

# PUCN Connection

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FROM the PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF NEVADA

Produced by the PUCN's Outreach & Public Information Offices

December 2019 Edition

## Tips for choosing a solar contractor

Installed properly, a renewable energy system can generate energy and save a customer money. But the technology is complex and, as with all complex systems, there can be pitfalls. In addition to technical issues, there is the issue of choosing a contractor who is knowledgeable and trustworthy. Taking the time to educate yourself and carefully choose your contractor can help avoid a painful experience.

### HIRE ONLY LICENSED CONTRACTORS

A licensed contractor with the proper classification is required to perform solar installations. Ask for your contractor's license number and verify with the Nevada State Contractors Board (NSCB) that the license is active and proper for the work to be completed. Visit [nscb.nv.gov](http://nscb.nv.gov) to verify, or call (775) 688-1141 or (702) 486-1100.

### BEWARE OF SCAMS

The NSCB urges consumers to be wary and watch for these red flags:

- Door-to-door solicitations
- Requests for verbal agreements
- High pressure sales tactics
- Demands for cash
- Scare tactics
- Demands for large down payments (the NSCB suggests no more than a 10% down payment)

Visit the NSCB online at [nscb.nv.gov](http://nscb.nv.gov) for more information on protecting yourself from scams.

### DO YOUR HOMEWORK & ASK QUESTIONS

Do your homework about the system you would like to install so that when you meet with a contractor you know what to ask. Some sample questions for installers follow.

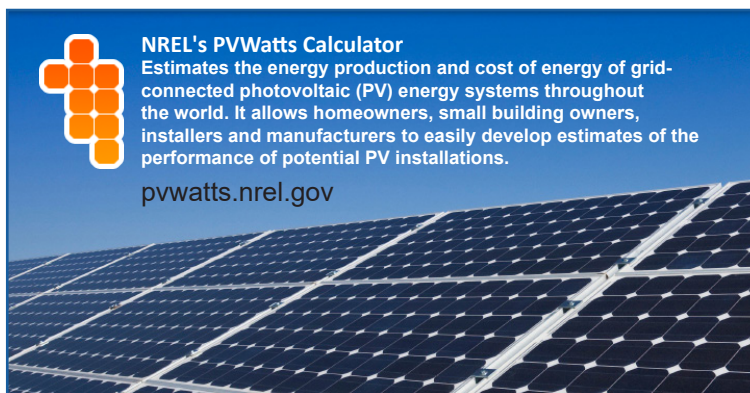
#### Q: What would your previous customers say about you?

Ask the contractor for contact information for three recent customers. Contact them directly and ask if they were satisfied with the work performed. A contractor who does quality work will be happy to provide references. Also consider checking consumer reviews online and contacting the NSCB and the Better Business Bureau (BBB) to see if there are complaints against the contractor.

Contact the Northern Nevada BBB at (775) 322-0657 or [bbb.org/reno/](http://bbb.org/reno/) and the Southern Nevada BBB at (702) 320-4500 or [bbb.org/southern-nevada](http://bbb.org/southern-nevada).

**Q: Do I need building permits?** Building departments generally require an electrical permit for solar installations and a structural review. Contact your local building department to inquire about permit requirements. Your contractor should get the necessary permits for you.

**Q: What brand of panels & inverter do you use?** All panels and inverters are not equal. Some are more efficient than others. Some are more prone to power degradation. Some perform better in less than full sunlight. Call distributors and ask for the best panel and inverter combinations or conduct online research.



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## Get to Know Us: Lisa Scott, Compliance Investigator II, Consumer Complaint Resolution

**Describe your current job responsibilities and areas of focus:** I respond to complaints from the public who believe that a regulated utility has violated its tariffs. (A [tariff](#) is a collection of rules that defines the relationship between a utility and its customers.) Typical complaints include billing disputes, service issues, deposits, high bills, interruptions in service, Rule 9 and solar complaints. For me, the most challenging are the Rule 9 complaints. (Rule 9 governs the cost of and conditions of water, sewer, electric, and gas line extensions.)

**What aspects of your job do you enjoy most:** I am thankful to be able to work in such a positive, fun work environment and I am grateful for the people I work with. I love my job. I enjoy helping people find solutions to the issues that they are experiencing. Sure, it's not easy all the time, but it's worth it.

