



Glossary of Terms:

- **Demand Response Program** - Utility programs which offer incentives to curb demand during peak energy usage periods in response to system reliability or market conditions.
- **Electricity Supplier** – As states restructure their electricity markets, an increasing number of customers will be able to choose from a range of electricity suppliers who market different types of power products, including green power. In states without restructured electricity markets, local utilities may offer green pricing programs that enable customers to elect to have their utility generate a portion of their power from renewable sources
- **Energy Efficiency Resource Standards (EERs)** - State policies that require utilities to meet specific targets for energy savings according to a set schedule. EERS policies establish separate reduction targets for electricity sales, peak electric demand and/or natural gas consumption. In most cases, utilities must achieve energy savings by developing demand-side management (DSM) programs, which typically provide financial incentives to customers to install energy-efficient equipment. An EERS policy is sometimes coupled with a state’s renewable energy portfolio standard (RPS). In these cases, energy efficiency is typically included as a lower-tier resource.
- **Green Power Product** – Green power electricity products are supplied from renewable energy resources that provide the highest environmental benefit. Green power sold by regulated utilities is called green pricing, and when sold in competitive electric markets, green power is called green marketing.
- **Green Pricing** – Some power companies are now providing an optional service, called green pricing, which allows customers to pay a small premium in exchange for electricity generated from renewable energy resources. The premium covers the increased costs incurred by the power provider (i.e., the electric utility) when adding green power to its power generation mix.
- **Interconnection Standards** - Interconnection standards specify the technical and procedural process by which a customer connects a system that generates electricity to the grid. Such standards include the technical and contractual arrangements that system owners and utilities must abide by. State public utilities commissions typically establish standards for interconnection to the distribution grid, while the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) has adopted standards for interconnection to the transmission level. Many states have adopted interconnection standards, but some states’ standards apply only to investor-owned utilities and not to municipal utilities or electric cooperatives. Several states have adopted interconnection guidelines, which are weaker than standards and generally only apply to net-metered systems.
- **Kilowatt-hour** – A kilowatt-hour (kWh) is a standard metric unit of measurement for electricity.
- **Net Metering** - For electric customers who generate their own electricity, net metering allows for the flow of electricity both to and from the customer – typically through a single, bi-directional meter. When a customer’s generation exceeds the customer’s use, electricity from the customer flows back to the grid, offsetting electricity consumed by the customer at a different time during the same billing cycle. In effect, the customer uses excess generation to offset electricity that the customer otherwise would have to purchase at the utility’s full retail rate. Net metering is required by law in most U.S. states, but these policies vary widely.
- **Performance Based Regulation** - a rate-setting mechanism that attempts to link rewards (generally profits) to desired behavior. PBR sets rates, or components of rates, for a period of time based on external indices rather than as a utility’s cost-of-service. Other definitions include: light-handed regulation, which is less costly and less subject to debate, and litigation. A form of rate regulation that provides utilities with better incentives to reduce their costs than does cost-of services regulation.
- **Return On Investment (ROI)**-One of several approaches to evaluating and comparing investments. With ROI, decision makers evaluate investments by comparing the magnitude and timing of expected gains to the magnitude and timing of investment costs. A good ROI means that investment returns compare favorably to investment costs. In terms of energy, ROI compares the initial investment for a renewable energy system, with the overall savings over the systems lifetime.
- **Renewable Portfolios Standard (RPS)**- Require utilities to use renewable energy or renewable energy credits (RECs) to account for a certain percentage of their retail electricity sales -- or a certain amount of generating capacity -- according to a specified schedule. (Renewable portfolio goals are similar to RPS policies, but renewable portfolio goals are not legally binding.) Most U.S. states have established an RPS. The term “set-aside” or “carve-out” refers to a provision within an RPS that requires utilities to use a specific renewable resource (usually solar energy) to account for a certain percentage of their retail electricity sales (or a certain amount of generating capacity) according to a set schedule.
- **Utility** – A utility is a municipal or private business that provides electricity to the public and is subject to governmental regulation.



Helpful Websites for Reference

Online Resources for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Information

- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Clean Energy (www.epa.gov/cleanenergy/)- This website contains information on clean energy technologies, partnerships, government programs, Energy Star, and clean energy resources.
- National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) (www.nrel.gov) - Valuable information on renewable energy and energy efficiency technologies. Numerous reports on green power markets and utility programs on a national, state, and local level)
- Duke Energy's North Carolina Business Services Website (<http://www.duke-energy.com/north-carolina-business.asp>)- Information on programs offered by the utility. With more in-depth information on [renewable energy](#) and [energy efficiency](#) projects.
- North Carolina GreenPower (NCGP) (<http://www.ncgreenpower.org/index.php>) - Homepage for the nation's first statewide green energy program. Contains information for individuals or businesses that are looking to invest in renewable energy production and offset their green-house gas impacts.
- United States Department of Energy Website for Green Power (<http://apps3.eere.energy.gov/greenpower/>). Contains the latest news and information regarding the purchasing of green power and utility programs. Contains a state by state listing of all utility companies and the types of renewable energy programs and pricing they offer. ([Direct link to table](#)).
- Energy Star Products Information (<http://www.energystar.gov>)- Energy management information and lists of energy star rated products. Many of these energy star products can be utilized in utility based rebate and incentive programs
- Database of State Incentives for Renewables & Energy (DSIRE) (www.dsireusa.org) DSIRE is comprehensive source of information on state, local, utility and federal incentives and policies that promote renewable energy and energy efficiency. This website has links and information to utility programs across the nation.
- ECU's Center For Sustainable Tourism (www.sustainabletourism.org)- Provides resources and links for businesses. Links to many online resources, tip sheets, industry partners, and much more.
- RETI website (www.sustainabletourism.org/RETI/About.cfm) The home page for the Renewable Energy in Tourism Initiative.
- **Reminder: Utility green energy programs vary widely across different states and different companies. It is important to always check with your own utility provider to see what specific programs they offer.**