



April 14, 2014

C. Ray Allshouse, Council Chair
Washington State Building Code Council
1500 Jefferson Avenue SE
P.O. Box 41449
Olympia, WA 98504-1449

Dear Chairman Allshouse:

I am writing in support of the proposed amendments to the International Residential Code in Washington regarding permitting of rooftop solar installations.

The solar industry in Washington State is rapidly growing and solar installations in residential dwellings will become more commonplace in the near future.

Currently, the solar photovoltaic (PV) market in Washington is challenged by an assortment of permitting processes that vary widely by jurisdiction. The inconsistent permit requirements and unclear processes make it difficult for installers to accurately plan for the cost and time frames required to obtain a permit, particularly when doing business in new jurisdictions. The uncertain permitting process ultimately leads to unnecessary costs to the customer.

Both proposed amendments would significantly reduce the permitting time and expense for solar installation companies by creating a standard, predictable, and consistent process across jurisdictions. The exemption criteria listed in the proposed amendments are consistent with industry best practices and would include the most common types of systems installed.

I understand that residential rooftop solar installations are already exempt from obtaining a building permit in a number of Washington State jurisdictions including; Seattle, Bellingham and jurisdictions who are members of the mybuildingpermit.com group – Bellevue, Bothell, Burien, Issaquah, Kenmore, Kirkland, Mercer Island, Mill Creek, Newcastle, Renton, Sammamish, and Snohomish County. I also understand that an electrical permit will still be required.

Having a consistent state-wide set of requirements that do not jeopardize the life/safety aspects of the housing stock in Washington will promote residential rooftop solar installations, reducing the use of fossil fuels, which in turn reduces greenhouse gas emissions. Furthermore, installers and homeowners will have reduced installation costs, due to a predictable process.

I respectfully request that the International Residential Code Technical Advisory Group, the Building, Fire and Plumbing Committee and the Washington State Building Code Council consider and approve either of the proposed changes to the International Residential Code.

Thank you for your consideration on this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jake Fey".

Jake Fey
State Representative
27th Legislative District