**How long have you been at the PUCN:** I started on Feb. 8, 2010, the day after Super Bowl Sunday as an Administrative Assistant I. Shortly afterward, I was promoted to an Administrative Assistant III and now I am lucky enough to be in my current position, Compliance Investigator II.

**Prior professional experience:** In November 2000, I left the food service industry and started working for Big Sky Locators, a

utility line locating company in Las Vegas. I was hired as a dispatcher and eventually worked my way up to office manager. In October 2002, Big Sky dissolved and ELM Locating stepped in and took over the NV Energy and Southwest Gas line locating services. We all had to reapply and interview with the new company (ELM Locating) and I was fortunate enough to be offered a position. I was hired as an Administrative Assistant. Craig Rogers (currently a PUCN Gas Pipeline Engineer) was my new boss at ELM. I worked there until February 2010.

**Educational background:** I graduated from high school in 1988. I didn't go to college; however, I did maintain a full-time job during my senior year and I have been blessed enough to maintain a full time job since then.

**Hometown:** Born and raised in Las Vegas. I had the opportunity to live in D'iberville, Mississippi, for about a year from 1998-99, and I loved every minute of it!



## PUCN Commissioner Hayley Williamson panelist at Arizona conference

### At Advanced Energy Now | West, Target of 100% Clean Energy Came into Focus

By Joanna Iacovelli  
*AEE Advanced Energy Perspectives blog*

Throughout the West there is a bold vision from elected officials, advanced energy companies, and utilities of a 100% clean energy future. But what's the path to 100% clean energy in the West?

On Oct. 16-17, in Scottsdale, Ariz., Advanced Energy Economy (AEE) conducted its first regional policy conference, Advanced Energy Now | West.

The conference included leaders in energy innovation, business, and government from across the western region to

identify ways to achieve this goal, state by state and through a regional grid, powered by advanced energy growth from New Mexico to Washington state. PUCN Commissioner Hayley Williamson was a panelist during the two-day event.

AEE is a national association of business leaders who are making the global energy system more secure, clean, and affordable. Advanced energy encompasses a broad range of products and services that constitute the best available technologies for meeting energy needs today and tomorrow. Among these are energy efficiency, demand response, energy storage, natural gas electric generation, solar, wind, hydro, nuclear, electric vehicles, biofuels and smart grid.

The two-day agenda reflected AEE's core portfolio of work transforming policy to expand advanced energy markets in the West. AEE's multi-technology membership was well represented with attendees from tech companies such as Facebook and Google that buy advanced energy; advanced energy companies Direct Energy, Uplight, and Recurrent Energy; and advanced transportation companies Greenlots, EVgo, and Tesla. The more than 125 attendees had the opportunity to engage directly with industry CEOs, utility leaders, directors of energy offices from Montana, Nevada, Colorado, and New Mexico, as well as commissioners from western public utility commissions.

The conference kicked off with a special screening of the film "Current Revolution," followed by a panel discussion and audience Q&A with the film's award-winning producer, writer, and director, Aaron Sorkin. The discussion focused on strategies and



Left to right: Arizona Corp. Commission Chairman Bob Burns, Nevada Public Utilities Commissioner Hayley Williamson, Colorado Public Utilities Commission Chairman Jeffrey Ackermann, and AEE Managing Director Ryan Katofsky. Photo Source: Scott Mitchell

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## Solar contractor: *continued from page 1*

**Q: How will the system be installed?** If the system will be mounted on your roof, ask how panel supports will be flashed and caulked to prevent leaks. Make sure holes are not drilled into the roof when it's wet. Check the attic after installation to verify bolts are in the rafters or trusses, not the sheathing. Ask where the inverter will be installed to ensure there will be adequate air flow and/or shade to keep the inverter cooler on hot summer days.

**Q: Will you do a structural analysis?** Loads for most solar panels are well under the maximum allowable for most roofs. A structural analysis for solar is pretty basic and should not cost a great deal, but make sure it reflects the actual structure of the supports in your attic. Flying panels in high winds are usually of more concern than the weight of the panels.

**Q: What's in the contract?** To help consumers understand what they're getting when leasing or purchasing a solar system, or entering into a purchase power agreement, Nevada Revised Statutes ([NRS 598-9801 through 598.9822](#)) specify the information that must be included in the contract. See the fact sheet prepared by the Public Utilities Commission, "[Consumer Protections in the Renewable Energy Bill of Rights.](#)" for more information on agreement requirements.

