

**From:** Mark Toney

**Date:** August 3, 2021 at 5:12:24 PM PDT

**Subject: Campaign to Modernize Solar Subsidies**

Dear X

**TURN needs the help of \_\_\_\_\_** to convince the CPUC to stop overpaying higher income rooftop solar homeowners, hundreds of dollars annually, at the expense of renters, low income residents, communities of color, and every other customer who does not own solar panels.

Just under half of all new solar is going into working and middle class neighborhoods. In addition, over 150,000 solar roofs serve customers in the CARE discount program. This year alone, 30,000 solar-powered rental units serving more than 100,000 people at multifamily affordable housing projects are under development thanks to net metering. By 2030, the Solar on Multifamily Affordable Housing (SOMAH) projects will bring another 300,000 families the direct benefit of rooftop solar. [bit.ly/factssolar](http://bit.ly/factssolar)

**Please sign onto FAIR POWER CA: Consumer Campaign to Modernize Solar Subsidies, and send me your logo by August 13.**

I have attached the draft fact sheet, not for distribution, for your review.

**Current solar subsidies (Net Energy Metering) increase social inequities. between haves and have nots.**

1) Nonsolar customers overpay an average of \$100–\$230 a year for solar rooftop subsidies.

**FALSE:**

- The latest and most detailed energy studies indicate that rooftop solar and battery storage will save the average ratepayer \$295 / year over the next thirty years. [bit.ly/VibrantStudy](http://bit.ly/VibrantStudy)
- For a deep dive into how TURN and the utilities's claims are incorrect, see Bill Powers' detailed rebuttal [bit.ly/PowersNEMRebuttal](http://bit.ly/PowersNEMRebuttal)

2) Solar rooftop customers don't pay their fair share of wildfire and other grid maintenance costs. **FALSE:** See above. In addition, data obtained directly from the utilities show that rooftop solar consumers pay between \$46 and \$118 a month on average for grid infrastructure costs through monthly fees, non-bypassable charges and electricity purchased from the utility. [bit.ly/avgsolarbills](http://bit.ly/avgsolarbills)

3) Low income CARE customers make up over 30% of customers, but own less than 2% of solar rooftops. **FALSE:** Just under 15% of all CARE accounts are served by rooftop solar systems according to state data. The Save California Solar campaign is pushing to accelerate

this trend so that millions of working communities can get the benefits of rooftop and community solar. [bit.ly/solarCAREdata](http://bit.ly/solarCAREdata)

**Modernizing solar subsidies promote fairness, if you and I convince the CPUC to take action.**

- 1) End overpayments. Adjust subsidies for future rooftop solar owners to reflect fair value to all customers.
- 2) Require future rooftop solar customers to pay their fair share of maintaining the grid they use every day.
- 3) Create targeted subsidies to increase affordability for CARE homeowners to install solar rooftop systems.

**FACT:**

- TURN's proposal will force solar users to pay monthly solar penalty fees, and severely cut the credit solar users receive for sharing their extra energy with the community.
- TURN'S rooftop solar proposal will make solar prohibitively expensive for working and middle class Californians, and decrease working class adoption of rooftop solar.

**If the CPUC fails to stand up to pressure from the solar industry.**

In other words, the CPUC should **give in** to pressure from the utilities to gut rooftop solar?

Consider:

- The Save California Solar coalition includes nearly 200 local, state and national nonprofit organizations, over 30,000 individuals who have signed the petition, and also the solar industry. [www.savecaliforniasolar.org/about](http://www.savecaliforniasolar.org/about)
- TURN's proposal is functionally indistinguishable from the utility proposals.
- TURN is lobbying side-by-side with the utilities and large-scale renewable energy developers to kill rooftop solar.

- 1) Overpayments will double by 2030, leading to hundreds of dollars of bill increases. **FALSE:** See both Vibrant Clean Energy report and Bill Powers rebuttals cited above. Reducing rooftop solar will deprive ratepayers of \$295/year in average bill savings over the next thirty years.
- 2) Increased wildfire and grid maintenance costs will be spread among fewer customers. **FALSE:** Increasing rooftop solar will reduce the cost of wildfire and grid maintenance costs for all ratepayers.
- 3) California climate change progress will be undermined if electricity costs are too high. **FALSE:** The Vibrant report shows how reducing rooftop solar will increase climate change emissions by 4.1 million metric tons. And by driving up electricity costs and depriving consumers of ways to control their energy bills, reducing rooftop solar will deter the public from switching to electric cars and appliances, further slowing down climate change progress.

