

Southern California Edison orders 200 MW of SunPower panels for large utility solar project

Wednesday, 10 March 2010

Southern California Edison (SCE) announced today that SunPower has won a contract to provide solar technology for generating up to 200 megawatts of the solar power capacity needed for the utility's large solar photovoltaic installation program.

Southern California Edison (SCE), an Edison International company (NYSE:EIX), and SunPower Corp. (Nasdaq: SPWRA, SPWRB) announced today that SunPower has won a contract to provide solar technology for generating up to 200 megawatts, or 80 percent, of the solar power capacity needed for the utility's large solar photovoltaic installation program.

During the next five years, SCE plans to install, own and operate 250 megawatts of solar generating capacity, most of it on otherwise unused large warehouse rooftops. The large one- to two-million-watt solar installations will be connected directly to neighborhood distribution circuits where the leased rooftops are located.

"The anticipated benefits of this agreement with SunPower include panel costs that will allow us to meet our commitment to increasing our customers' supply of renewable energy while reducing the cost of installed solar photovoltaic power in California," said SCE President John R. Fielder.

SCE is purchasing the SunPower T5 Solar Roof Tile product, which integrates into a single unit a solar panel, frame and roof mounting system, thereby reducing installation time and costs. In addition, the SunPower product was selected because it will allow SCE to produce more power per installation.

"The SCE program reflects the growing value of advanced solar panel technology as a reliable, cost-effective energy resource that can be installed quickly, anywhere and at any scale," said Howard Wenger, president of SunPower's utilities and power plant business group. "SunPower applauds SCE's commitment to rooftop solar development, which is unprecedented in the utility industry."

In a related development, on January 21, 2010, the California Public Utilities Commission approved the process to be used for a second track of solar installations that will double the size of SCE's photovoltaic program. Regulators previously directed SCE to conduct a competitive solicitation offering long-term power contracts to independent solar power providers willing to install an additional 250 megawatts of photovoltaic generation. SCE hopes to launch the solicitation later this month. Eventually, the two installation tracks will add a total of 500 megawatts to the solar generating capacity of Southern California's power resources – the largest U.S. photovoltaic program ever undertaken.

SCE solar project benefits

- New generation sources will be installed in areas where customer demand is rising.
- The installations will speed up California's deployment of solar generation while major new renewable energy transmission lines are being built such as SCE's 4,500 megawatt Tehachapi Renewable Transmission Project.

SCE grid engineers will be studying the electrical effects of a high penetration of photovoltaics on distribution circuits and adapting circuits to accommodate these large installations. The information gained will be shared with the power industry.

SCE anticipates its solar power project will create as many as 800 new green jobs in Southern California in the solar industry. The International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, one of SCE's project partners, is supporting the project through the expansion of its solar installation apprentice training program.

To know more about SunPower, visit www.sunpowercorp.com.