Objective: To streamline the rebate and interconnection processes for rooftop solar energy systems while ensuring the safety and reliability of the electric grid.

1. Issue Statement:

   The deployment and utilization of residential rooftop solar energy systems can be beset with rebate approvals and interconnection timeline delays. When the approvals are interdependent on one another the interconnection process may be delayed.

2. Background:

   Some utilities require that the PV Installation not begin until the rebate application has been approved. There were reasons for this requirement when rebates were a very large portion of the cost of the system. Utilities did not want the customer to have installed a system and not be able to pay for it because a rebate was no longer available or not approved. Practically, this means a delay in a rebate application that may delay the interconnection of the system to the utility’s grid and vice versa.

   Some utilities have purchased or developed standalone software for both rebate application processes and interconnection application processes. PowerClerk is an example of rebate software used by utilities. As an example, LADWP recently developed an online system to handle interconnection applications.

3. Current Status:

   Delays associated with a main service panel upgrade can sometimes account for almost half of the time when the PV system is sold and the time that it can be turned on. This is one of the most common complaints from PV system customers at this time.
4. **Key considerations:**

   The State of California continues to set far reaching climate and energy goals. There are many state policies and laws promoting and encouraging the use of solar energy systems. Many cities/counties are vowing to use more renewable energy and to cut greenhouse gas emissions. Utilities, regulators, technology providers, AHJ's, and customers need to work together to build the Greatest electricity system that delivers value and affordability to customers and society.

   Now that many rebates are no longer available or the rebates are small, rebate approval is no longer as much of a necessity for customers to afford residential PV systems. In addition, with the advent of leases and Power Purchase Agreements, installers often carry rebates for customers and are willing to perform the work without a guarantee of rebates. For this reason, some of the utilities who still offer rebates have decided to separate their process. Also, communication related to the technical aspects of the interconnection process is generally handled by the installer and utility representative, not the entity in charge of rebates or incentives.

5. **Recommendation(s):**

   The following are practices and processes to consider:

   1) Separation of rebate approval and interconnection approval would allow installers to receive interconnection approval without already having rebate approval.

   2) A user friendly online system for rebate and interconnection applications may provide scalability for handling a potentially high volume of residential solar interconnection applications and streamline the process.

6. **Benefits:**

   By separating the interconnection and rebate processes and by using online systems for application processes, the time between the sale of the system and Permission to Operate (PTO) is expected to decrease.

7. **Applicable to whom:**

   The recommendations would apply to utilities, contractors and AHJs.
   The implementation of these recommendations would also benefit end customers.

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