

KENNY C. GUINN  
Governor

**STATE OF NEVADA  
PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF NEVADA**

1150 East William Street  
Carson City, Nevada 89701-3109  
Policy (775) 687-6007 • Fax (775) 687-6110  
Staff (775) 687-6001 • Fax (775) 687-6120  
[www.puc.state.nv.us](http://www.puc.state.nv.us)

RURAL NEVADA  
557 W. Silver Street, No. 205  
Elko, Nevada 89801  
(775) 738-4914 • Fax (775) 778-6928



SOUTHERN NEVADA OFFICE  
101 Convention Center Dr., Suite 250  
Las Vegas, Nevada 89109  
(702) 486-7210 • Fax (702) 486-7206

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Contact: Rebecca Wagner  
(775) 687-6107

**PUC ADOPTS RENEWABLE ENERGY REGULATIONS**

*Carson City, Nev.* – The Public Utilities Commission (PUC or Commission) today voted to adopt new renewable energy regulations that establish incentives for the Solar Energy Systems Demonstration Program.

The Solar Energy Systems Demonstration Program was created by the passage of AB 431 in the 2003 legislative session and provides incentives to participants utilizing photovoltaics or solar energy for generating electricity.

“I am delighted that the regulations have been adopted by the Commission and the program can move forward,” said Chris Giunchigliani, a Las Vegas Assemblywoman and sponsor of the legislation. “While the individual systems are small, the combined effect of several systems installed on schools, homes and businesses will result in a reduction in the demand for electricity. This is particularly critical during times of peak consumption of electricity on hot summer days in Las Vegas.”

Eligible participants will be offered incentives from Nevada Power Company and Sierra Pacific Power Company. For the first program year beginning July 1, 2004, participants can receive \$5 per watt of capacity generated by the solar energy systems up to a combined total of 500 kilowatts. By 2006, the incentive will be \$3 per watt up to a combined total of 3 megawatts of capacity.

Schools, public buildings, private residences and businesses will be eligible to participate under the program. The Task Force for Renewable Energy and Energy Conservation will oversee the program and determine the qualifications for the participants.

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Don Soderberg, PUC Chairman and presiding officer, expressed his support of the program.

“Solar energy is our most abundant resource,” he said. “This program will vitalize the development of solar energy and will lessen our dependence on fossil fuels and volatile wholesale power markets.”

The utilities will be able to utilize the Renewable Energy Credits (REC) generated by the program participants to meet the requirements of the Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS).

“Today’s PUCN action should help jump start small scale solar photovoltaic installations for residences and small businesses throughout Nevada,” said Bob Balzar, Director of Energy Efficiency and Conservation who will be responsible for implementation of this program. “Sierra Pacific Power Company and Nevada Power Company are in full support of solar incentives and will begin immediately to implement this incentive program that translates to \$20 million over three years.”

Program participants can chose to forego the incentive and transfer the RECs to the utility by signing a standardized contract with the utility for an extended period of time.

“We look forward to gaining valuable operation experiences that could lead to the development of more efficient and economical solar energy systems in the future,” said Balzar.

The Commission unanimously approved the new regulations and will forward the finalized version to the Legislative Counsel Bureau for review.

During the public comment period, Suzanne Johnson of Gardnerville, an avid supporter of solar energy development, expressed her enthusiasm for the Commission’s action.

“I really want to thank the commission for laying the groundwork for the solar energy buy downs,” said Johnson.

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