This prior change and proposed change are significant reductions in the financial return on my 7.7 kW, “pre-existing net-metered solar system” and combined, would alter my financial position into an ongoing loss.

My system, like many in the service area of my local, municipal utility, was constrained by circumstances not especially common throughout the rest of my native state: The slate roof of my small house would not support a roof-mounted system. The back yard was too small to meet the national electric code adopted by my municipality for a ground-based system and be out of the shadows of my and my neighbors’ nearby houses.

On the cusp of a rather underfunded retirement, I thoroughly investigated the financial impact of investing in a net-metered array. This diligence included written assurances from Burlington Electric Dept., based on the then-existing PUC rules, that:

“Since your CPG was filed prior to January 1, 2017, you would be considered a “pre-existing” customer and would be subject to the net-metering rules that were in effect 2012.”

And “Solar credits will not expired (sic) and if the credit balance reaches $100, you can request BED to cut you a check. Solar credits can be used to offset any charges on your bill.”

And “After ten years (from the system commissioning date), your rates will change. At that point you will then be subject to credit expiration (any credits that are unused within 12 months)….”

Not having a high enough income to use the federal residential energy efficient property credit promptly (currently more than 80% of the credit remains available, 5 years after commissioning), I found that the ten year period of credit balance refund and solar incentive would be critical for the financially viability of the project. Unfortunately, loss of the refund for excess production, in particular, would leave me searching for ways to continue to pay for the capital expense, insure the potential loss of part of the array, and be able to replace the inverter when that eventuality comes to pass in order to continue to put power on the grid.

My identified options are not pretty, for me, my fellow ratepayers, and the climate at large. In no way is this proposed change a rate decrease. The proposed change is in effect a rate INCREASE for me and many of my fellow net-metered customers and must need be thoroughly vetted with supporting documentation.