on the PSC, Georgia Power wanted a connection fee for solar power generators. This was back in 2013, when it never actually got to the PSC, because Sierra Club and others organized Town Halls around the state, in which the public response was overwhelmingly opposed. <http://www.l-a-k-e.org/blog/?p=6231>

Mary Landers reported for SavannahNow, October 17, 2013, “Ga. Power proposed rate hike, solar fee blasted,”

““Unconscionable” and “theft” were two of the words used Thursday evening to describe a residential rate hike and fee on solar installations proposed by Georgia Power....”

Mary Landers also reported for SavannahNow, October 15, 2013, “Ga. Power rate hike, solar fee focus of town hall meeting,”

“...Georgia Power argues it needs to impose the fee to make customers with solar on their roof - and no long term agreement for selling it to the monopoly power - pay their fair share for accessing the grid when they need it.

At a recent PSC hearing Commissioner Chuck Eaton asked why solar power is being singled out.

“In the end, what is it about solar that’s unique in reducing one’s electric usage versus other techniques that are available to reduce electric usage?” he asked.

Greg Roberts, Georgia Power’s vice president of pricing and planning, replied solar is unique because it’s intermittent and doesn’t permanently reduce demand.

“...But the load hasn’t changed. That underlying load hasn’t changed. It’s just sometimes their generator is supplying and sometimes we’re supplying or sometimes both of us are.”

Since I have 15 kilowatts of solar panels on my farm workshop roof, I can attest that my electricity generation does, in fact, change the utility load, because much of the power I generate I use right here on the farm, without it ever going through the utility meter, thus reducing the amount of electricity Colquitt EMC has to generate. The whole rationale for Georgia utilities paying solar generators less per kilowatt-hour than the customer pays the utility is that the utility is paying the “avoided cost” of not generating that power by the usual utility methods. Surely Mr. Roberts knows that.

In addition, Austin Energy in 2013 studied this issue. Chris Warren wrote for Oxford American 7 June 2013, [The Revolution Will Be Solarized](#),

To come up with a true value of solar to the utility, Austin Energy formulated numerical values for all of the benefits yielded by each kilowatt-hour of distributed generation. These included not only the actual electricity produced but also the elimination of line losses as well as costs the utility could avoid by not building, or even delaying, construction on more generation. “If you put off a billion-dollar decision for one year, that’s at five percent interest,” said [Karl] Rabago. “It’s a big savings in cash each year.”

Due to that study, Austin Energy started crediting “homeowners who have installed solar at a rate three cents higher than retail for every kilowatt-hour produced....”

The Minnesota Department of Commerce came to similar conclusions.

<https://programs.dsireusa.org/system/program/detail/5666>

Minnesota utilities have not chosen to use this so-called Value of Solar Tariff, because