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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



FOR INFORMATION CALL

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Ald. Tony Zielinski  
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## **Alderman Zielinski seeks halt to 'anti solar, anti-renewable energy' We Energies rate hike**

Alderman Tony Zielinski said he will introduce legislation next week urging the full Common Council to go on record in opposition to a requested rate increase that could boost electric rates for homeowners and other residential customers of We Energies by nearly 5% in January 2015.

Alderman Zielinski, chair of the Council's Licenses Committee, said he will introduce a file at the September 3 Council meeting opposing the requested We Energies rate increase (also referred to as a rate case) and asking Governor Walker to also join in the effort to reject the request.

"The proposed rate increase plan punishes those who use solar and other renewable energy systems that We Energies likely believes will threaten to take a few dollars out of the energy giant's massive and bloated coffers," Alderman Zielinski said.

"The fact is solar, wind and other such systems are clean and reduce our dependence on foreign fossil fuels that pollute our air. The bottom line is our economy is stronger when we can produce our own energy using solar and other renewable sources, and I am calling on Governor Walker to use the power of his office to urge his two appointees to the three-member Public Service Commission (PSC) to reject the We Energies proposal," he said.

"Today I am also calling on the Governor to respond – to tell us whether he will, in fact, take a strong position opposing the job-killing We Energies attack on renewable energy efforts," the alderman said.

**-More-**

## **We Energies rate case/ADD ONE**

The rate case filed by We Energies includes two components: One could impact all residents' energy bills, and the second introduces charges and restrictions on clean energy system owners.

If granted by the PSC, the We Energies rate increase and changes would mean:

- All new and all existing renewable energy systems could be impacted, including residential, business, and non-profit or government installations. For a list of some of the installations on community facilities that may be impacted, consumers can visit the We Energies website.
- **More than solar?** Yes, the changes will impact all distributed generation in We Energies territory including solar, wind and biogas/bio-digesters. Solar and wind system owners would be charged roughly \$4/kW/month. Bio-digester owners would see a new surcharge of \$8.60/kW/month.

According to a news article in the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* (Sunday, August 24 edition – “Electric rates could rise 5% in January for We Energies customers”) the We Energies request's potential impact on solar users has drawn the attention of national energy industry observers and solar advocates.

The article states that an “alliance of large national solar companies that haven't done much business in the state is getting involved, and nearly 4,000 people have signed an online petition challenging the proposals.”

The article states further: “A national conservative politician has also joined the protest. Retired U.S. Rep. Barry Goldwater Jr. (R-Ariz.) sent a letter to state lawmakers saying the move by Wisconsin utilities to pay less to customers with solar panels is contrary to conservative values advocating free-market competition, property rights and tax cuts.”

Alderman Zielinski is also urging residents to oppose the rate increase and changes, as **public comments are being taken on the We Energies rate case until September 24, 2014.** To file a comment, go to the **PSC's website**. Click on ***Public Comment***, then search for We Energies 2014 rate case (Docket No. 5-UR-107).