

# EVERGREEN STATE SOLAR PARTNERSHIP – ROOFTOP SOLAR CHALLENGE

The Evergreen State Solar Partnership (ESSP) Rooftop Solar Challenge, led by the Washington Department of Commerce (Commerce), is one of 22 projects across the country working to bring down the cost of rooftop solar electricity by standardizing processes for permitting, zoning, interconnection, and net metering for rooftop solar.

The ESSP is reviewing best practices and devising streamlined approaches in consultation with Washington State's cities, counties, and utilities. A core team of jurisdictions and their utilities, along with industry and non-profit partners, is developing proposals that will be shared widely.

The **Rooftop Solar Challenge** is part of the U.S. Department of Energy's **SunShot Initiative**. The SunShot Initiative seeks to make solar electricity cost competitive without subsidies by the end of the decade. Reducing the installed cost of solar energy by about 75 percent will help to drive widespread, large-scale adoption of this renewable energy technology and restore U.S. leadership in the global clean energy race. ESSP's work is supported by a \$500,000 Department of Energy grant.

## Activities

In 2012, the Department of Commerce is working with the core team to develop proposals in the following target areas.

### Permitting and Interconnection

After mapping the process for each core team utility and jurisdiction, we identified key areas for streamlining and standardization. Expected outcomes include an expedited permit process for standard rooftop systems and a standard interconnection agreement used across multiple utilities.

### Building Codes and Zoning

The 2013 International Fire Code poses challenges to solar installations. The ESSP is working with the Washington Building Code Council to ensure that the Fire Code allows for best practices that meet the unique needs of the Pacific Northwest.

### Net Metering and Interconnection Standards

The ESSP is engaged with the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission to comment on its proposed model rules for interconnection for distributed generation. In addition, the ESSP is reviewing possible legislation to strengthen net metering opportunities in Washington State.

## THE CORE TEAM:

City of Bellevue – Puget Sound Energy

City of Ellensburg – Ellensburg Electric Services Utility

City of Edmonds – Snohomish PUD

City of Seattle – Seattle City Light

Northwest SEED – Solar Washington – Sustainable Connections

Washington State Department of Commerce

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## **Financing**

The ESSP is researching financing options to increase access to solar, including direct financing, community solar programs, and third-party ownership.

In 2013 and 2014, if DOE funding is renewed, Commerce and its partners will support efforts to adopt the best practices in jurisdictions and utilities across the state, through workshops, peer-to-peer exchanges, and technical support.

The completion of the project will result in a streamlined rooftop solar development process which should improve the market across the State of Washington to benefit rooftop solar owners, installers, local government, utilities, and the environment.

## **Opportunities for Engagement**

The reports outlining the proposed changes will be posted on the project website. We look forward to any comments or suggestions you have.

Look for the following work products near the beginning of the month.

- Permitting – October
- Interconnection – November
- Codes – December
- Financing – January

Evergreen State Solar Partnership - <http://www.nwseed.org/Projects/Solar/sunshot.asp>

Comments can be sent to: [rooftop@commerce.wa.gov](mailto:rooftop@commerce.wa.gov)

For further information:

- Rooftop Solar Challenge - <http://www.eere.energy.gov/solarchallenge/>
- SunShot Initiative - <http://www1.eere.energy.gov/solar/sunshot/>