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### 1. What are the major changes to the microFIT Program?

Key changes to the microFIT Program include:

- Solar prices for new microFIT contracts have been reduced to reflect lower operating and capital costs (54.9 cents per kilowatt-hour for rooftop microFIT projects and 44.5 cents per kilowatt-hour for ground-mounted microFIT projects).
- Individuals and farmers are now limited to one microFIT contract.
- Municipalities, universities, schools and colleges, hospitals and long-term care homes, social or affordable housing and Aboriginal communities can lease the land on which their project is located. Individuals and farmers still need to own the land where their project is located. Renewable energy co-ops must locate their projects on property owned by the co-operative. Farm co-ops must locate their projects on land that is owned by a member of the co-operative.
- There are new restrictions on where ground-mounted solar projects, or wind projects of 3 kW or less, can be located.
  - They are permitted on agricultural lands, provided that any residential use on such lands is a secondary use to the agriculture.
  - They are **not permitted** on or adjacent to property on which residential use is a lawfully permitted use.
  - They are permitted on property on which commercial and industrial use is a lawfully permitted use as long as the project is not the main, primary or only purpose for which the property is used.
- The OPA will no longer be issuing conditional offers. Rather, the OPA will issue an Application Approval Notice following applicants receiving an Offer to Connect for their proposed project from their local distribution company (LDC).
- Applicants will be required to seek an Offer to Connect from their LDC within 30 days of the OPA confirming that their application has passed the initial completeness and eligibility reviews. This will be followed by a 90-day period during which the applicant must receive an Offer to Connect. After the OPA issues an Application Approval Notice, the applicant must construct the project and obtain the [Electrical Safety Authority \(ESA\) Connection Authorization](#) within 180 days.
- microFIT prices will be reviewed annually, with prices published in November that will take effect on January 1 of the following year.
- Now that the microFIT Program has been relaunched, the OPA will provide for the awarding of 50 MW of microFIT contracts as soon as possible.

### 2. What changed between the draft and the final Rules?

- Based on comments received during the comment period, a number of clarifications have been made to the final Rules. In addition, several definitions have been clarified.
- A key change from the draft to the final version of the microFIT Rules is on the timelines for the microFIT process. Applicants will be required to seek an Offer to Connect from their local distribution company (LDC) within 30 days of the OPA confirming that their application has passed the initial completeness and eligibility reviews. This will be followed by a 90-day period during which the applicant must receive and accept an Offer to Connect. This change is to provide sufficient time for LDCs to process Offer to Connect requests from microFIT applicants.

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### 3. So what is the application process now?

- Applicants with a pre-existing application (submitted between September 1, 2011, and April 5, 2012) who wish to participate in the program must reapply to the new microFIT Program by completing a new application using the online application form. All pre-existing applications that are resubmitted must comply with the new microFIT Rules. The transition window opened on July 12, with pre-existing applicants required to reapply by August 10, 2012.
- New applicants who are interested in applying to the microFIT Program first need to register using the online tool to create a unique "My microFIT Home Page", user name and password. Once registered, applicants can apply to the program using the online application form.
- New applicants may also begin submitting applications starting July 12. They will be reviewed after resubmitted pre-existing applications, provided there is remaining capacity within this application window – which has a planning target of 50 MW.
- Following submission of an online microFIT application, the OPA will review the form for completeness and eligibility, and determine if there is capacity available within the planning target.
- Applicants will be notified by the OPA that their application has passed the initial completeness and eligibility review. At that point, applicants will have 30 days to apply for an Offer to Connect from their local distribution company (LDC).
- There is then a 90-day period during which applicants must receive an Offer to Connect from their LDC.
- The LDC will notify the OPA directly that the Offer to Connect has been issued, and the OPA will issue an Application Approval Notice.
- Applicants will then build their project and will be required to provide their Electrical Safety Authority (ESA) Connection Authorization to the OPA within 180 days.
- Applicants will then have their LDC connect their project to the distribution system.
- Once the OPA receives the ESA Connection Authorization, ensures that the applicant still meets eligibility requirements, and the project has been connected by the LDC and meets all conditions, a contract will be issued to the applicant.

### 4. Why can't I have more than one project?

- Limiting microFIT projects to one per individual and one per farmer will enable more Ontarians to participate in the clean energy economy and will help maintain the intent and focus of the program.

### 5. Where can ground-mounted projects now be located?

- Ground-mounted microFIT solar projects are permitted on agricultural lands, provided that any residential use on such lands is a secondary use to the agriculture.
- Ground-mounted microFIT solar projects are not permitted on or adjacent to property on which residential use is a lawfully permitted use.
- A ground-mounted solar project is permitted on property on which commercial and industrial use is a lawfully permitted use as long as the project is not the main, primary or only purpose for which the property is used.
- Properties where residential, commercial and industrial uses are permitted can host rooftop solar projects.

