

NEW JERSEY GREEN ENERGY BILL

The American Solar Field Bill

- A. It is the policy of the state to promote and encourage the use of solar energy systems and to remove obstacles thereto. Accordingly, reasonable restrictions on a solar energy system are those restrictions that do not significantly increase the cost of the system or significantly decrease its efficiency or specified performance, or that allow for an alternative system of comparable cost, efficiency, and energy conservation benefits.
- B. A solar energy system shall meet applicable health and safety standards and requirements imposed by state and local permitting authorities.
- C. A solar energy system for producing electricity shall also meet all applicable safety and performance standards established by the National Electrical Code, the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers, and accredited testing laboratories such as Underwriters Laboratories and, where applicable, rules of the Public Utilities Commission regarding safety and reliability.
- D. Whenever approval is required for the installation or use of a solar energy system, the application for approval shall be processed and approved by the appropriate approving entity in the same manner as an application for approval of an architectural modification to the property, and shall not be willfully avoided or delayed.
- E. A public or private entity that fails to comply with this section may not receive funds from a state-sponsored grant or loan program for solar energy. A public entity shall certify its compliance with the requirements of this section when applying for funds from a state-sponsored grant or loan program.
- F. A local public entity may not exempt residents in its jurisdiction from the requirements of this section.
- G. "Solar easement" means the right of receiving sunlight across real property of another for any solar energy system.

- H. As used in this section, "solar energy system" means either of the following:(1) Any solar collector or other solar energy device whose primary purpose is to provide for the collection, storage, and distribution of solar energy for space heating, space cooling, electric generation, or water heating.(2) Any structural design feature of a building, whose primary purpose is to provide for the collection, storage, and distribution of solar energy for electricity generation, space heating or cooling, or for water heating.
- I. Any instrument creating a solar easement shall include, at a minimum, all of the following:(1) A description of the dimensions of the easement expressed in measurable terms, such as vertical or horizontal angles measured in degrees, or the hours of the day on specified dates during which direct sunlight to a specified surface of a solar collector, device, or structural design feature may not be obstructed, or a combination of these descriptions.(2) The restrictions placed upon vegetation, structures, and other objects that would impair or obstruct the passage of sunlight through the easement.(3) The terms or conditions, if any, under which the easement may be revised or terminated.

American Green Energy Initiative Bill

(a) The implementation of consistent statewide standards to achieve the timely and cost-effective installation of solar energy systems is not a municipal affair, as that term is used in the New Jersey State Constitution, but is instead a matter of statewide concern. It is the intent of the Legislature that local agencies not adopt ordinances that create unreasonable barriers to the installation of solar energy systems, including, but not limited to, design review for aesthetic purposes, and not unreasonably restrict the ability of homeowners and agricultural and business concerns to install solar energy systems. It is the policy of the state to promote and encourage the use of solar energy systems and to limit obstacles to their use. It is the intent of the Legislature that local agencies comply not only with the language of this section, but also the legislative intent to encourage the installation of solar energy systems by removing obstacles to, and minimizing costs of, permitting for such systems.

(b) A city or county shall administratively approve applications to install solar energy systems through the issuance of a building permit or similar nondiscretionary permit. Review of the application to install a solar energy system shall be limited to the building official's review of whether it meets all health and safety requirements of local, state, and federal law. The requirements of local law shall be limited to those standards and regulations necessary to ensure that the solar energy system will not have a specific, adverse impact upon the public health or safety. However, if the building official of the city or county has a good faith belief that the solar energy system could have a specific, adverse impact upon the public health and safety, the city or county may require the applicant to apply for a use permit.

(c) A city or county may not deny an application for a use permit to install a solar energy system unless it makes written findings based upon substantial evidence in the record that the proposed installation would have a specific, adverse impact upon the public health or safety, and there is no feasible method to satisfactorily mitigate or avoid the specific, adverse impact. The findings shall include the basis for the rejection of potential feasible alternatives of preventing the adverse impact.

(d) The decision of the building official pursuant to subdivisions (b) and (c) may be appealed to the planning commission of the city or county. (e) Any conditions imposed on an application to install a solar energy system shall be designed to mitigate the specific, adverse impact upon the public health and safety at the lowest cost possible.

(e) (1) A solar energy system shall meet applicable health and safety standards and requirements imposed by state and local permitting authorities

(f) A solar energy system for producing electricity shall meet all applicable safety and performance standards established by the National Electrical Code, the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers, and accredited testing laboratories such as Underwriters Laboratories and, where applicable, rules of the Public Utilities Commission regarding safety and reliability.

(g) The legislative body of a city, county, municipality or borough may by ordinance require, as a condition of the approval of a solar field, the dedication of easements for the purpose of assuring that each parcel or solar field for which approval is sought shall have the right to receive sunlight across adjacent parcels provided that such ordinance contains all of the following:

(1) Specifies the standards for determining the exact dimensions and locations of such easements.

(2) Specifies any restrictions on vegetation, buildings and other objects which would obstruct the passage of sunlight through the easement.

(3) Specifies the terms or conditions, if any, under which an easement may be revised or terminated.

