

Communication from Public

Name:

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Council File No: 23-1333

Comments for Public Posting: Support for Motion CF# 23-1333 to Enable Use of Meter Socket Adapters in LADWP's Service Area



February 6, 2024

Chair Yaroslavsky
Vice Chair McOsker
Councilmember Raman
Councilmember Blumenfield
Councilmember Hernandez

Re: Support for Motion CF# 23-1333 to Enable Use of Meter Socket Adapters in LADWP's Service Area

Chair Yaroslavsky, Vice Chair McOsker, and members of the Energy and Environment Committee:

We are writing to encourage you to adopt Motion CF# 23-1333. This Motion, introduced in November of 2023 by Council President Krekorian and Councilmember McOsker, directs the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP) to provide a report to City Council on the processes LADWP uses to review and adopt new technologies that advance the deployment of solar and battery systems and, more specifically, ways to improve those processes for enabling technologies like meter socket adapters (MSAs), which are currently prohibited by the utility.

As the City of Los Angeles looks to dramatically expand its use of renewable resources, as reflected in the ambitious goals established in the LA 100 plan, MSAs have an essential role to play in accelerating the deployment of Distributed Energy Resources (DERs), including solar and battery storage, as well as emerging energy technologies like vehicle-to-home applications. Customer interest in clean resiliency solutions is also growing, driven by reliability and energy security concerns due to increasingly volatile weather events and system level resource challenges. MSAs represent a critical means of expanding equitable access by significantly reducing the costs incurred when deploying DERs.

Yet at this time, LADWP lacks a transparent process for efficient adoption of new technologies like MSAs. We are gratified to see consideration of this motion, which is critical to ensuring that customers have access to proven technologies that can facilitate access to clean DERs like rooftop solar and battery storage systems. To ensure the Motion's directives are timely addressed, we respectfully request that it be amended to include a specific date, no more than 30 days from when the motion is adopted, for LADWP to report back.

Why MSAs?

MSAs are plug-and-play solutions that utilize the standardized utility meter socket that exists on nearly every electricity customer's property to simplify the deployment of various energy technologies. Over the past decade, MSAs have emerged as a safe and secure enabling technology to streamline the deployment of DERs including solar energy and battery systems. Further, MSAs will play an increasingly important role in facilitating the use of electric vehicles to provide vehicle-to-home and vehicle-to-grid services. Regardless of their specific application, MSAs allow customers to avoid the extensive rewiring work, associated costs and installation complexity that would otherwise be required when installing and interconnecting a behind-the-meter energy solution. These applications include interconnecting a solar PV system that would, in the absence of an MSA, require a cost-prohibitive main panel upgrade, as well as establishing a point of disconnection to allow a battery system to safely isolate from the grid and provide backup power in the event of a grid outage. In short, use of MSAs safely lowers costs and saves customers hundreds to thousands of dollars per project in avoided labor and material costs, while also substantially reducing project timelines and installation complexity.

MSAs are Already in Use Across the Country

MSAs are no longer a cutting-edge technology, with tens thousands of these devices successfully deployed in other utility jurisdictions across the country. A growing number of utilities in California and across the western US have recognized the value of MSAs in facilitating customer access to DERs. For example, the Sacramento Municipal Utility District, Pacific Gas and Electric, San Diego Gas and Electric and NV Energy all allow use of MSAs such as the Tesla Backup Switch to facilitate the deployment of battery storage for whole-home backup. The California IOUs also allow use of MSAs specifically intended to support solar installations where the existing main panel has insufficient capacity. In Arizona, all of the major utilities have approved the use of MSAs, with APS and TEP establishing criteria-based approaches that provide an objective standard to qualify MSAs for use in their respective service territories. Similarly, Xcel Energy in Colorado authorizes the use of MSAs meeting certain criteria as reflected in the utility's energy standards.

Despite the proven track record of MSA use across the country, LADWP continues to prohibit use of these devices. Unfortunately, bilateral efforts, some of which have been ongoing for years, to engage LADWP to address this have fallen short. There does not appear to be any clearly defined process through which technologies like MSAs can be timely reviewed and approved by the utility. City Council engagement is needed on this issue to ensure LADWP is providing the most effective and efficient paths to achieving clean energy goals and in enhancing energy resiliency for all customers. We urge you to pass this important measure amended to require DWP to report back within 30 days from the Motion's adoption.

Sincerely,

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