Read the proposed contract in its entirety and make sure it includes the information required by NRS 598-9801 through 598.9822. Make sure it reflects what you understand the agreement to be. If the contractor does not provide clear and direct answers to your questions, don't sign. You have three days after signing the contract to cancel it.

**Q: How much will the solar system cost?** NRS 598-9801 through 598.9822 requires the contract to specify the amounts due at the signing for and at the completion of the installation of the solar system for leased and purchased systems, as well as power purchase agreements. NRS 598-9801 through 598.9822 also specifies the information that must be included in the contract regarding any monthly payments, the rate of any payment increases during the term of the agreement, and fees, incentives, or tax breaks factored into the cost of the system, etc.

**Q: What percentage of my total power will the installation provide annually?** For leased and purchased solar systems, as well as power purchase agreements, NRS 598-9801 through 598.9822 requires the contract to specify the estimated production of the solar system in the first year of operation. NRS 598-9801 through 598.9822 also requires that the contract include any guarantees of the performance of the solar system.

The National Renewable Energy Laboratory's online tool, PVWatts Calculator, available at [pvwatts.nrel.gov](http://pvwatts.nrel.gov), helps consumers develop estimates of the performance of potential solar system installations.

**Q: When will you start & how long will the job take?** The installation and electrical hookup should take a couple days. NRS 598-9801 through 598.9822 requires the solar contract include an estimated timeline for the installation of the solar system. Be aware that interconnecting with the electric utility may also take time.

**Q: Is maintenance required?** NRS 598-9801 through 598.9822 requires the solar contract to specify if maintenance and repairs of the solar system are included in the lease or purchase of the system, as well as power purchase agreements. Typically,

you'll need to hose off the panels in the cool of the day at least once or twice a year. Maintain good air flow around an inverter located in a garage. If the inverter is mounted outside on a south facing wall, construct a shade structure above it to reduce temperatures. High temperatures from sunlight affect its efficiency and life expectancy.



Ask for your contractor's license number and verify with the NSCB that the license is active and proper for the work to be completed. Visit [nscb.nv.gov](http://nscb.nv.gov) to verify, or call (775) 688-1141 or (702) 486-1100.

**Always hire licensed Nevada contractors**

**Q: Is there a warranty?** NRS 598-9801 through 598.9822 requires the contract for the lease or purchase of a solar system, as well as a purchase power agreement, to include a written warranty for the installation of the solar system and penetration into the roof by the solar system, that does not expire earlier than 10 years after the installation of the solar system. NRS 598-9801 through 598.9822 also requires the contract for the purchase of a solar system to include a written warranty of not less than 10 years for component parts, including parts and labor, of the solar system, either directly from the solar installation company or passed through from the manufacturer of the component parts. The warranty for purchased systems also must include a minimum 7-year warranty for inverters and a minimum 10-year warranty for collectors and storage units.

### CONSUMER COMPLAINTS AGAINST SOLAR INSTALLATION COMPANIES

The PUCN accepts consumer complaints concerning solar installation companies. Upon receipt of the complaint, the PUCN's Consumer Complaint Resolution Division may direct you to the appropriate agency or person to resolve the complaint, such as the NSCB or the Nevada Attorney General. Compliance investigators are able to assist you Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. You can also submit an informal complaint online anytime at [puc.nv.gov](http://puc.nv.gov).

- Northern Nevada: (775) 684-6100
- Southern Nevada: (702) 486-2600

### MORE INFORMATION

Please read NRS 598-9801 through 598.9822 to learn more about consumer rights and information that must be included in a solar contract. The PUCN's "[Consumer Protections in the Renewable Energy Bill of Rights](#)" is another resource that outlines the information provided in NRS 598-9801 through 598.9822.

## Commissioner Williamson: *continued from page 2*

opportunities for working collaboratively to build a clean energy future in Arizona and across the western region.

The second day explored strategies to better integrate state efforts in the West and identified how industry can play a critical role in moving toward a 100% clean grid. In addition, sessions considered challenges in getting to 100% such as affordability and regional coordination coupled with currently deployed and effective solutions such as solar-plus-storage; also discussed were options for regional energy markets, the benefits they could capture, and strategies moving forward.

