

HB 3010 by Rep. Zwiener, relating to the use of and permitting for certain energy devices at a retail customer's premises.

1. *HB 3010 Explained*

- ❖ HB 3010 amends the Texas Local Government Code to require local governments to use an online permitting process for residential-scale rooftop solar and battery storage (<40 kWh). The online permitting process must have capabilities comparable to “SolarAPP+” (a National Renewable Energy Laboratories (NREL) permitting software). Local government access to grant funds are contingent upon adoption of an online permitting process.
- ❖ HB 3010 amends the Texas Utilities Code to require municipal utilities or electric co-ops to likewise adopt the online process. Municipal utilities and electric co-ops are required to complete interconnections for distributed generation less than 100 kW within 42 days. Municipal utilities and co-ops must further provide notice to an applicant if facility upgrades are necessary, provide a cost-sharing plan for such upgrades, and guarantee interconnection within 14 days of upgrade completion.
- ❖ The solar permitting process in Texas is excessive, takes far too long, and is not standardized. Currently, the process can last “six months or even longer”¹. This holds up much-needed generating capacity. According to estimates, “Texas likely has more than one gigawatt of solar power awaiting approvals”². This power would bolster the energy grid’s overall capacity, and help fortify grid resiliency.
- ❖ Academic, peer-reviewed research has concluded that lengthy solar permitting “affect[s] customer experiences (Sinitskaya et al., 2019), translate[ing] to higher system prices (Dong and Wiser, 2013; Burkhardt et al., 2015), and ultimately result[ing] in lower PV adoption rates (Hsu, 2018; White, 2018)”³.

2. *How would HB 3010 impact consumers*

- ❖ SolarAPP+ is both more efficient and effective than traditional permitting. According to an NREL report on SolarAPP+, projects were 37% more likely to pass inspections, saved

¹ Blok 2022.

² Hobby & Biggart 2022.

³ O'Shaughnessy, Barbose, & Wiser 2020.

review staff an average of up to an hour of labor time per permit application, and reduced the median permitting length by 13 days⁴.

- ❖ SolarAPP+ is free. This means the budgetary impact on local governments is minimal, amounting to administrative costs, and may actually offer cost-savings.

Citations:

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⁴ Cook et al., 2022.

Disclosure:

Bret Biggart and Freedom Solar are business members of the Texas Solar Energy Society.