

**EXPANDED CONSUMER PROTECTION WORKING GROUP AGENDA**

**Friday, March 7, 2025**

<b>TOPIC 1</b>	<b>Soliciting market and consumer feedback on consumer confidence in solar</b>
<b>BACKGROUND</b>	<p>The Agency and Program Administrators for Illinois Shines and Illinois Solar for All request feedback on consumer confidence in the economic viability and potential risks of adopting solar.</p> <p>The recent volume of application submissions has been significantly lower than in past years during the same winter period, demonstrating a recent downward trend. In light of recent changes to investor-owned utility net metering tariffs, interest rates that challenge financing for both solar providers and customers, and other changing market conditions, the Agency and the Program Administrators seek market feedback on changing consumer economic and risk calculations resulting from these developments.</p> <p>Additionally, the solar industry has recently experienced some large bankruptcies, which have left many customers stranded and may have eroded the confidence consumers have in solar providers generally. The Agency and Program Administrator are interested in hearing from consumer representatives and solar companies regarding whether consumer confidence in solar providers is affected by these recent developments and what risks consumers consider when considering whether to invest in a solar project.</p>
<b>ISSUES/ QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>What concerns are solar marketers and consumer groups hearing from customers regarding the viability of the solar market?</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ <i>Is there a difference in response for customers considering leases?</i></li> <li>◦ <i>Are customers considering community solar expressing concerns?</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>• <i>Do market participants believe there is a decline in consumer confidence in the economics of installing solar?</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ <i>If so, what issues are consumers most concerned about?</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>• <i>Are solar companies adapting or tailoring their marketing efforts to address consumer concerns about the economics of installing solar? If so, how?</i></li> <li>• <i>Are solar companies or consumer representatives hearing concerns from customers regarding recent solar company bankruptcies?</i></li> </ul>
<b>MEETING MINUTES</b>	<p>Stakeholder feedback included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One stakeholder noted they are continuing to see strong interest in Community Solar.</li> <li>• Multiple stakeholders noted that there is uncertainty in the market about the continued availability of the Federal Investment Tax Credit. Stakeholders also noted that some customers are concerned that changes at the federal level may affect the availability of Illinois Shines and Illinois Solar for All. One stakeholder suggested that the Program Administrators create educational materials to highlight that the Programs are funded by ratepayer collections and not federal funds.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One stakeholder noted that there is confusion in the market due to the same name used for Illinois Solar for All (ILSFA) and the federal Solar for All program. They reported that they explain to customers the difference between the Illinois and federal programs.</li> </ul>
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TOPIC 2	Determining Viability of Projects
<b>BACKGROUND</b>	<p>The Program Administrator for the Illinois Solar for All (ILSFA) Program is soliciting feedback and constructive input on how Approved Vendors and Designees may determine if a project is viable or not.</p> <p>Specifically, the Program Administrator would like insight into how entities are deciding to take on projects for the Illinois Solar for All program, given the lower uptake as compared to Illinois Shines.</p> <p>There have been instances within ILSFA where potential participants may reach out to multiple solar providers, get declined from one company, but another is willing to proceed with their project. An example includes a potential participant requesting to have a ground mount system rather than roof installation, and multiple solar providers declining this request, but another provider deciding it is feasible.</p> <p>The Program Administrator understands that, specifically within ILSFA, there may be various barriers that solar providers face that make it difficult for them to take on certain projects.</p>
<b>ISSUES/ QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>What do companies look for to determine if a project is viable for the company?</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ <i>Are there any issues or barriers (perhaps company-specific or general Program requirements/structure) that are considered when determining if a project is practical for ILSFA?</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>• <i>Are there any specific parameters that Approved Vendors or Designees may have in place, or any automatic disqualifying factors (i.e. specific counties that an AV/D is unwilling to work within)?</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ <i>If so, does the entity communicate this to the Program Administrator?</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>• <i>If an entity determines that a potential participant's project is not feasible for them, how is this communicated to the individual?</i></li> </ul>
<b>MEETING MINUTES</b>	<p>Stakeholder feedback included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project viability is affected by numerous project-specific considerations, which comes down to costs versus revenue. Shading can have a significant impact on project viability, and smaller projects are often not profitable.</li> <li>• Levers to encourage more projects could be higher REC prices and better access to low-cost capital / financing.</li> <li>• When projects are deemed infeasible, clear communication with customers and consumer education are key. However, some Approved Vendors do not communicate details about why they have declined a project, leaving customers uncertain about the reasons.</li> </ul>