(4) Specifies that in establishing such easements consideration shall be given to feasibility, contour, configuration of the parcel to be divided, and cost, and that such easements shall not result in reducing allowable densities or the percentage of a lot which may be occupied by a building or a structure under applicable planning and zoning in force at the time such tentative map is filed.

PUBLIC PORTION.

This chapter shall be known and may be cited as the Solar Shade Control Act. It is the policy of the state to promote all feasible means of energy conservation and all feasible uses of alternative energy supply sources. In particular, the state encourages the planting and maintenance of trees and shrubs to create shading, moderate outdoor temperatures, and provide various economic and aesthetic benefits. However, there are certain situations in which the need for widespread use of alternative energy devices, such as solar collectors, requires specific and limited controls on trees and shrubs.

As used in this chapter, "solar collector" means a fixed device, structure, or part of a device or structure, which is used primarily to transform solar energy into thermal, chemical, or electrical energy. The solar collector shall be used as part of a system which makes use of solar energy for any or all of the following purposes: (1) water heating, (2) space heating or cooling, and (3) power generation.

After January 1, 2008, no person owning, or in control of a property shall allow a tree or shrub to be placed, or, if placed, to grow on such property, subsequent to the installation of a solar collector on the property of another so as to cast a shadow greater than 10 percent of the collector absorption area upon that solar collector surface on the property of another at any one time between the hours of 10 a.m. and 2 p.m., local eastern standard time; provided, that this section shall not apply to specific trees and shrubs which at the time of installation of a solar collector or during the remainder of that annual solar cycle cast a shadow upon that solar collector.

For the purposes of this chapter, the location of a solar collector is required to comply with the local building and setback regulations, and to be set back not less than five feet from the property line, and no less than 10 feet above the ground. A collector may be less than 10 feet in height, only if in addition to the five feet setback; the collector is set back three times the amount lowered. Every person who maintains any tree or shrub or permits any tree or shrub to be maintained in violation of the law upon property owned by such person and every

person leasing the property of another who maintains any tree or shrub or permits any tree or shrub to be maintained in violation of the law after reasonable notice in writing from a district attorney or city attorney or prosecuting attorney, to remove or alter the tree or shrub so that there is no longer a violation of the law, has been served upon such person, is guilty of a public nuisance as defined in Sections of the Penal Code and in Sections of the Civil Code.

For the purposes of this chapter, a violation is hereby deemed an infraction. The complainant shall establish to the satisfaction of the prosecutor that the violation has occurred prior to the prosecutor's duty to issue the abatement notice. For the purpose of this section, "reasonable notice" means 30 days from receipt of such notice. Upon expiration of the 30-day period, the complainant shall file an affidavit with the prosecutor alleging that the nuisance has not been abated if the complainant wishes to proceed with the action. The existence of such violation for each and every day after the service of such notice shall be deemed a separate and distinct offense, and it is hereby made the duty of the district attorney, or the city attorney of any city the charter of which imposes the duty upon the city attorney to prosecute state infractions, to prosecute all persons guilty of violating this section by continuous prosecutions until the violation is corrected. Each and every violation of this section shall be punishable by a fine not to exceed one thousand dollars (\$1,000).

Any person who plans a passive or natural solar heating system or cooling system or heating and cooling system which would impact on an adjacent active solar system may seek equitable relief in a court of competent jurisdiction to exempt such system from the provisions of this chapter.

The court may grant such an exemption based on a finding that the passive or natural system would provide a demonstrably greater net energy savings than the active system which would be impacted.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

(a) A city or county shall administratively approve applications to install solar energy systems through the issuance of a building permit or similar nondiscretionary permit. However, if the building official of the city or county has a good faith belief that the solar energy system could have a specific, adverse impact upon the public health and safety, the city or county may require the applicant to apply for a use permit.

(b) A city or county may not deny an application for a use permit to install a solar energy system unless it makes written findings based upon substantial evidence in the record that the proposed installation would have a specific, adverse impact upon the public health or safety, and there is no feasible method to satisfactorily mitigate or avoid the specific, adverse impact. This finding shall include the basis for the rejection of potential feasible alternatives of preventing the adverse impact.

(c) Any conditions imposed on an application to install a solar energy system must be designed to mitigate the specific, adverse impact upon the public health and safety at the lowest cost possible.

(d) A solar energy system shall meet applicable health and safety standards and requirements imposed by state and local permitting authorities

(e) A solar energy system for producing electricity shall meet all applicable safety and performance standards established by the National Electrical Code, the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers, and accredited testing laboratories such as Underwriters Laboratories and, where applicable, rules of the Public Utilities Commission regarding safety and reliability.

It is the intent of the Legislature to encourage the use of passive solar energy design. The Legislature recognizes that building code regulations with regard to natural light and ventilation standards have to be modified to permit existing buildings to be retrofitted with passive solar energy.

This law would also Authorize local governments to develop a program to encourage the construction of buildings that use solar thermal and photovoltaic

On the next available ballot there would be provisions for \$100 million for the installation of solar panels on city-owned buildings, wind turbines and energy conservation technologies all at no cost to taxpayers.

The Proposition would pay for itself entirely through energy savings.