Another session focused on “Transportation Electrification in the West.” Speakers included David Bobzien, director of Nevada Governor’s Office of Energy. Key decision-makers in attendance announced a new regional collaborative across the eight intermountain states – five of them with new governors – focused

on building out an EV corridor across major roadways in the region.

The final panel discussion centered on leading from the West, featuring Commissioner Williamson and commissioners from the Colorado and Arizona utility commissions.

In addition to the panel sessions, breakout sessions addressed topics such as:

- Role of demand side resources on a clean energy grid
- Corporate procurement driving toward 100% clean energy
- Challenges and opportunities for siting renewable energy projects
- Grid modernization and financing the transition

For the full AEE blog post and additional conference information, go to [blog.aee.net/at-advanced-energy-now-west-target-of-100-clean-energy-came-into-focus](http://blog.aee.net/at-advanced-energy-now-west-target-of-100-clean-energy-came-into-focus).

## Dockets Opened at the PUCN in November 2019

Visit [puc.nv.gov/Dockets/Dockets/](http://puc.nv.gov/Dockets/Dockets/) to view documents filed in the dockets listed below.

Docket #	Date Filed	Description
19-11001	11/01/2019	Filing by Southwest Gas Corporation of tax adjustment pursuant to the Order issued in Docket No. 00-1028.
19-11002	11/01/2019	Joint Petition of the Regulatory Operations Staff and Campbell Construction Co., Inc. ("Campbell Construction") requesting the Commission accept a stipulation regarding violations of Nevada’s One Call Law by Campbell Construction.
19-11003	11/06/2019	Application of Nevada Power Company d/b/a NV Energy, filed under Advice Letter No. 497, to revise Tariff No. 1-B to modify the Electric Vehicle Recharge Rider ("EVRR") to add Critical Peak Program ("CPP") and CPP with Daily Demand Pricing as time of use schedules eligible for EVRR and to remove reference to cancelled Net Metering schedules.
19-11004	11/06/2019	Application of Sierra Pacific Power Company d/b/a NV Energy, filed under Advice Letter No. 622-E, to revise Electric Tariff No. 1 to modify the Electric Vehicle Recharge Rider ("EVRR") to add Critical Peak Program ("CPP") and CPP with Daily Demand Pricing as time of use schedules eligible for EVRR and to remove reference to cancelled Net Metering schedules.
19-11005	11/12/2019	Notice by Mpower Communications Corp. d/b/a TPx Communications, U.S. TelePacific Corp. d/b/a TPX Communications, U.S. TelePacific Holdings Corp., and Tango Private Holdings II, LLC of a transaction that will result in a transfer of control of telecommunication companies.
19-11006	11/07/2019	Application of Nevada Power Company d/b/a NV Energy, filed under Advice Letter No. 498, to revise Interruptible Agricultural Irrigation Water Pumping Schedule No. IA1WP to increase the IA1WP rate.
19-11007	11/07/2019	Application of Sierra Pacific Power Company d/b/a NV Energy, filed under Advice Letter No. 623-E, to revise Interruptible Irrigation Service Schedule No. IS-2 to increase the IS-2 rate.
19-11008	11/08/2019	Joint Petition of the Regulatory Operations Staff and Cruz Construction Company, Inc. ("Cruz Construction") requesting the Commission accept a stipulation regarding violations of Nevada’s One Call Law by Cruz Construction.
19-11009	11/12/2019	Notice by Securus Technologies, Inc. of a transaction that will result in a transfer of control of a telecommunication company.
19-11010	11/12/2019	Notice by Frontier Communications of the Southwest Inc. of Service Catalog updates to introduce Live Operator fee when a customer chooses to connect to a live operator.
19-11011	11/13/2019	Joint Petition of the Regulatory Operations Staff and Granite Construction Company ("Granite Construction") requesting the Commission accept a stipulation regarding violations of Nevada's One Call Law by Granite Construction.
19-11012	11/14/2019	Application of Occidental Energy Marketing, Inc. to voluntarily discontinue service as an alternative seller of natural gas conducted under License No. G-7.
19-11013	11/14/2019	Filing by Virgin Mobile USA, L.P. of updated Informational Tariff No. 1 that includes revisions to Lifeline Assistance Broadband Plan.

