

Larry Beahan PSC REV Hearing 1/29/2015

The NY Public Service Commission deserves thanks for recognizing the need to plan for the coming revolution in energy sources.

Huge centralized electrical generating plants fueled by coal, methane gas and nuclear fission are unsustainable because of their destructive effects on this planet on which we have to live.

New technology to produce electricity from wind, sun and geothermal sources is cheaper and does not produce the planet destroying wastes that the older fuels have.

These new power sources have the advantages that they can be individually owned and to a large extent the electricity they produce can be used where it is made. It does not need to be transported great distances.

But how will this system be organized?

How will individuals and corporations be persuaded to install the new equipment and insulate their buildings, allocate power use to appropriate times?

Who will arrange for backup power when there is heavy demand because of a heat wave or when sun and solar aren't producing enough in your home town.

Who will organize massive population scale conservation efforts like "demand response" systems and lower rates for low demand times?

The problem we face in this revolution is how will the revolutionary system be organized, who will own and administer it and for whose benefit?

It is understandable that you, the PSC, went to the utilities first with the question "How do we organize this new distributed energy system." They have been in the electricity business a long time.

But if we let Utilities run the system there is a real danger that because of Utilities' heavy investment in the old system, they will be too slow to move to the new one. They will wish to maximize the profit from the old first.

The Revolution provides a unique opportunity for individuals and communities to own their own power systems. Utilities may realize that this individual ownership will make it difficult for them to continue earnings they have enjoyed in the past. Utilities may not be motivated to take advantage of this opportunity for distributed ownership.

Utilities are like the foxes that make their living off chicken coups. Utilities know how to make electricity, like foxes know the habits of chickens. But Utilities are organized to make money not to save the planet; foxes are motivated to eat chickens not produce high quality eggs.

So either Utilities have to be so tightly regulated that to stay in business they get us on to a citizen owned distributed energy system very quickly or publicly owned corporations must be created and charged with the task of doing the job and doing it quickly.