

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS

California Public Utilities Commission

Deadline for Submittal is 11:59 p.m. PDT, Sunday, October 3, 2021

Expedited Interconnection Dispute Resolution Technical Panel: Non-Utility Member

Electric Rule 21 is a tariff that describes the interconnection, operating and metering requirements for generation facilities to be connected to a utility's distribution system. The tariff provides residential and commercial customers wishing to install generating or storage facilities with access to the electric grid while protecting the safety and reliability of the distribution and transmission systems at the local and system levels.

In recent years, growth in the number of requests to interconnect solar photovoltaic, energy storage, electric vehicle charging, and other distributed energy resource (DER) systems to the utility grid has raised new issues and challenges for installers and utilities, including disputes over Rule 21 interconnection applications.

Assembly Bill (AB) 2861 (Stats. 2016, Ch. 672) authorizes the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) to establish an expedited interconnection dispute resolution (EIDR) process that will issue binding determinations of Rule 21 electric distribution grid interconnection disputes based on the recommendations of a technical panel within 60 days of the Commission's receipt of an interconnection applicant's request regarding a particular dispute.

AB 2861 is intended to address the inadequacy of the existing interconnection dispute resolution process described in utility tariffs in Section K of Rule 21, which relies on protracted mediation and does not benefit from readily leveraged technical expertise to review the engineering determinations and upgrade cost allocations that often lead to disputes.

Specifically, AB 2861 directs the CPUC to, among other things, establish a technical panel (EIDR Technical Panel), consisting of at least four members from utilities and four non-utility (i.e., public) members. Individual disputes will be reviewed by sub-panels of two utility and two non-utility members selected from the broader EIDR Technical Panel.

The California Institute for Energy and Environment (CIEE) and the Center for Law, Energy & Environment (CLEE) seek to identify and recommend for CPUC selection non-utility technical panel members to serve on the EIDR Technical Panel as needed.

The selected panel members will assist the State with the following activities:

- Serve as one of two non-utility technical panel members when called upon (with advance notice) for individual interconnection dispute resolution sub-panel reviews.
- Review and analyze applicant and utility filings in connection with the dispute, such as interconnection applications, interconnection studies, other Rule-21 related additional technical information, and statements of dispute and relief sought.
- Work with other utility and non-utility sub-panel members to develop a well-reasoned, consensus recommendation that ensures safe and reliable interconnection (or, if no consensus can be reached, develop an individual recommendation).
- Prepare a written recommendation for CPUC’s final decision regarding the dispute including:
 - A summary of the facts of the dispute, a description of the panel’s review process, a recommendation for actions CPUC should take to resolve the dispute, and clear justification for the recommendation.
 - All relevant technical, policy, and financial information necessary for CPUC to make an informed determination, in a concise document written for a non-technical reader.
 - A record of any meetings or interviews conducted in the course of review.
- Complete the review and recommendation process within 30 days of selection for a sub-panel, spending no more than 120 hours (aggregate for all four panel members) on the review.¹

Eligibility:

Respondents cannot be employed by any of the three major Investor Owned Utilities (Pacific Gas & Electric, Southern California Edison, San Diego Gas & Electric). If a conflict of interest is positively determined at any time, respondents will be automatically disqualified from consideration.

Qualifications:

Each member of the EIDR Technical Panel must be an “engineer with substantial technical expertise in distribution system interconnection.” Minimum and desired qualifications are described below.²

Minimum Qualifications:

- Must be an engineer, but the individual does not need to be a licensed engineer.
- Extensive working experience with electrical grid interconnection issues, including strong technical understanding of distributed generation, grid integration, and electric power systems and protection.
- Comprehensive knowledge of CPUC Rule 21 interconnection process, rules, and requirements (or equivalent), including steps in the process and their purposes; obligations of IOUs and applicants; and technical, business, and procedural priorities of CPUC, IOUs, applicants, and other Rule 21 stakeholders.
- Consultant shall be independent and shall not have the appearance of a conflict of interest that may restrict the ability of the person to provide the services outlined in this RFQ. The person must not be subject to the one-year or permanent ban on providing such services outlined in this RFQ, pursuant to the Political Reform Act, California Government Code Sections 87400-87410.

¹ See Cal. Pub. Util. Code § 769.5/[Assembly Bill 2861](#) (Ting, Chapter 672, Statutes of 2016) and [CPUC Resolution ALJ-347](#) (October 12, 2017), *Expedited Interconnection Dispute Resolution Process FINAL* for a more detailed description of the EIDR process.

² Qualifications are based on Cal. Pub. Util. Code § 769.5 and CPUC Resolution ALJ-347.

Desired Qualifications:

- Strong familiarity with national standards for interconnection of distributed generation resources, including IEEE 1547-2018 and IEEE 2030.5-2013.
- Understanding of the trend from analog to digital protection systems.
- Comprehensive knowledge of technical, functional, distribution grid integration, and compliance issues related to:
 - Programmable smart inverters;
 - Behind-the-meter (BTM) energy storage systems;
 - BTM solar + storage systems (and implications for distribution grids);
 - Two-way meters and demand response technologies; and
 - Transformers and synchronous condensers on primary and secondary distribution systems.
- Understanding of concerns regarding interconnection of distributed generation resources in relation to distribution grid system protection and overcharging on secondary distribution lines.
- Working knowledge of utility costs and safety concerns related to interconnection and timelines related to distribution line construction and upgrades.
- Knowledge of the impacts associated with reverse flow on electrical distribution lines, including analog protection systems.

Required information for consideration:

Individual Response Package shall consist of:

- Curriculum Vitae (CV) not to exceed two pages in length.
- Brief one-page statement of interest and relevant experience.
- Proposed hourly rate for services.
- Anticipated month-to-month general availability to potentially serve on panels through the end of calendar year 2022.

Questions and Answers:

Questions regarding the content of this RFQ must be submitted via email to: Rule21@berkeley.edu. Answers to relevant questions may be provided as a Q&A supplement hosted and accessible from CIEE's website the week ending **September 24, 2021**. No subsequent email notice will be provided and it will be the responsibility of interested respondents to check the website for the Q&A supplement. Please note that feedback on individual response packages (pre- or post-submission) will not be provided.

The deadline to submit questions is **11:59 p.m. Pacific Daylight Time, on Wednesday, September 15, 2021**.

Instructions for Submission of RFQ Response:

Individual Response Package must be submitted via email as a single PDF file. The email address for submissions is Rule21@berkeley.edu.

The deadline for submissions is **11:59 p.m. Pacific Daylight Time on Sunday, October 3, 2021**. Earlier submission is encouraged to avoid potential last-minute issues with transmittal.