Please let me know if you have any questions that I may answer.

In partnership and solidarity,

Thanks,

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# FAIR POWER CA

A CONSUMER CAMPAIGN TO MODERNIZE SOLAR SUBSIDIES



## DID YOU KNOW You Are Overpaying For Other People's Solar?

A sustainable future depends on California's ability to equitably provide cost-effective, reliable, renewable energy to every resident.

For a thorough, sourced piece showing how TURN's claim is incorrect, and how rooftop solar actually saves all ratepayers money, see [Protect Our Communities Foundation Bill Powers' rebuttal to the CPUC: bit.ly/PowersNEMRebuttal](#)

**Rooftop solar is less expensive than ever to purchase and install, but solar subsidies continue to rise.** Unless the CPUC modernizes this outdated program, utility bills will skyrocket for non-solar customers, and California's transition to a clean, renewable, zero carbon electric system will be at-risk.

- Right now rooftop solar users benefit from generous subsidies—which significantly favor higher-income homeowners and disproportionately leave neighborhoods of color behind.
- Smarter, more equitable, solar incentives will promote a faster transition to clean energy, lower the cost of monthly electricity bills for homes without rooftop solar panels, and create a more fair and balanced system.
- Prioritizing larger-scale renewable systems, which support entire communities rather than a single home, can make renewable power a reality for lower income and working class families and help us achieve our climate goals more quickly.
- Overpaying for solar undermines state climate goals by making electricity bills too costly for California residents to switch to electric vehicles, water heaters, stoves, and heating systems.

**Fact: Doubling down on large-scale renewables and slowing down rooftop solar will cost Californians \$120 billion over the next thirty years, or \$295/ratepayer per year on average.** <https://bit.ly/VibrantStudy>

**“Right now we are leaving communities behind.”**

— Assemblymember Mark Stone —

One of just four Assemblymembers to speak in favor of the Utility Profit Grab (AB 1139), which would have slapped all solar users past and present with fees from \$54 to \$91/month



## Rooftop Solar Subsidies Increase Electricity Rates for Everyone Else

**If you are one of the approximately 90% of residential customers who don't own solar panels, you are overpaying on your utility bills to support those who do.**

- In 2021 alone, each non-solar customer will overpay on their bills an additional \$100-230 for solar customers. By 2030 these amounts could double if the CPUC fails to act. **False: TURN should provide a source for their claim. Here's ours: [bit.ly/VibrantStudy](https://bit.ly/VibrantStudy)**
- Currently, solar panels are more affordable and rooftop solar is mandated on new residential construction. Unless we update the system, the costs of these overpayment subsidies will continue to increase.

**If TURN gets their way, people who buy solar homes will pay \$50-\$91/month just to have solar. Current rooftop solar customers don't pay a fair share for the energy grid we all use.**

- Rooftop solar customers continue to need the grid to sell excess electricity and to buy electricity once the sun has set, but they no longer pay an equitable share of the grid costs. With the addition of each new rooftop solar panel, the cost to keep our utility grid reliable, safe, and responsive unfairly shifts to those consumers without rooftop solar.

**FALSE: Rooftop solar reduces the cost of long-distance power lines by billions of dollars each year - \$2.6 billion in 2018 alone according to CAISO. This benefits all ratepayers. [bit.ly/CAISO18](https://bit.ly/CAISO18)**

**“Everybody benefits from the grid, and everybody should pay their fair share.”**

— Assemblymember Wendy Carrillo —

**Another Assemblymember who supported hitting all solar users with huge monthly fees.**

## Current Rooftop Solar Subsidy Program Creates Inequitable Burdens

- Customers pay 3¢/kWh for solar energy when it is sourced through large-scale projects
- Customers pay about 26¢/kWh to compensate solar customers for their rooftop panels. **This is misleading. TURN ignores the long-distance power lines that must ship the large-scale energy plus the costs of wildfire mitigation and blackouts.**

**Most electricity consumers can't participate in the rooftop solar program.**

- Customers who receive CARE (low-income discounts) represent 28% of residential customers (PG&E), but CARE customers with rooftop solar are only 1.7% of total PG&E residential customers. For SCE, CARE customers represent 32% of all residential customers but CARE rooftop solar customers are only 1.5% of total residential customers.
- Lower-income and working class families, especially those who live in communities of color, can seldom afford solar panels.
- Rental properties in working class neighborhoods are highly unlikely to install rooftop solar since tenants typically pay their own utility bills.
- Homes in neighborhoods with lots of trees cannot benefit from rooftop solar panels.

