



Case Study:

Led Stakeholder Initiative to Reform Maine’s Distributed Energy Resource (DER) Market

BACKGROUND

After the Maine Public Utilities Commission (PUC) initiated a study on the “value of solar,” the Maine Office of the Public Advocate (OPA) engaged Strategen to aid with OPA’s participation in the study. Strategen crafted a whitepaper that looked at how to implement the findings from the value of solar study. Strategen’s whitepaper was picked up by the Maine State Legislature, which directed the PUC to launch a stakeholder process to explore the reforms presented by Strategen.

APPROACH

Strategen first worked with OPA to analyze the PUC’s study on the value of distributed solar generation to communities, ratepayers and the overall economy of the state. Strategen then aided OPA in its response by creating a comprehensive policy option for the future of Maine’s DER market. Specifically, Strategen:

- Provided technical analysis to support a detailed policy and program design.
- Introduced a novel mechanism for procurement of DER resources that balanced the interests of growing the DER market with maximizing benefits to Maine utility customers.
- Developed a whitepaper providing specific details about the proposal, including market sizing and segmentation, compensation mechanisms and implementation guidelines.
- Coordinated with other key stakeholders in developing support for the proposal.
- Aided in policy passage of a Resolve by working with policymakers on legislative proposals.

RESULTS

Strategen was successful in garnering significant support for a new policy framework -- an innovative solution for the state’s emerging DER market that would maximize value to all ratepayers, while fairly compensating solar adopters. The policy garnered national news and was supported by the state’s utilities, Maine’s solar industry, environmental groups, and others.

Figure 5. Overview of Step-level Changes

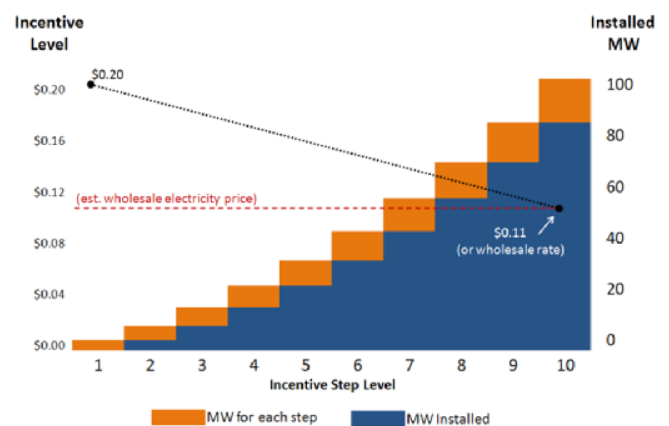


Illustration of the proposed “step-down” approach proposed for Maine’s new distributed energy resource marketplace.