

COAI applauds the Ministry of Power for issuing the Electricity (Promoting Renewable Energy through Green Energy Open Access Rules) Rules 2022

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New Delhi, 07th June 2022: The Electricity (Promoting Renewable Energy through Green Energy Open Access Rules) Rules 2022 were issued by the Ministry of Power. These rules will apply to the generation, purchase, and consumption of green electricity including energy from the Waste-to-Energy facility. The new regulations will allow consumers to be eligible for open access to green energy if they have a contract demand or a sanctioned load of at least 100 kW. Captive consumers will not be subject to any load limitations.

In various meetings and submissions, COAI raised concerns that the important limitation in the OA policies - that the buyer must have a minimum 'Connected Load' typically 1MW, which is being followed by most states. From a telecom perspective, since each tower has an independent electricity connection and consumes about 3 to 5KW, which is much less than 1MW, our member TSPs are unable to make use of renewable sources effectively due to this regulatory bottleneck. Although on an aggregate level, tower sites put together consume much higher. From a practical standpoint, considering the distribution and spread of mobile towers and limited open area available at the tower site, an on-site solar net metering solution has practical limitations w.r.t. deployment. Hence to deploy renewables at a bigger scale, our member TSPs need renewable energy solutions that can only be provided through Open Access.

Appreciating the directions issued by the Ministry of Power, Lt. Gen. Dr SP Kochhar, Director General said "We are grateful to Chairman, TRAI and Secretary, DoT for their continuous support on taking this issue with the Ministry of Power. We welcome the notification of the Electricity (Promoting Renewable Energy through Green Energy Open Access Rules) Rules 2022 for promoting renewable energy through Green Energy Open Access which prescribes for any consumer who has contracted demand/sanctioned load of 100 kW or more except for captive consumers. However, the Industry has been requesting to Ministry of Power and various State Electricity Regulatory Commissions (SERC) & Central Electricity Regulatory Commissions (CERC) to allow Telecom Infrastructure Open Access for Solar/Renewal Energy without any policy restrictions on minimum usage or allow Telco's to aggregate their electricity demands across a number of towers. We hope that this request of the industry will be considered at the earliest.

Telecom connectivity is the lifeline for the country that has kept people and businesses connected throughout the pandemic. The Telecom networks (Tower sites, networks, and telecom Data Centres among others) run 24x7 with 99.95% uptime requirements, and consumers are dependent upon reliable and continuous electricity supply.

COAI's member TSPs deploy a huge infrastructure of towers across the length and breadth of the country and continuously try to reduce their carbon footprint by deploying solar and other renewable energy solutions in line with the audacious target set by the Government and are committed to it under Paris Accord to achieve energy sustainability and reduce carbon footprint.