**FALSE: Just under 15% of all CARE accounts are served by rooftop solar systems according to state data. Save California Solar is proposing to accelerate this trend. [bit.ly/factssolar](https://bit.ly/factssolar)**





**“Those wildfire costs, they’re also put on ratepayers, not solar users. Every time we add costs, it’s shifting the burden.”**

— Assemblymember Lorena Gonzales —

The leader of the Utility Profit Grab (AB 1139) to slap \$50-\$90/mo fee on solar users

## Simple Solutions to Modernize FUTURE Rooftop Solar Subsidies

**Future rooftop solar subsidies should be adjusted to reflect the value of rooftop solar to all customers.**

- Solar customers should be fairly compensated for the value of their solar system contributions to the electrical grid.
- Current rooftop solar users should be allowed remain on their existing rates for now, but should also be required to make a modest contribution towards subsidies for new low-income solar customers.

Rooftop solar users already pay between \$46 and \$118/mo for these and other grid costs.

**Rooftop solar customers should pay their fair share of wildfire, grid operation and CARE discounts for low income customers.**

- Most California utility ratepayers contribute to wildfire mitigation efforts in their utility bills. Currently rooftop solar customers don’t pay their fair share. It’s only fair to expect rooftop solar users to contribute equitably to prevent wildfires—just like everyone else. **False, see above**
- Rooftop solar customers do not pay their fair share for utility grid maintenance and programs that support research and development, low-income discounts, and many other public purpose efforts. It is unfair to ask non-solar users cover the difference since the benefits are shared by all customers.

**False, see above**

**Targeted subsidies to support low-income installation of rooftop solar would promote sustainable expansion of rooftop solar and save consumers money.**

- Up-front rebates should be provided to low-income customers with new solar systems sufficient to allow these customers to achieve a 10-year payback period.
- Limiting rebates to the amounts needed to support defined participation goals will significantly reduce the burden on non-solar customers.
- Any additional rebates for other solar customers should be funded through sources other than the rates of non-solar customers (like general tax revenues, a state climate bond or Cap-and-Trade funds).

We agree we must supercharge programs to accelerate working class solar adoptions. Vilifying rooftop solar's existing progress and slashing net metering will achieve the opposite.

**Many of us have run out of patience with the CPUC**

**(California Public Utilities Commission), to fix the cost shift issue.**

— Assemblymember Al Muratsuchi —

For a plan that will actually keep rooftop solar growing more equitably, so that millions of middle and working class Californians can cut their energy bills and avoid blackouts, see [www.SaveCaliforniaSolar.org](http://www.SaveCaliforniaSolar.org) and check out our infographic: [bit.ly/workingsolar](http://bit.ly/workingsolar)





## The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) Must Act!

**We expect the CPUC to make a decision on this issue in late fall of 2021. Your voice is critical!**

- Add your organization's name, or your name, to **Fair Power California: A Consumer Campaign to Modernize Solar Subsidies.**
- Sign a petition asking the California Public Utilities Commission to modernize solar subsidies to promote climate equity and fair bills for all communities.
- Using this link, submit your own comment for the CPUC proceeding on reforming Net Energy Metering (R20-08-020): [apps.cpuc.ca.gov/apex/f?p=401:1:0](https://apps.cpuc.ca.gov/apex/f?p=401:1:0)

**When Submitting your comments, please include:**

- Name / County
- Are you a rooftop solar consumer: Yes/No?
- Reference the bullets in this document to help guide general talking points, and feel free to make the comment personal and authentic

One more thought: TURN has done a great job advocating for ratepayers to the utilities over the years. Unfortunately, TURN seems to think that doubling down on the same centralized monopoly-run system we've had for 100 years is the best way to stop budget-busting rate hikes and endless blackouts. TURN would better serve ratepayers by recognizing that we need a better, more decentralized system that reduces the cost of long-distance power lines and increases our local resilience to blackouts. And TURN would serve the public better by using actual data on the ground, rather than utility-cooked accounting methods. More facts and citations here: [bit.ly/factssolar](https://bit.ly/factssolar)

**Sign-on Partner  
logos here**