



Energy

Green-e “Certifiable” is NOT Green-e Certified

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Renewable energy certificates (RECs) and renewable electricity programs are sometimes referred to as Green-e “certifiable” or “eligible.” These terms are meant to convey to a customer that, in the seller’s opinion, the renewable energy meets Green-e’s publicly available standards.

Customers are not protected when they purchase “certifiable” renewable energy that has not been certified by Green-e. This is a misleading practice that is not endorsed by Green-e.

“Certifiable” renewable energy has not been certified by Green-e Energy; has not undergone Green-e’s third-party verification of correct and exclusive delivery and product quality; and may not actually source from generation facilities that meet the Green-e Energy National Standard. Sale of “certifiable” renewable energy can be deceptive—an attempt to mislead customers about the quality assurances that are being provided by presenting a product as equivalent to Green-e certified. “Green-e certifiable” is also a misuse of the Green-e certification word mark, which may expose sellers to legal risk.

The only way to ensure your renewable energy purchase meets all applicable sustainability and consumer protection criteria in Green-e Energy’s National Standard and Code of Conduct is to buy Green-e Energy certified.

Certification is important when buying and using renewable energy.

“Certification helps ensure the quality of green power products, and also helps build consumer confidence in the marketplace.”

—U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

One of the key values of certification and verification of renewable energy is tracking the full chain of custody from the consumer all the way back to the generator. This ensures that there is no double counting, double selling, or double claiming of renewable energy.

In addition, Green-e monitors state and national policies that may negatively impact renewable energy purchasers’ claims, and works with state agencies to prevent double counting and claiming to maintain the value of certified purchases. The representation that renewable energy could meet Green-e Energy criteria is no substitute for and is not equivalent to the rigorous verification process Green-e Energy undertakes.

Electricity from generators labeled “Green-e Energy Eligible” in a tracking system is not automatically certified.

The term “Green-e Energy Eligible” refers to the fact that the generator has signed a Green-e Energy Tracking Attestation form, it is not a certification. There is potential for the facility’s output to be used in a certified sale (by a current Green-e Energy program participant), but without Green-e Energy verifying the sale, there is no way to prove that the customer is getting something of the same quality as a certified product.

Tracking systems are tools that help Green-e Energy with verification and certification of renewable energy, but they are not a replacement for the range of protections offered by Green-e Energy. For example, there are also many state-specific delivery restrictions for Green-e Energy certified products, which are not captured in tracking system facility eligibility checkboxes, and, if not accounted for, may result in potential double counting or the failure to deliver all renewable energy attributes to customers.

An energy seller that buys certified renewable energy cannot automatically resell it as Green-e certified.

Green-e Energy verifies deliveries to customers purchasing certified renewable energy. If you are not buying a certified product, then Green-e Energy is not verifying your purchase transaction. A renewable energy seller that has bought certified renewable energy cannot then claim that sales of that renewable energy to its own retail customers are certified or verified by Green-e Energy unless the seller has certified that sale directly with Green-e Energy. Sellers that buy Green-e Energy certified renewable energy but do not sell it as certified are also not subject to Green-e’s rigorous product disclosure and marketing standards.

In short, “certifiable” products and sales are uncertified. This term provides no legitimate claim to certification, and purchasers of these products face serious risks related to low-quality renewables, deception, fraud, and previously-claimed or impermanent benefits. If you are offered “certifiable,” “eligible,” or otherwise Green-e equivalent renewable energy as a retail customer, ask for Green-e certified or seek out a seller with Green-e certified products.

Look for the Green-e Energy Certified logo when you buy. A list of sellers offering Green-e Energy certified renewables is available at www.green-e.org/buy.