

CONSUMER

Resources



Bill of Rights



Checklist



IREC's Clean Energy Consumer Bill of Rights

Our future depends on clean, renewable energy and our ability to access and enjoy that energy efficiently. The Interstate Renewable Energy Council (IREC) works to make this a reality for more Americans.

IREC's Clean Energy Consumer Bill of Rights addresses important consumer issues, including safety, contractual transparency, warranties, advertising, privacy and other protective measures related to solar and other renewable energy and energy efficiency technologies. This information empowers consumers to engage in the rapidly evolving clean energy industries with greater confidence. It enables a positive consumer experience with products, technologies, service providers, marketers, sellers, and other market players, including their utility.

The Clean Energy Consumer Bill of Rights covers consumer relationships with utilities, third-party providers and sellers, access to the utility grid, and access to electricity consumption data.

Section I: Consumer interaction with companies, contractors, and/or subcontractors

General

- Companies, contractors and/or subcontractors must confirm compliance with all applicable federal, state and local laws.

Safety

- Companies, contractors and/or subcontractors shall provide proof of the following:
 - Health and safety practices and procedures are followed;
 - Licensing, bonding, and insurance requirements are met;
 - Permitting and inspection requirements are met;
 - Workers are trained to industry standards and supervised; and
 - Industry-recognized credentials in good standing shall be explained and displayed.

Contracts

- Contracts and contract terms shall be transparent, easy to understand and prominent.
- All costs and financing terms, including those that may be dependent on price or retail rate escalation assumptions, shall be made clear, easy to understand, and explained thoroughly.
- All prices and costs shall be transparent throughout the life of the transaction.
- Contracts shall avoid underestimating costs and overestimating performance.
- Ownership terms shall be clearly defined.
- Contracts shall clearly describe the duration, nature, and potential impacts to the buyer of any restrictions, liens, fixture filings, or other security interests that may encumber the consumer's ability to transfer or modify his property or gain access to credit as a result of such terms.
- Termination and removal terms shall be clear especially in cases of third-party ownership.
- Contracts shall include discussion of who is responsible for the proper disposal of the product at the end of its life.
- Performance calculations shall specify and include all relevant factors.
- If installation and/or equipment will be monitored, the consumer shall be told what kind of data is being collected, who has ownership and access to the data, and if the data will be sold to others.

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Contracts continued

- Contracts shall include a reasonable period for rescinding contracts.
- Contracts shall include remediation terms regarding damage to property from work.
- Contracts shall include start and end dates if applicable.

Warranties & Protection

- Equipment and labor warranties shall be clearly defined and easily understood, with responsible parties identified.
- Any performance labels shall be clear and verifiable.
- Upon completion, operating manuals shall be provided if applicable.
- Contact information for follow up shall be provided and kept updated including if the company or product manufacturer ceases operations.
- Any long-term maintenance plan shall be made available in writing and explained.
- An adequate dispute resolution process shall be available in writing and explained.

Advertising

- Claims shall be accurate, factual and substantiated.
- Claims shall avoid underestimating costs, overestimating performance and overvaluing financial and incentive benefits.
- Endorsements shall be genuine and verifiable.
- Renewable Energy Certificates or Renewable Energy Credits (RECs):
 - Providers must educate their clean energy customers about RECs.
 - Providers must be clear and transparent in the role of RECs and their disposition in the clean energy offering, and clearly communicate the customer's rights to make clean energy claims.
 - All statements or claims about renewable energy use must be supported by appropriate REC ownership.
- Companies must follow applicable telephone marketing laws, such as the National Do Not Call Registry rules, which require companies to keep their own "no call" lists, and that telemarketers promptly identify a sales call, among other requirements.
- Companies must follow applicable email and commercial electronic message laws (e.g., the CAN-SPAM Act). These rules require such commercial messages be clearly identified as advertisements, prohibit advertising emails that contain false or misleading header information or deceptive subject lines, and require such messages to have an unsubscribe option, among other requirements.

Respect & Privacy

- Consumers shall be treated fairly and honestly.
- Confidentiality of consumer personal information must be maintained, unless a consumer has actively consented to having that information shared, as permitted by relevant laws.
- Customers should have to give express written permission to have any information shared.
- Consumer data shall be secure and handled responsibly.
- Any conflict of interest or an appearance of impropriety by the provider shall be disclosed.

Section II. Consumer interaction with their utility company

Access

- Consumers shall have fair and non-discriminatory access to the grid provided that safety and reliability requirements are followed.
- The price paid for customer resources shall reflect the full and fair market value of those resources.
- A simple, transparent and efficient process shall be defined for customer resources to connect to the grid.
- Utility rate information shall be clearly available to customers and shall be transparent and easy to understand.
- Consumers using and/or owning distributed resources connected to the grid shall only be responsible for costs directly attributable to their connection and shall not be burdened with unfair or unreasonable charges.
- Consumers shall have access to their own consumption and generation data and be able to share it with third parties.
- Consumers shall know which other entities have access to their data, how the data will be used and if any personal information will be identified with the data.
- Individual consumer energy information provided to third parties for commercial purposes not related to the services provided by the utility shall be prohibited (or fully disclosed with an opt-out clause).

For more information and explanations, please visit IREC's Consumer Resources at www.irecusa.org