

Principles/Recommendations for Large-scale and Distributed Energy Interconnection Reform: Solar Energy Industries Association Report



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The Solar Energy Industries Association (“SEIA”) issued a June 14th report titled:

Lessons from the Front Line: Principles and Recommendations for Large-scale and Distributed Energy Interconnection Reform (“Report”)

The *Report’s* authors include Dave Gahl, Melissa Alfano, and Jeremiah Miller.

SEIA describes itself as the national trade association of the solar and solar-plus storage industries, focused on research, education and advocacy. Membership includes 1,000 companies.

The *Report* notes that the United States solar industry continues to have rapid expansion. However, it expresses concern for what it characterizes as:

. . . outdated interconnection policies pose a major threat to solar and storage deployment across the nation.

The *Report* argues that:

. . . interconnection policies and regional transmission organizations (“RTOs”), vertically integrated utilities, and distributed utilities have not kept pace with the demands of this new energy marketplace.

The *Report* advocates what it describes is a series of reform principles and interconnection reform recommendations which include:

- Add staff, adhere to interconnection timelines, and advance needed policies related to planning, forecasting, and standards to ensure progress is made toward state and national clean energy goals;
- Automate and standardize processes where appropriate; and
- Collect more information about infrastructure upgrade costs for all types of projects and make them accessible to developers.

Interconnection reform for large-scale projects is addressed by the *Report* which recommends that the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission standardize queue management requirements across RTOs and require them to:

- Make better transmission system operating information more accessible to interconnection customers; and
- Explore alternate models for paying for network upgrade costs.

In regards to interconnection reforms for distribution level projects, SEIA recommends that state regulators require each distribution utility to:

- Improve and open the black box of distribution system planning and perform proactive forecasting and scenario development to meet state clean energy goals; and
- Provide greater transparency and accuracy of interconnection estimates of infrastructure upgrade costs using hosting capacity maps, through the study process, or through preapplication processes.

State regulators are asked to:

- Reform cost sharing for infrastructure upgrades and split costs between interconnection customers and other system beneficiaries; and
- Increase project maturity requirements for projects to enter the interconnection queues.

A copy of the *Report* can be downloaded [here](#).