

1. If a FiT is passed, will existing solar installations benefit from the energy buyback rates? While there has been discussion of allowing the early adopters of solar PV in New York State to also get this rate (totals about 25 MW) in year one, this is not addressed directly in the current draft of the bill (NY Green Energy Jobs Act, GEJA <http://open.nysenate.gov/openleg/bill/S2715A>). It could be added if there were public or private interest.
2. What would happen to the NYSEERDA rebate program?
Funding for the current rebate program – which was originally funded by the Systems Benefit Charge (SBC, <http://www.dps.state.ny.us/sbc.htm>) and currently funded through the Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS, <http://www.dps.state.ny.us/03e0188.htm>) and paid for by New York State ratepayers of the investor-owned utilities (i.e. National Grid, Con Ed, NYSEG, RG&E & Central Hudson) – will be redirected to the New York Green Energy Jobs Act.
3. What will happen to the current Systems Benefit Charge? Will there be an additional ratepayer charge?
Effective at the initiation of the feed-in-tariff, PV rebates are no longer funded by the SBC. The SBC is still in existence and primarily funds NYS's energy efficiency efforts. The RPS program is an existing ratepayer charge. It appears, like the SBC program, as a line item on your electric bill (if you are served by one of the utilities identified above). Therefore, this is not an additional charge, and in fact, in the first few years of the program, it is expected that the cost of the program will lower customer bills compared to continuing with a rebate effort. Further, over time, as the cost of conventional power increases, the Green Energy Jobs Act is expected to lower the cost of energy.
4. In my understanding, a well-designed SREC program leads to lower energy costs for businesses, and that FiTs don't have the same effect. In this case, why not support an SREC program for New York?
This is a statement that is commonly made but to our knowledge, never been substantiated. In looking at the New Jersey SREC program, the cost per kWh for the SREC program is over 2 times the cost of the NYS Green Jobs Act (60+ cents/kWh in NJ vs. 27 cents/kWh for the NY Green Jobs Act). This is a misconception that we are working to clear up, and a more detailed report on this topic will be provided by the New York Solar Energy Society in the near future.
5. Why is New York State pursuing potentially damaging natural gas exploration rather than meeting the energy needs through a renewable energy FiT?
The natural gas industry wants to do it and are convincing our elected officials that it is safe and viable.
6. Will New York State be able to compete against Ontario's rate and contract structure to ensure that we retain investment dollars here for renewable energy

and job growth?

Yes. The contract structure for the NY Green Energy Jobs Act and the Ontario program are based on the German Feed in Tariff model. The major distinction, which you seem to be referring to in the question, is the local content requirement of the Ontario program. Given that the bulk of the jobs that would be created by the NY Green Energy Jobs Act are installation based, most of the work will be done by New Yorkers. Nevertheless, there is discussion underway about adding a local content element to the GEJA.

7. How do you finance a FiT program for solar energy with uncertain production; how do you address this risk?

Production from solar energy systems is one of the most certain, risk free technology investments one can make. This is known in the industry and has proven itself in the renewable marketplace created by Germany and replicated by many other countries.

8. Why would FiT prices be fixed for a contract term, while the price of the technology is decreasing over time?

The FiT prices DO decrease over time. The current version of the GEJA bill would reduce these payments by 5% per year. The fixed price that you are referring to is promised for a fixed investment in the year the project was installed. If an identical project is installed in a subsequent year, the FiT price received for that project would, by definition, be reduced. This ensures a reduction in technology costs over time.

9. Does a FiT policy, at least how proposed for New York, address the issue of community stakeholders; the NIMBY issue?

The bill seeks to promote community ownership of renewable systems. Most NIMBY issues result from large wind farms. These projects will still be required to secure all environmental and local building permits and comply with all public notices.