POLICYMAKERS

Establishing An Approval Process For Meter Socket Adapters (MSAs)

A Safe, Proven, Cost-Reduction Solution For Installing Distributed Energy Resources

EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW

Meter socket adapters (MSAs), also called “meter collars,” are a powerful cost reduction solution for installing residential distributed energy resources. Adopting guiding policies can remove barriers to accessing safe, effective devices.

MSAS ARE NO LONGER A NOVEL TECHNOLOGY: THEY ARE USED BROADLY ACROSS THE U.S.

MSAs are a proven solution for safe and cost-effective DER installations. Over 70 utilities across 35 states, including major solar markets like CA, CO, AZ, IL, NJ, and MD, allow MSAs. These utilities serve over 40 million households and 50% of the US residential solar market. Reports from California utilities (PG&E, SCE, and SDG&E) show that over 40,000 customer-owned MSAs were installed in California in 2025 alone, including models from ConnectDER, Tesla, and Enphase.

MSAS ARE OFTEN THE MOST COST-EFFECTIVE OPTION

Compared to traditional hardware, MSAs save hundreds to thousands of dollars per residential installation. Installed alongside solar or battery storage, an MSA avoids main panel upgrades, custom line-side taps, and rewiring. According to Rewiring America, standard panel upgrades cost $2,000—$4,000. Even without panel upgrades, MSAs streamline installation and reduce labor costs. For battery systems, isolating MSAs enable backup power during blackouts without expensive gateways or circuit relocation, saving $1,000—$3,000 per project.

EXISTING UTILITY PROCEDURES MAY PROHIBIT CUSTOMERS FROM INSTALLING MSAS

MSAs are intended to be installed in the customer’s existing meter socket, directly behind the electric utility meter. As this becomes the new point of interface between customer equipment and utility equipment, utilities must approve the use of meter socket adapters before a customer can install one in the existing meter socket. Utility standards may directly or indirectly prohibit the use of customer equipment installed in the meter socket. Utilities may adopt such rules in order to prevent tampering, improper work, or the use of unauthorized devices. However, such rules also prevent the use of beneficial devices that are reviewed by the utility and installed by an authorized, qualified electrician.

MSA POLICIES ESTABLISH A PROCESS FOR CUSTOMERS TO USE CERTIFIED AND APPROVED DEVICES

MSA laws and regulations balance the customer need for affordable hardware options with the utility need for safety and reliability. Adopted in many major solar market states, a typical MSA policy will:

- Establish that Meter Socket Adapters are customer-side equipment, and therefore the responsibility of a customer and their qualified electrician to purchase, install, and maintain.
- Establish the responsibility of the MSA manufacturer to ensure the device meets applicable national standards before requesting review by a utility.
- Establish a process at the utility to intake new meter socket adapter models for review, review the devices for alignment with national standards within a set timeframe and give a response, and clearly list the devices approved for use.

Model Policy Language

Policymakers may reference the model policy language below as an example. This language is based on laws introduced and adopted to date.

Authorizes installation and operation of meter socket adapters on residential electric meters, under certain conditions.

MODEL POLICY LANGUAGE TO ESTABLISH AN APPROVAL PROCESS FOR METER SOCKET ADAPTERS (A.K.A. "METER COLLARS")

Definitions: As used in this section:

- "Meter socket adapter" means a device that is installed between the existing primary meter socket and the utility meter for the purpose of facilitating the deployment of customer-owned, customer-leased, or third party owned equipment or technology.

(a) An electric utility shall authorize the installation and operation of meter socket adapters, whether owned by a residential customer or by a third-party, provided the meter socket adapters meet the following criteria:

(1) the meter socket adapter is qualified to be connected to the supply side of the service disconnect pursuant to the applicable provisions of the National Electrical Code;

(2) the meter socket adapter is certified to meet all applicable standards, as determined by a nationally recognized testing laboratory

(3) the meter socket adapter is rated appropriately for the meter sockets into which it is intended to be installed; and does not impede clearances or access to adjacent equipment, per NEC requirements, as applicable.

(b) Qualified personnel shall be allowed to install, maintain or service a meter socket adapter or associated equipment.

(c) An electric supplier shall not impose additional restrictions on the meter base that a meter socket adapter may be connected to beyond the restrictions provided in the manufacturer installation instructions.

(d) An electric supplier shall establish and publicly publish on their website a point of contact to which device manufacturers will submit formal requests for approval.

(e) An electric supplier shall approve or disapprove a meter socket adapter for installation throughout its entire service area no later than 60 days after a request has been submitted for approval of specific models of meter socket adapters. An electric supplier may disapprove a proposed customer-owned meter socket adapter only if the proposed meter socket adapter does not meet the requirements set forth in subsection (a) of this section. Should an electric supplier disapprove a meter socket adapter, the electric supplier shall provide a clear and detailed explanation to the requesting party enumerating the reasons the application was denied and shall file the same explanation with the commission. Failure by the electric supplier to respond to a meter socket adapter approval request within 60 days may serve as grounds to pursue dispute resolution.

(f) An electric supplier shall allow qualified personnel to temporarily remove a residential electric meter, perform relevant electrical work, and install a meter socket adapter, and replace a residential electric meter in conjunction with the installation of customer-owned, customer-leased, or third party owned energy equipment, including in storage, generator, load-management, and future grid-interactive use cases.

(g) The authority charged with regulating an electric supplier shall establish standards to implement the provisions of this section within 180 days after the effective date of this section.