

From: Steve Hoffman [mailto:steve@energysolutionsproject.org]
Sent: Thursday, October 24, 2013 2:59 PM
To: GA SBCC (GA)
Subject: Solar Power and Fire Setbacks, Fire Review, etc

Greetings,

I am writing today to comment to the state building code council regarding a very important issue to the solar industry in WA.

I support solar power -- and the categorical exemption from the proposed fire setbacks for rooftop residential solar electric systems. I believe you want to leave 3' from roof ends (not gutters) and 18" from peaks before mounting solar panels. I believe you want solar contractors to submit to fire-related official review for most prospective installations.

I encourage you to adopt all of the recommendations that came from the technical advisory group, including an exemption from setback requirements when solar panels cover less than 40% of the home's roof area. Requiring most potential solar installations to get fire official review before proceeding would put undue hardship on solar contractors. It would seriously hurt sales in one of the few growing industries in the state. Systems would be smaller in size, and many homes with multiple roofs would be unable to cost-effectively install any solar at all. These fire setback codes may be appropriate for California, where they were developed without public or industry input, but our typical installation is far different from theirs. Our state is working hard to encourage solar energy use. Please don't let firefighters' fears, of what "might" happen, kill our hard-won strides to solarize the northwest and help save our planet.

If this code passes, without all of the TAG's recommendations included, it will surely be a hard blow.

Our society and economy desperately need clean, renewable, secure, reliable, solar power.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Steve Hoffman, Ph.D.
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Executive Director, NW Center for Sustainability and Innovation
Bow, WA