**Interconnection Discussion Forum Charter**

**Objectives:**  The forum objectives include the following:

* Foster proactive, constructive communication between utilities, developers, and other impacted stakeholders about issues related to implementation of Rule 21 and other interconnection rules;
* Resolve informally and/or prevent interconnection disputes; and
* Share information and best practices across utilities and developers

**Scope**: The forum will provide an informal venue for stakeholders to explore a wide variety of issues related to interconnection practices and policies, and will exist independently of any concurrent proceeding on interconnection. Topics of discussion may include:

* Issues regarding individual interconnection requests that are common to multiple applications or representative of recurring issues
* Observed inconsistencies in practices or interpretation of rules across utilities
* Announcement and discussion of upcoming program or tariff changes that impact Rule 21 stakeholders
* Suggestions for improvements to interconnection practices or policies
* Modifications to materials such as the Unit Cost Guide, Guide to Energy Storage Charging Issues, etc.
* Utility management of the Rule 21 public queue Smart inverter rollout (to the extent issues are not discussed in meetings of the Smart Inverter Working Group)
* Technical interconnection subjects related to special reports from technical experts

While some discussion of potential changes to Rule 21 provisions will naturally occur during forum meetings, it shall not be within the scope of this forum to develop or submit formal recommendations for tariff changes to an open Commission proceeding. The facilitator will have discretion to terminate any lines of discussion that do not forward the forum’s objectives of fostering proactive communication about issues related to implementation of Rule 21, informally resolving and/or preventing disputes, and sharing information and best practices across utilities and developers. If forum discussions consistently highlight the need for a specific change to existing interconnection rules, the facilitator will determine how best to share the information with the Commission.

The forum shall not have authority to alter or require new interconnection policies, practices or requirements that are not otherwise established by a Commission decision or resolution via a public proceeding.

**Facilitation**: The CPUC will provide one or more facilitators to lead forum meetings, develop agendas and meeting materials, organize special reports on technical subjects, circulate meeting notes, maintain a web portal for the forum, and provide logistical support. The facilitator or facilitators will have a combination of technical expertise in interconnection and/or distribution system engineering and experience with facilitation.

**Participants**: Forum meetings will be open to the public. The makeup of the forum will reflect the variety of stakeholders impacted by interconnection practices, including but not limited to: utilities, developers, trade associations, nongovernmental organizations, and regulators. At least one engineering representative from each of the three large investor‐owned utilities will be required to attend in person meeting in person.

**Logistics**: In-person meetings will occur quarterly and last for approximately two hours. The in‐person meetings will have conference lines enabled. Additional in-person and teleconference meetings will be scheduled monthly or as needed. The facilitator(s) will be responsible for scheduling and identifying hosts for upcoming meetings and for noticing meetings on the CPUC’s Daily Calendar, Smart Inverter Working Group member list, and the R.11‐09‐011 and R.17‐07‐007 service lists.

**Background:** Between 1999 and 2008, the California Energy Commission and California Public Utilities Commission sponsored a “Rule 21 Working Group” to provide a regular forum for communication and problem‐solving between utilities, developers, and stakeholders regarding interconnection‐related issues. The working group was widely considered to be an effective tool for improving understanding of interconnection by all interested parties, bringing utilities and developers together to find mutually acceptable solutions, and driving toward more consistent and efficient interconnection practices and policies across utilities and developers. Resource constraints ultimately led to the closure of the working group, however with the passage of AB 2861 and new State funding for dispute resolution, the CPUC is now reconvening the working group as an Interconnection Discussion Forum.