

Kuether-Steele, Molly

From: Bauman, Robert
Sent: Tuesday, February 11, 2020 7:29 AM
To: Kuether-Steele, Molly; Lemmer, Jodi
Subject: FW: Response to Michel Barnett Letter on Solar Dated Feb 8

Please add to the file.

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows 10

From: [Michael Barnett](#)
Sent: Monday, February 10, 2020 9:19 PM
To: [Bauman, Robert](#)
Cc: 'mike.s.barnett@gmail.com'; [Kovac, Nik](#)
Subject: RE: Response to Michel Barnett Letter on Solar Dated Feb 8

Alder Bauman,

Please see my responses to Erick's comments below in red. It did not appear that he actually read the letter in its entirety based on his responses. I am happy to send this reply to others, but don't have everyone's email that he had responded too. Feel free to forward my response or send me emails of the relevant folks I should send to.

As this is not company business, if you could reply to my personal email at mike.s.barnett@gmail.com that would be appreciated.

Thanks, Mike

From: Shambarger, Erick
Sent: Monday, February 10, 2020 1:44 PM
To: Bauman, Robert; Spiker, Scott; Kovac, Nik; Murphy, Michael (Alderman); Johnson, Cavalier; Borkowski, Mark
Cc: Hittman, Elizabeth; Misky, David
Subject: Response to Michel Barnett Letter on Solar Dated Feb 8

FYI

Barnett responses in red...2/10/2020

Good afternoon,

I'm writing in response to Mr. Michael Barnett's letter from February 8th that has been added to Council file 191604. First, it should be noted that Mr. Barnett is neither a City of Milwaukee resident nor a We Energies ratepayer. Yes, this is correct--my address is at the end of the letter. The Solar Now docket is chock full of public comments from Milwaukee residents against Solar Now. I'm not recalling 1 resident that was for it.

He does not speak for Renew Wisconsin.

Renew Wisconsin has provided extensive testimony on the record about their opposition to this program. At the time of the original Solar Now application, the commission was made up of 3 Walker appointed commissioners. Solar Now was going to be approved regardless of Renew's comments so their intent was really to get some restrictions to the

program's use. Since the Solar Now approval, the commission has essentially turned over. The Evers' appointee, Chair Valcq, dissented when the remaining 2 Walker commissioners approved Alliant's Solar Now copy cat tariff. Since that time 1 of the 2 Walker appointees has retired early, and Evers is working to appoint a new commissioner, which will leave a 2-1 Evers majority. Times are changing... There is unanimous agreement on the Renew board that we would not support an expansion of the Solar Now program if We Energies applied for one.

Furthermore, I'm proposing Solar Now not as a "misinformed host," but as an experienced energy professional with the goals of rapidly scaling up the amount of renewable energy in Wisconsin, protecting the interests of local taxpayers, and supporting economic equity.

Apologies, that was a bit of a "cheap shot". Please delete "misinformed" and replace with "misguided".

- 1) The "Alternative Tariff" referenced by Mr. Barnett is the Dedicated Renewable Energy Resource (DRER), which is also a We Energies program.

That is not correct. The alternate tariff I am referring to would be based on the MGE Renewable Energy Rider. See page 5 of my letter. DRER is not a good fit for this installation. DRER is intended for a utility scale system on the order of 50MW+ outside of Milwaukee County in a farm field. MGE's RER is intended for smaller local systems and provides credit at retail cost---not wholesale like the DRER---retail credit is about double what the wholesale credit is.

I think the City should potentially use *both* Solar Now and the DRER. We can use Solar Now for the first eight acres of the landfill, and if the Council chooses, use the DRER for the remaining 30+ acres. However, Solar Now is a lower risk program to local taxpayers and provides nothing but revenue for the City. Under that program, the solar system is entirely paid for by We Energies (and admittedly, its rate payers from throughout their entire service territory), and the City gets a lease payment for use of the land. By contrast, under the DRER, the *City* pays for the cost of the solar array and receives the lease revenue + an additional revenue. You hope to break even on it, but there is a risk there. And if the revenue on Solar Now comes in lower than projected, we would also get lower revenue under the DRER since it uses the same formula for valuing capacity. So my thinking is start with Solar Now, and if we're comfortable with that, move on to the DRER. In fact, the revenue from the Solar Now project could hedge the financial risk of a DRER project or it could be used to fund additional City-owned solar on our own buildings. From my standpoint, using Solar Now is the most equitable funding approach for the most vulnerable in our city because the system costs are spread across the whole region.

With the changing of the PSC guard there is opportunity to get a better program for the City. You are no longer hostage to We Energies. Take advantage of that. See page 5 of my letter.

- 2) The PSC has already approved ratepayer support of Solar Now. So the customers that utilize it first will get the benefit. New Berlin School District, UW-Parkside, and others are already getting revenue from this. I'd like to see Milwaukee benefit from this new revenue as well. And philosophically, I'm perfectly fine with ratepayer support of solar projects. I'd rather have that than continuing ratepayer support for fossil fuels only. If we don't use Solar Now, other suburban communities will use it and ratepayers in the City of Milwaukee will pay part of the bill without getting revenues back.

Don't know where to start with this one... 2 wrongs don't make a right. Just because the Walker commissioners decided it was okay to let We Energies fleece ratepayers, doesn't mean it should be okay for the City of Milwaukee to be an accomplice. Ratepayers should not be treated as a pinata---break open and everyone grabs the candy.

If some bully busted a kids candy bag open on Halloween, would it be okay for all the other kids in the vicinity to grab the candy and run off? How about we teach our kids to pick up the candy, return back to the bullied kid, and let the bully know that this behavior is not okay.

Let's call out Solar Now for what it is. Cut through all the technical lingo about accredited capacity value, MISO, etc and the analogies are spot on. We are trying to rationalize something that really has no business being rationalized. Solar Now is crap; there are no two ways about it.

- 3) Solar stakeholders (particularly some private solar companies) have objected to We Energies using the Solar Now program to box out the private rooftop solar market. And it's true that they originally offered Solar Now to the City as an alternative to the roof-top projects we were doing with Eagle Point. However, we declined to use the Solar Now program *in that context* as a replacement for our own projects. What I'm proposing it to use Solar Now on a landfill that *cannot be developed by the private solar market unless We Energies agrees to purchase that power*. That's an important distinction.

This is not accurate. PURPA requires We Energies to purchase the energy...it's a federal law. See my letter and associated footnote 11.

- 4) My goal is to advance renewable energy across all sectors, including a robust and competitive roof-top solar market and have We Energies invest in renewable energy. I'd like to avoid what I call the "solar circular firing squad" whereby We Energies creates obstacles to the private solar market, and solar advocates retaliate by fighting We Energies' new solar programs. I'm fighting for all of it. It's part of our "All of the Above" approach to solar energy. The County has looked at solar by the airport for years and has done nothing. The time to take bold action on climate change is now. This is the right project using the right tariff at the right time.

Solar Now empowers We Energies, no one else. Read my letter, read my responses. It's all the facts. I think the decision is quite straightforward, but you all need to arrive at that conclusion on your own. There are win-win solutions within reach that could appease both sides of this argument. How about we get busy as a community on these solutions, and stop arguing if it is okay to be stealing some other kids candy.

Respectfully, Mike Barnett

Thank you for your consideration.

Erick Shambarger, Environmental Sustainability Director
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eshamb@milwaukee.gov

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