

Solar Feed-in Tariff: Frequently Asked Questions

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How does Oregon's new solar incentive option (feed-in tariff) work? It's an incentive program in which the electric utility pays the owner of a solar electric system a fixed premium rate for every solar kilowatt hour generated over 15 years. Those payments allow the owner to recoup the investment over time. This model has been used successfully in Germany.

When did this come about? The 2009 Oregon legislature passed a law in 2009 establishing a feed-in tariff as another way to encourage solar electric installations.

When did it become available in Oregon? It became available on July 1, 2010.

Who is eligible? Oregon customers of Portland General Electric, Pacific Power and Idaho Power.

How do I contact my utility?

For Portland General Electric customers:

Solar Payment Option
www.portlandgeneral.com/solar
solar@pgn.com; 503.464.8200

For Pacific Power customers:

Oregon Solar Incentive Program
www.pacificpower.net/oregonsolar
oregonsolar@pacificorp.com; 1.888.221.7070

How long will this program be available? The program will end no later than March 31, 2015. PGE and Pacific Power residential and business customers can participate on a first-come, first-served basis, as long as there is room in the program. The program allows for the installation of up to 25 megawatts of capacity statewide. Capacity will be rationed and made available over time.

How will the capacity be rationed? There will be a dedicated capacity reserved for each category of small, medium and large systems. A portion of that capacity was made available on July 1, 2010, and October 1, 2010. Additional capacity will be made available every six months, the next allotment being April 1, 2011. Capacity will be made available annually for large systems. About 50 percent of the capacity is available to residential customers for systems smaller than 10 kW.

Can I get the feed-in tariff *and* ...

... the Energy Trust of Oregon solar incentive? No. If you enroll in the feed-in tariff, you are *not* eligible for the Energy Trust incentive, and vice versa.

... the Oregon state tax credit (Residential Energy Tax Credit or Business Energy Tax Credit)? No. If you enroll in the feed-in tariff, you are *not* eligible for the state residential or business energy tax credit, and vice versa.

... the 30 percent federal tax credit? Yes. If you enroll in the feed-in tariff, you are *still* eligible for federal solar tax incentives, including the 30 percent credit.

What types of systems are eligible? Solar electric (photovoltaic) systems.

How long will I receive feed-in tariff payments? 15 years.

What if I move during the 15 years? If you leave your system on the property, the next property owner may continue to receive payments for the remainder of the 15 years.

Can I self-install a solar system and be eligible for the new solar incentive option (feed-in tariff)? No; during this pilot, self-installations will not be eligible for the feed-in tariff payments. Contractors must be selected from the list of solar contractors on Energy Trust's website.

How do I find a solar contractor? Energy Trust maintains a list of licensed solar contractors (called trade allies) on its website at www.energytrust.org/findacontractor. Customers enrolled in the new solar incentive option (feed-in tariff) are required to use a contractor from this list.

Energy Trust cannot endorse or guarantee the performance of any individual contractor and recommends interviewing and selecting contractors carefully. Customers enrolled in the new solar incentive option (feed-in tariff) will arrange for their solar project installation, cover all projects costs and retain ownership of the solar electric system. A qualified installer can guide customers through the steps, including the necessary applications to Pacific Power or PGE, if not already submitted.

For residential and small commercial systems less than 100 kW in size:

Will my system be net metered? You will enter into a contract with your utility that will be very similar to net metering. You will pay the utility your current retail rate for every kWh you use, and the utility will pay you the solar incentive rate for every solar kWh you generate, so long as you use all the kWh you generate in a year. Your system will have a second meter to measure the solar generation.

What is the feed-in tariff rate? The incentive rate on October 1, 2010, ranged from \$0.495-\$0.585/kWh, depending on system size and location (see table below). This total per-kWh amount will remain constant for 15 years.

Rate Class	Counties	Small scale systems ($\leq 10\text{kW}$)	Medium scale systems ($> 10 \text{ kW}, \leq 100 \text{ kW}$)
1	Benton, Clackamas, Clatsop, Columbia, Lane, Lincoln, Linn, Marion, Multnomah, Polk, Tillamook, Washington, Yamhill	\$0.585/kWh	\$0.495/kWh
2	Coos, Douglas, Hood River	\$0.54/kWh	\$0.495/kWh
3	Gilliam, Jackson, Josephine, Klamath, Morrow, Sherman, Wallowa, Wasco	\$0.54/kWh	\$0.495/kWh
4	Baker, Crook, Deschutes, Jefferson, Lake, Malheur, Harney	\$0.495/kWh	\$0.495/kWh

Will the rates change if I wait to sign up? Rates are subject to change for the April 1, 2011, enrollment period, and each period every six months after, depending on how quickly the available capacity becomes subscribed. Once enrolled in the program your rate remains the same for 15 years.

Can I install any size system I want? No. Your system must be sized to provide *no more than* 90 percent of your building’s annual electricity consumption. If your system is too large, a portion of the output will be ineligible for incentives. The maximum system size is 500 kW.

How do I apply for the new solar incentive option (feed-in tariff)? The electric utilities will have online applications available on their websites when capacity is available to be reserved. Applications are accepted on a first-come, first-served basis.

What happens after the 15-year payment period ends? The additional incentive payments will end, but the utility may continue to pay you “avoided cost” rates for the energy you produce.

For large commercial systems, larger than 100 kW and less than 500 kW:

Will large systems be net metered? No. These systems will sell 100 percent of the power they generate to the utility.

What is the feed-in tariff rate for large systems? The rate will be determined through competitive bid.

How do large systems apply for the feed-in tariff? The electric utilities will conduct annual RFPs soliciting projects of this size range, and will award bids based on the lowest price.