

Utah Solar Rocky Mountain Power

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The Utah Solar vs. Rocky Mountain Power Standoff

Let's cut through the glare - Utah solar adoption has tripled since 2018, but Rocky Mountain Power customers are facing new roadblocks. Why does America's sunniest state rank 13th in solar installations? The answer lies in a regulatory tug-of-war impacting every homeowner considering panels.

Hidden Costs of Going Solar

In 2023, Rocky Mountain Power quietly modified its net metering program. Instead of 1:1 credit for excess energy, customers now get compensated at wholesale rates - about 70% less. Imagine producing enough solar power for three homes but only getting paid for one!

Here's the kicker: Utah's average residential electricity rate jumped 18% last year. Solar seems like a no-brainer, right? Well, the utility's new demand charges add \$9.50/month per kW of installed capacity. For a typical 6kW system, that's \$57/month before you even flip a light switch.

Battery Storage: The Silent Game Changer

This is where solar battery storage enters the chat. Salt Lake City-based Wasatch Energy reports a 300% surge in battery installations since the policy shift. "Customers are creating personal power plants," says CEO Mark Thompson. "They're storing daytime excess to dodge evening peak rates."

Consider this real-world math:

Without battery: Earn 3¢/kWh for excess solar

With battery: Avoid buying at 15¢/kWh after sunset

That 500% difference makes batteries pay for themselves 3 years faster than pre-2023.

The Policy Puzzle Unpacked

Rocky Mountain Power argues traditional net metering unfairly burdens non-solar users. But Germany - where 50% of renewables are citizen-owned - proves community solar can work. Their secret? Feed-in tariffs that guarantee fair pricing for 20 years.

Utah's approach feels like changing rules mid-game. Imagine buying a fuel-efficient car, then being taxed extra because you buy less gas. That's essentially what solar users face with the new demand charges.

Global Lessons, Local Solutions

Australia's virtual power plants (VPPs) offer a blueprint. Households with solar-plus-storage systems collectively stabilize the grid during peak demand. Participants earn \$1,000/year while reducing strain on infrastructure. Could this model work in Provo or Ogden?

Your Solar Questions Answered

Q: Will Rocky Mountain Power completely eliminate net metering?

A: Unlikely, but expect gradual compensation reductions through 2030.

Q: How much can I really save with current rates?

A: Most Utah homes break even in 6-8 years, down from 4-5 pre-2023.

Q: Do batteries qualify for the federal tax credit?

A: Yes! The 30% ITC applies through 2032 for solar+storage installations.

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