



# Berkeley Electric Cooperative, Inc.

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

www.berkeleyelectric.coop

Post Office Box 1234, Moncks Corner, SC 29461

January 2, 2020

Comments from Berkeley Electric Cooperative, by Eddie Plowden and Tim Swicord.

Berkeley Electric Cooperative has worked with just over 800 of our members to have solar PV systems installed on their homes. This began in 2012 and has continued through 2019. Our rate/rider has changed over time and the process has been modified to provide quality installations for our member owners, a fair return value for solar PV investors in their home and a rate that is supported by the participant and not subsidized by other members.

We have seen many situations where members have been tricked/mislead into installing a solar PV system. As a result, we hired a full-time person to work with members and financially advise the members on the solar PV system they are considering. The following are some comments for protecting the consumer:

1. Proposal rate and rate increases: require all residential solar PV installations use the utility's actual energy price and average 10-year rate increase, as part of the proposal. Example: many times, we see beginning rates higher than our current rate and increases in electricity price around 3% PER YEAR. Looking back and forward, we see rates increasing at 1% or less per year for Berkeley Electric members.
2. Elder protection: if citizens over 75 are getting proposals for solar PV systems they need to be POSITIVE return on investment or something clearly stating the customer will be losing money every month, until the system is paid off. More protection for the senior who is deceived, to get out of the system cost, without financial penalty!
3. Lease agreement: most lease agreements we have seen, offer a lease with an annual increase of 3% per year, which is VERY high for all utilities in SC. The lease also must guarantee energy production to equal or exceed the projected kWh generation or the consumer does not have to pay the lease. All contracts we have reviewed, state there is NO responsibility of the LEASOR to produce any kWh for the solar PV system and not held responsible if the system fails to perform.
4. Provide specific guidance/language concerning the Tax Credits. Many we deal with believe it is a REBATE and do not understand the difference between a Credit and a Rebate. Many proposals use the word "Incentive" which makes it more confusing.

Just these few items could be a big protection to our members. Please contact us if you have further questions.

Respectfully submitted,

Eddie Plowden  
Manager, Marketing & Energy Services

Tim Swicord  
Supervisor, Marketing & Energy Service.

