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How is Seattle City Light's Power Grid Prepared for Growing Electricity Use? and other FAQs

As our customers electrify, and with the adoption of Seattle's Building Emissions Performance Standard (BEPS), Seattle City Light has been preparing our workforce and power grid to continue delivering affordable, reliable and environmentally responsible power. We have compiled answers to the most frequently asked questions we receive around the load capacity of the power grid.

1. WILL SEATTLE'S ELECTRIC GRID HANDLE THE NEW LOAD ANTICIPATED BY THE ADOPTION OF THE BUILDING EMISSIONS PERFORMANCE STANDARD (BEPS)?

Yes. City Light's electric grid will handle the new load anticipated by the adoption of BEPS.

We recently concluded an [Electrification Assessment](#) that looked at electrification scenarios and their impact on our grid. Despite Seattle's growth, [electricity retail sales have decreased](#) over the past decade. This means some excess capacity is available in many areas of the grid throughout much of the year.

To manage this transition affordably and equitably, we have been implementing a [grid modernization](#) roadmap (which includes rolling out a demand response pilot), securing external funding for electrification-enabling solutions and continuing to invest in [energy efficiency](#).

2. WILL BEPS AFFECT CURRENT INCENTIVES, SUCH AS PAY FOR PERFORMANCE, ONCE IMPLEMENTED?

No. BEPS does not impact City Light's authority to offer incentives for energy efficiency, which is required by Washington state law (RCW 19.285.040). Our [Deep Retrofit Pay for Performance](#) program has existing methods to account for non-routine events or fuel switching that occur during a performance period.

3. IS THE ELECTRICITY PROVIDED BY CITY LIGHT CARBON NEUTRAL?

Yes. City Light has been [greenhouse gas \(GHG\) emissions neutral](#) since 2005, using industry-accepted practices and third-party verification. Each year, we report our emissions to [The Climate Registry's](#) Carbon Footprint Registry and purchase verified GHG offsets to achieve GHG neutrality.

4. IS CITY LIGHT DIVERSIFYING ITS ENERGY PORTFOLIO BEYOND HYDROPOWER FOR NEW RENEWABLE ENERGY SOURCES TO MEET OUR FUTURE NEEDS?

Yes. City Light is investing in new technologies and approaches to energy conservation, energy storage and other opportunities.

We acknowledge potential challenges in procuring renewable resources and their transmission as other west coast utilities require the same. Our [Integrated Resource Plan](#) (IRP) outlines the utility's long-term strategy to supply reliable electricity while protecting the environment and ensuring service equity, equipping the utility to address these challenges.

We have also been preparing for the effects of climate change on hydropower generation. The IRP and our [Climate Change Adaptation Plan](#) consider the impacts of climate change and electrification on long-term energy resource needs. The IRP relies on only clean energy sources, such as new renewables (e.g., solar and wind), and energy efficiency to meet future increases in electricity demand.

5. HOW IS CITY LIGHT IMPROVING SERVICE-UPGRADE TIMELINES AND ENSURING CONSISTENT CUSTOMER SERVICE?

City Light has been working on a long-term program to improve the end-to-end process from connection requests to receiving bills.

Since 2021, these efforts have included reducing engineering backlog, improving our online application, establishing a variance committee to handle exceptions to City Light standards, and workflow management.

Going forward, we are pursuing additional projects that seek to improve the pre-application and application process, customer pre-planning resources, overall staffing, and electrification education and technical assistance.

6. ARE THERE CITY PROGRAMS FOR INTEGRATING SOLAR POWER INFRASTRUCTURE FOR BUILDINGS?

Yes. City Light has a variety of [solar programs for businesses](#):

- For solar power systems up to 100 kW, customers are eligible to receive kWh credits on bills (valued at the customer's retail rate) for the energy produced, known as net metering.
- For systems over 100 kW and up to 2 MW, customers are eligible for cash credits for excess generation (valued at below retail rate).

Customers may also be eligible for meter aggregation which allows customers to share excess generation with their adjacent property.

7. HOW CAN CUSTOMERS PREPARE TO COORDINATE OR PARTNER WITH THE UTILITY ON LONG-TERM ELECTRIFICATION PLANNING?

To best prepare, we recommend customers start planning for electrification as soon as possible and discuss their approach to electrification with City Light. Customers can start with [Business Customer Services](#) to set up a meeting. From there, we ask that they submit their application for a Service Request as early as possible, so we can get resources assigned to their project and proceed at a pace that is aligned with their consultants, electricians and engineers.