

Solar Advocates File Emergency Motion to Prevent Ameren from Devastating Illinois' Solar Market

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Chicago, IL -- Today a coalition of solar and environmental groups filed [an emergency motion with the Illinois Commerce Commission \(ICC\)](#) to prevent utility company Ameren from devastating rooftop solar in southern and central Illinois. Last week Ameren told the Commission it intends to eliminate fair compensation for the solar energy homeowners and families produce. Ameren would slash the credits solar customers receive for excess clean energy, a foundational policy known as net metering, as soon as October 1.

The abrupt move would cost the average residential solar customer hundreds of dollars per year, wiping out savings on energy bills and putting solar projects out of reach for many consumers. Ending the policy early impacts every new solar customer in Ameren territory as well as hundreds that have already committed to install solar but now won't receive the full savings they signed up for. Ameren's move would disrupt the solar group purchasing programs currently being sponsored by municipalities and advocacy groups in Champaign-Urbana Carbondale, and several Metro East counties that were expected to drive numerous residents to purchase new solar systems during the month of October.

By suddenly reducing the value of rooftop solar, Ameren is also threatening jobs at Illinois' independent solar businesses, which have already seen 3,500 jobs disappear this year alone due to a lack of funding in the state's clean energy program and the impacts of COVID19.

"This move is contrary to Illinois' commitment to creating jobs, protecting consumers and expanding clean energy," said Nakhia Morrisette, central region director and counsel for Solar Energy Industries Association (SEIA). "We're calling on the ICC to fix it urgently before we lose more solar jobs."

"Our employees and customers will be directly hurt if Ameren is allowed to pull the rug out from under our market," said Shannon Fulton, VP of Development for StraightUp Solar in Bloomington, IL. "I hope the Commission understands that this is a threat to jobs and consumers' pocketbooks in the middle of an economic crisis. We need them to take immediate action."

Clean energy groups argue that Ameren is distorting Illinois statute in order to avoid its legal responsibility to fairly compensate rooftop solar and help Illinois meet its clean energy goals. In July, an ICC administrative law judge found that Ameren's calculations of the number of customers using net metering were wrong and concluded that Ameren should continue crediting customers the full retail value of their solar energy for at least two more years.

But on September 23rd, the Commission issued a ruling that Ameren is using as justification to end net metering years ahead of schedule. The lack of clarity leaves families and solar businesses in central and southern Illinois in the lurch.

The emergency filing was submitted to the ICC by the Solar Energy Industries Association, Illinois Solar Energy Association, Coalition for Community Solar Access, Environmental Law & Policy Center, Natural Resources Defense Council, and Vote Solar.

“We’re calling on the Commission to act quickly and decisively to protect the state’s cornerstone net metering policy while it continues to develop new policies to fairly compensate rooftop solar for the value it provides to the grid,” said Brad Klein, senior attorney at the Environmental Law & Policy Center, who helped prepare the legal filing.

“Right now, Illinois families in Ameren territory are unable to make a confident calculation of the value of investing in rooftop solar, stalling the industry and stymying consumer choice,” said John Delurey, Midwest director at Vote Solar. “The consequences are especially dire for low-income families, who would no longer have access to the solar cost savings from the Illinois Solar for All program.”