

Where Does FECA Stand On Amendment 1 And Solar?

WHY ARE THE ELECTRIC CO-OPS BACKING AMENDMENT 1?

There are several special interest groups that want to exempt non-utility solar generation from “reasonable health, safety, and welfare” regulations, including consumer protections. Florida’s not-for-profit electric co-ops believe consumer-owners should not have to sacrifice safety or financial peace of mind to have solar power, and that is why we support Amendment 1.

HOW WILL AMENDMENT 1 AFFECT NET METERING?

Owners of solar panels that sell their extra solar energy back to the utility will still be able to do so. Federal law requires each utility to purchase this energy, and that can’t be undone with an amendment to Florida’s Constitution.

ALL AMENDMENT 1 APPEARS TO DO IS KEEP THE STATUS QUO. ARE ELECTRIC CO-OPS ONLY INTERESTED IN PROTECTING THEIR BUSINESS INTERESTS?

We support solar, but it must be done right. Amendment 1 would accomplish many things that benefit our consumer-owners. For instance, ensuring the safety measures that protect our consumer-owners, linemen, first responders, and the general public are kept in place. Amendment 1 also would guarantee Floridians the right to own or lease solar panels, which is good for consumer-owners.

ARE CO-OPS AGAINST SOLAR POWER?

Florida’s electric cooperatives support generation that is safe, reliable, cost-effective, and environmentally responsible. Co-ops have a strong preference for solar and other renewable generation options when they are competitive.

ISN’T SOLAR POWER MORE COST-EFFECTIVE THAN BUILDING NEW POWER PLANTS? ISN’T THE ANSWER RIGHT HERE IN OUR OWN BACK YARD IN THE “SUNSHINE STATE?”

While there are benefits associated with solar energy, it also has limitations that must be considered as we strive to responsibly meet the needs of our consumer-owners. One of those issues involves storage. At this time, the technology to cost-effectively store solar power for later use has not been developed. Without cost-effective storage, it’s impossible to totally rely on solar as an energy source during peak demand periods - such as a cold winter morning or the early evening on a hot summer day. Traditional power plants will still be needed for those times when the sun is not shining.