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## Dockets: *continued from page 4*

Docket #	Date Filed	Description
19-11014	11/14/2019	Notice by Hamel Renewables, LLC, under the provisions of the Utility Environmental Protection Act, of an application to a federal agency for approval to construct the Rough Hat Nye County Solar Project consisting of an up to 500 MW photovoltaic solar energy generation facility, generation-tie transmission lines, and associated facilities to be located in Nye County, Nevada.
19-11015	11/14/2019	Notice by Hamel Renewables, LLC, under the provisions of the Utility Environmental Protection Act, of an application to a federal agency for approval to construct the Rough Hat Clark County Solar Project consisting of an up to 400 MW photovoltaic solar energy generation facility, generation-tie transmission lines, and associated facilities to be located in Clark County, Nevada.
19-11016	11/15/2019	Nevada Power Company d/b/a NV Energy filed Notice No. 19-04 to adjust the Base Tariff Energy Rates and Deferred Energy Account Adjustment Rates effective January 1, 2020.
19-11017	11/15/2019	Sierra Pacific Power Company d/b/a NV Energy filed Notice No. 19-04(E) to adjust the Base Tariff Energy Rates and Deferred Energy Account Adjustment Rates effective January 1, 2020.
19-11018	11/15/2019	Sierra Pacific Power Company d/b/a NV Energy filed Notice No. 19-04(G) to adjust the Base Tariff Energy Rates and Deferred Energy Account Adjustment Rates effective January 1, 2020.
19-11019	11/15/2019	Investigation to revise Nevada Power Company d/b/a NV Energy's and Sierra Pacific Power Company d/b/a NV Energy's NV GreenEnergy Rider schedules as appropriate.
19-11020	11/18/2019	Notice by HD Carrier LLC of its intent to request numbering resources for various rate centers from the North American Numbering Plan Administrator.
19-11021	11/15/2019	Joint Petition of Nevada Bell Telephone Company d/b/a AT&T Nevada and AT&T Wholesale and Metropolitan Telecommunications of Nevada, Inc. d/b/a MetTel for approval of Amendment No. 4 to their Interconnection Agreement pursuant to Section 252 of the Telecommunications Act of 1996.
19-11022	11/18/2019	Application of Sierra Pacific Power Company d/b/a NV Energy, filed under Advice Letter No. 624-E, for approval of a Portfolio Charge to be applicable to Newmont Mining Corporation under Rate Schedule GS-4-NG for calendar year 2020 to recover the additional costs required to meet the Nevada Portfolio Standard.
19-11023	11/19/2019	Application of Operator Service Company, LLC to voluntarily discontinue telecommunication service conducted under Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity ("CPC") 1048 Sub 2.
19-11024	11/18/2019	Proceeding to revoke Commercial Mobile Radio Service ("CMRS") provider registration number CMRS 134 and Eligible Telecommunications Carrier status pursuant to the Order issued in Docket No. 18-09010.
19-11025	11/18/2019	Application of Rio Virgin Telephone Company d/b/a Reliance Connects, filed under Advice Letter No. 73, to revise Tariff No. 1 to reduce the Federal Lifeline discount for Lifeline customers pursuant to Federal Communications Commission Docket No. FCC 16-38.
19-11026	11/19/2019	Joint Petition of the Regulatory Operations Staff and VersaGrade, Inc. ("VersaGrade") requesting the Commission accept a stipulation regarding violations of Nevada's One Call Law by VersaGrade.
19-11027	11/19/2019	Application of CallCatchers Inc. d/b/a FreedomVoice Systems to voluntarily discontinue telecommunication service conducted under Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity ("CPC") 3037.
19-11029	11/22/2019	Notice by Frontier Communications of the Southwest Inc. of Service Catalog updates to include an increase to Feature Pack rates for residential bundles.

### Subscribe to a Service List & Stay Informed

The PUCN maintains three official service lists as a means of keeping interested persons informed of open proceedings, as well as PUCN agenda meetings. To subscribe to a service list, submit a service list request form online at:  
[puc.nv.gov/About/Docs/Forms/Service\\_List\\_Requests\\_\(Subscribe\\_or\\_Unsubscribe\)/](http://puc.nv.gov/About/Docs/Forms/Service_List_Requests_(Subscribe_or_Unsubscribe)/)

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