

CHAPTER 8 – Rate Setting, Program Terms and Conditions

Introduction

This Chapter describes the initial policies proposed for MBCP retail generation rates, including policies guiding rate design, rate objectives, and provision for due process in setting Program rates. Program rates are ultimately approved by MBCP's Board. MBCP would retain authority to modify program policies from time to time at its discretion.

Rate Policies

MBCP will establish rates sufficient to recover all costs related to operation of the MBCP Program, including any reserves that may be required as a condition of financing and other discretionary reserve funds that may be approved by MBCP. As a general policy, rates will be uniform for all similarly situated customers enrolled in the MBCP Program throughout the service area of MBCP.

The primary objectives of the rate setting plan are to set rates that achieve the following:

- MBCP will offer default service rate that will be the same or less than that provided by the incumbent utility.
- MBCP will set rates to support the acquisition of resource portfolio that will meet the State's RPS standard and maximize the carbon free resources in the portfolio mix (near or at 100%).
- MBCP will offer voluntary rate programs to enhance the local development of renewable energy and storage capacity supply option.
- MBCP will offer stable rates through hedging strategies and long-term contracts.

Each of these objectives is described below.

Rate Competitiveness

The primary goal is to offer competitive rates for electric services that MBCP would provide to participating customers. For participants in MBCP's standard Tariff, the goal would be for MBCP Program rates to be initially at or lower, subject to actual energy product pricing and decisions of MBCP Board, than similar generation rates offered by PG&E. For voluntary participants in the MBCP Program's 100 California carbon free tariff, the goal would be to offer the lowest possible customer rates with an incremental monthly cost premium reflective of the actual cost of additional California carbon free resources required to serve such customers – based on current estimates, the anticipated cost premium for the MBCP Program's 100 percent California carbon free supply option would be 5 to 10 percent relative to the default MBCP tariff.

Competitive rates will be critical to attracting and retaining key customers. For MBCP to be successful, the combination of price and value must be perceived as superior when compared to the bundled utility service alternative. As planned, the value provided by the MBCP Program will include a higher proportion of carbon free energy relative to the incumbent utility, enhanced energy efficiency and customer programs, community focus, and local investment and control.

Participating qualified low- or fixed-income households, such as those currently enrolled in the California Alternate Rates for Energy (“CARE”) program, will be automatically enrolled in the standard Tariff and will continue to receive related discounts on monthly electricity bills through the incumbent utility.

Rate Stability

MBCP will offer stable rates by hedging its supply costs over multiple time horizons and by including carbon free supplies that exhibit stable costs. Rate stability considerations may prevent MBCP Program rates from directly tracking similar rates offered by the distribution utility, PG&E, and may result in differences from the general rate-related targets initially established for the MBCP Program. MBCP will attempt to maintain general rate parity with PG&E to ensure that MBCP Program rates are not drastically different from the competitive alternative.

Customer Understanding

The goal of customer understanding involves rate designs that are relatively straightforward so that customers can readily understand how their bills are calculated. This not only minimizes customer confusion and dissatisfaction but will also result in fewer billing inquiries to the MBCP Program’s customer service call center. Customer understanding also requires rate structures to reflect rational rate design principles.

Revenue Sufficiency

MBCP Program rates must collect sufficient revenue from participating customers to fully fund MBCP’s annual budget. Rates will be set to collect the adopted budget based on a forecast of electric sales for the budget year. Rates will be adjusted as necessary to maintain the ability to fully recover costs of the MBCP Program, subject to the disclosure and due process policies described later in this chapter. To ensure rate stability, funds available in MBCP’s rate stabilization fund may be used from time to time to augment operating revenues.

Rate Design

MBCP will generally match the rate structures from the utilities’ standard rates to avoid the possibility that customers would see significantly different bill impacts as a result of changes in rate structures that would take effect following enrollment in the MBCP Program.

Custom Pricing Options

MBCP may work to develop specially-tailored rate and electric service products that meet the specific load characteristics or power market risk profiles of larger commercial and industrial customers. This will allow such customers to have access to a wider range of products than is currently available from the incumbent utility and potentially reduce the cost of power for these customers. MBCP may provide large energy users with custom pricing options to help these customers gain greater control over their energy costs. Some examples of potential custom pricing options are rates that are based on an observable market index (e.g., CAISO prices) or fixed priced contracts of various terms.

Net Energy Metering

As planned, customers with on-site generation eligible for net metering from PG&E will be offered a net energy metering rate from MBCP. Net energy metering allows for customers with certain qualified solar or wind distributed generation to be billed for their net energy consumption. The objective is that MBCP's net energy metering tariff will apply to the generation component of the bill, and the PG&E net energy metering tariff will apply to the utility's portion of the bill. MBCP plans to pay customers for excess power produced from net energy metered generation systems in accordance with the rate designs adopted by MBCP.

Disclosure and Due Process in rate setting

Initial program rates will be adopted by MBCP following the establishment of the first year's operating budget prior to initiating the customer notification process. Subsequently, MBCP will prepare an annual budget and corresponding customer rates. Any proposed rate adjustment will be made to the Policy Board of Directors and ample time will be given to affected customers to provide comment on the proposed rate changes.

After proposing a rate adjustment, MBCP will furnish affected customers with a notice of its intent to adjust rates, either by mailing such notices postage prepaid to affected customers, by including such notices as an insert to the regular bill for charges transmitted to affected customers, or by including a related message directly on the customer's monthly electricity bill. The notice will provide a summary of the proposed rate adjustment and will include a link to the MBCP Program website where information will be posted regarding the amount of the proposed adjustment, a brief statement of the reasons for the adjustment, and the mailing address of MBCP to which any customer inquiries relative to the proposed adjustment.