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Net metering would lower electric bills

As energy costs rise and wars are fought in part over energy resources, it is time for our state to join the rest of the nation in supporting folks who are willing to invest in solar and other renewable energy technologies. One low-cost program that reduces the effective cost of solar energy generation is net metering.

According to the U.S. Department of Energy, net metering is an important incentive for consumer investment in renewable energy generation. Net metering enables customers to use their own generation to offset their consumption over a billing period by allowing their electric meters to turn backwards when they generate electricity in excess of their demand. This offset means customers receive retail prices for the excess electricity they generate.

Unfortunately, South Carolina is not one of the 35 states that offers net metering. Currently the S.C. Public Service Commission (SCPSC) is receiving written comments to determine whether folks like us want to have the choice to invest in solar generation with net metering.

The current proposal, offered by most of the S.C. public electrical utilities, allows for non-residential electrical customers to generate electricity, but does not appear to offer that option for residential customers. North Carolina, for example, allows residential and non-residential customers to sell solar power back to the grid.

Please join me in urging SCPSC to offer net-metering to residential customers by providing your written comments to the SCPSC no later than Feb. 1, 2007. Written comments should reference SCPSC Docket 2005-385-E Order No. 2006-680.

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