

New PUC order affects solar panel modifications



AKAMAI MONEY

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QUESTION: When announcing the new solar incentive programs, Hawaiian Electric Co. said "current net energy metering customers who want to install more photovoltaic panels or otherwise modify their current systems will be required to transition to either the new grid supply or self supply programs." What does modify mean?

ANSWER: Under the new PUC (Public Utilities Commission) order, adding additional panels or otherwise increasing the capacity of a PV system would require a customer to switch their NEM system to one of the new interconnection programs.

Q: If a customer with NEM replaces an old/broken panel of their current system, is that modifying?
A: No. Replacement or



PROFILE

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repair of a damaged PV panel would not require customers to change programs. Customers who want to increase the capacity of their PV systems would need to transition to one of the new programs.

Q: If a customer with NEM

adds panels to a system, what happens to the NEM status?

A: Under the new PUC order, adding additional panels or otherwise increasing the capacity of a PV system would require a customer to switch their NEM system to one of the new interconnection programs.

Q: If a customer with NEM adds energy storage to a solar panel system, does that change the NEM qualification?

A: The NEM qualification does not change as long as the addition of storage does not increase the overall capacity of the PV system. The new system will have to meet all current technical requirements and be reviewed before storage is interconnected.

Q: If a customer with NEM sells his or her house, is the solar panel system still recognized under NEM?

A: Customers who purchase a home with an approved NEM agreement or a NEM application hand-delivered or postmarked on or before Oct. 13, 2015, will be grandfathered under the NEM program.

Q: Will new customers who decide to use grid-supply or self-supply options face a faster approval timeline than NEM applicants?

A: Self-supply systems are designed so they won't export excess electricity to the grid, so customers in areas with high concentrations of PV can receive an expedited review if they choose this option. We will continue to follow the PUC-approved process for reviewing applications. The time required to review and approve an application depends on a number of factors, including the size of the proposed system, the amount of PV already installed in the customer's neighborhood and whether the proposed system meets the required performance standards.

Interviewed by Kathryn Mykleseth