



SunShot Initiative Rooftop Solar Challenge Determining a Fair Permit Fee for Solar PV

Most Connecticut jurisdictions use a value-based permit fee structure to determine permit fees for construction projects, including rooftop solar PV systems. However, this fee structure can be challenging for solar PV projects.

Solar technology is relatively expensive, so value-based fee structures may not reflect the actual cost to municipalities for project review and inspection. Also variation in the type of technology used for the installation can affect the project cost. This means a more expensive solar PV system would incur a higher permit fee than a less expensive installation even though the cost to a jurisdiction to permit two such systems is about the same.

Research in Connecticut indicates that it costs \$200-\$300 for a town to permit a small-scale, rooftop solar PV installation. In 2016, fees for residential solar PV systems ranged from \$0-\$1,090, meaning going solar costs more for some residents than others depending on where they live.

Section 29-263 (c) of the Connecticut General Statutes states, "Any municipality may, by ordinance adopted by its legislative body, exempt Class I renewable energy source projects from payment of building permit fees imposed by the municipality." This means that municipalities have the option to waive or reduce permit fees for solar PV systems.

Reconsidering the permit fee structure in your municipality sends a positive message, encouraging solar growth, and allows solar to be installed affordably in your community.

Establishing a reasonable permit fee for solar

Consider waiving or reducing fees

Towns can encourage solar installations by reducing or waiving solar PV permit fees. If a full waiver is tough to do, consider a low or flat fee based on the cost to your town instead of a value-based fee structure that may not accurately reflect the cost of review and inspection.

Many towns have already taken this step, either permanently or during periods when their municipality was engaged in a solar campaign. Haddam elected to waive permit fees for class I renewable energy systems. Other towns have implemented flat fees of \$100-\$200 for solar.

- Eastford has a \$200 flat fee for solar
- Killingworth has a \$200 flat fee for solar
- Westbrook has a \$100 flat fee for solar
- Durham has a maximum permit fee of \$204.16

Consider eliminating additional fees for a Certificate of Occupancy or Approval

If your municipality does require a Certificate of Occupancy or Certificate of Approval for solar PV projects, consider waiving any fee associated with this document. Removing this added can help your residents save on their solar PV system.

Allow for Payment Electronically or by Mail.

If you allow installers to pay permit fees online, electronically, or by mail, this can help them save on driving time and cost, and allow them to do more business with your community.

It typically costs a municipality \$200 or less to permit small, rooftop PV systems

Waive permit fees for zoning review (if required) be for residential rooftop systems.

Residential rooftop solar PV systems are typically not impacted by zoning regulations and require no or very little review. By waiving the permit fee for zoning review you can help homeowners more affordably install rooftop solar PV.

For assistance contact:
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