### 6. Why will conditional offers no longer be issued?

- The OPA has simplified the microFIT review and approval process. Applicants will now receive an Application Approval Notice following their receipt of an Offer to Connect from their local distribution company (LDC). The Application Approval Notice will be valid for 180 days, and in that time applicants must construct the project and obtain the Electrical Safety Authority (ESA) Connection Authorization.
- Requiring applicants to submit the ESA Connection Authorization, rather than the completed connection notice from the LDC, will make it easier for applicants to meet the 180-day timeline.
- The OPA will review each application to determine whether it is eligible and complete and that capacity is available within the current annual procurement target. Applicants will be required to seek an Offer to Connect from their LDC within 30 days of the OPA confirming that their application has passed the initial completeness and eligibility reviews. This will be followed by a 90-day period during which the applicant must receive an Offer to Connect from their LDC. The LDC will inform the OPA if the Offer to Connect has been granted or denied.

### 7. Do I still need to own the land that the project will be located on?

- Yes, individuals, farmers, LDC participants and faith-based organizations still need to own the land on which their microFIT project will be located.
- Applicants from municipalities, universities, schools, hospitals, long-term care homes, social or affordable housing and Aboriginal communities can submit applications on land that is either owned or leased by the applicant.

- Renewable energy co-ops must locate their projects on property owned by the co-operative. Farm co-ops must locate their project on land that is owned by a member of the co-operative.

#### 8. Are domestic content requirements remaining the same?

- Yes, domestic content requirements have not changed as a result of the FIT Review and remain at 60 percent for all solar (PV) technologies.
- A new domestic content grid for concentrated solar PV (CPV) and for Thin-Film PV Technology is now included in the microFIT Program.

#### 9. Have any changes been made to the program eligibility requirements?

- Individuals and farmers are now limited to one microFIT contract.
- Other changes made to the Eligible Participant Schedule include:
  - Farm co-ops have now been included.
  - Applicants from municipalities, universities, schools, hospitals, long-term care homes, social or affordable housing and Aboriginal communities can submit applications on land that is either owned or leased by the applicant.
- The eligibility and evidence requirements of the Eligible Participant Schedule are very specific and applicants are encouraged to review them carefully before applying. Applicants who are unsure of their eligibility are encouraged to consult legal counsel to confirm that their specific requirements are met. In particular, the issue of ownership interests, riparian rights and regulatory approvals for proposed waterpower microFIT Projects can be complex, and those considering such projects are strongly encouraged to seek legal counsel.

#### 10. What are the restrictions for projects on residential lands?

- The restrictions apply to:
  - Ground-mounted solar PV projects
  - Wind projects up to and including 3 kW (i.e., in the microFIT program; and noting that there are other restrictions for wind projects greater than 3 kW set out in the *Renewable Energy Approval Regulation, O. Reg. 359/09*)
- The restrictions for residential land are:
  - A project may not be located on a property on which residential use is a lawfully permitted use; and
  - A project may not be located on a property that abuts another property on which residential use is a lawfully permitted use.
  - However, for property where the primary lawfully permitted use is agricultural, the above projects are permitted on the property or on an abutting property if residential use is permitted as ancillary to the agricultural use.
- To ensure compliance with the residential land restrictions, applicants will be required to obtain, using the [prescribed forms](#), either:
  - A written opinion of a Land Use Planner or a director of planning or equivalent municipal official; or
  - A written certification of a chief building official, municipal chief administrative officer, municipal clerk, or equivalent official of each municipality in which the project is located, in whole or in part.

#### 11. What are the restrictions for projects on commercial and industrial lands?

- Where a ground-mounted solar PV project is proposed on a property on which commercial use or industrial use is a lawfully permitted use, the proposed facility may not be the main, primary or only purpose for which the property is used.
- These restrictions apply to ground-mounted solar PV projects (all sizes, in both the microFIT and FIT programs).
- To ensure compliance with the commercial/industrial land restrictions, applicants will be required to obtain, using the [prescribed forms](#), either:
  - A written opinion of a Land Use Planner or a director of planning or equivalent municipal official; or
  - A written certification of a chief building official, municipal chief administrative officer, municipal clerk, or equivalent official of each municipality in which the project is located, in whole or in part.

#### 12. What evidence do applicants need to provide to prove that their proposed project is not subject to any land-use restrictions?

- If applying for a ground-mounted solar PV project (up to and including 10 kW) or a wind project up to and including 3 kW, the following evidence is required using standard [prescribed forms](#) that are available on the OPA's website:
  - A written opinion of a Land Use Planner or a director of planning or equivalent municipal official; or
  - A written certification of a chief building official, municipal chief administrative officer, municipal clerk, or equivalent official of each municipality in which the project is located, in whole or in part.

Click [here](#) for FAQs on existing microFIT applications submitted September 1, 2011, or later.