

Quick Guide

Solar Task Force Consultation

WHAT WE DID AND WHY:

- SaskPower's Small Power Producers and Net Metering programs support customers in the generation of renewable energy. As the cost of solar generation decreases and power rates continue to go up, we are experiencing a growth of interest in solar generation.
- As part of a formal review of these programs, we asked for feedback from customers and solar industry advocates as part of a public engagement process in February-March 2017. Our aim was to use that feedback to shape our new customer generation programs.

WHO WE TALKED TO:

- Over 1000 Saskatchewan residents provided input through seven workshops, six focus groups, and an online survey. This included solar vendors, environmental non-profit organizations, urban and rural municipalities, business associations and organizations, First Nations, and university students.

WHAT WE HEARD:

- Participants expect SaskPower to be an active champion for solar power. This includes public education, offering financial incentives to promote program participation, and streamlining the application process for those wanting to participate in our programs. They also want us to provide assurances that solar vendors operating the province are reputable and reliable.
- Participants also recognized the need for power to be affordable for all customers, even as SaskPower encourages solar uptake. They encouraged us to find a way to offer financial incentives to those interested in pursuing solar; but not ones so generous that they would negatively impact customers who cannot afford to self-generate.
- There is also recognition of the operational impacts to SaskPower. They want us to take steps to ensure that solar fits into a more technologically-advanced Saskatchewan power grid. Solar should be considered as part of a larger emission reduction strategy alongside energy conservation, energy storage, electric vehicle deployment, and demand response (e.g. smart appliances).
- Participants felt that the environmental benefits of solar power justify a premium being paid for self-generation. They also asked that SaskPower recognize the benefit of

distributed energy and look at ways that solar self-generation could contribute to a more resilient and reliable electricity grid.

- Participants expect us to do more in terms of education and advocacy. They want SaskPower to be a vocal ambassador and advocate for solar power. The role that solar power will play in the company's long-term power generation strategy must also be clearly articulated. Vendors especially want programs that are clearly laid out, and want advance notice of upcoming programs so that they can capitalize on them with their customer base. They also expressed concern that a delay in announcing new programs could lead people to delay installing solar panels, in the hope that future programs would be more generous.
- Due to where they live, some customers are unable to participate directly in solar generation projects, which could make them less supportive of SaskPower programs. Opportunities for these customers to be part of larger solar projects need to be explored.
- Rural representatives shared a belief that large solar projects should not be built on high-quality farmland. Rural representatives wanted SaskPower to consider the quality of agricultural land when planning solar projects, and encouraged SaskPower to select sites on marginal farmland.