

## Series 1 – AB 2188 Requirements

### Issue 3 – Expedited PV Permitting Process Guidelines for Small Residential Rooftop Solar Energy Systems

**Objective:** *To facilitate submission of uniform, correct, and complete expedited PV permitting applications and reviews in a timely manner.*

#### 1. Issue Statement:

Permit requirements and processing can be plagued with misunderstandings. Permit applications which are submitted incorrectly and/or incomplete, require resubmission creating delays in approval.

#### 2. Background:

Permitting processes vary widely across jurisdictions creating confusion for permit applicants; in addition, permitting processes which are not clearly defined or are overly complex create confusion and misunderstandings resulting in additional costs for both the applicants and reviewers in the processing of permit applications. Some permit applications require resubmission due to insufficient preparation or understanding of codes and standards.

#### 3. Current Status:

As of September 30, 2015 all California jurisdictions were mandated by the State to adopt an expedited PV permitting and inspection process in accordance with Assembly Bill 2188.

#### 4. Key considerations:

The State of California continues to set far-reaching climate and energy goals. SEAC has conducted research and identified the following important mandates, acts and facts to take into consideration:

- AB 2188 requires all California jurisdictions to adopt an ordinance to create a streamlined permitting process for residential PV systems in substantial conformance with the California Solar Permitting Guidebook.
- The California Solar Rights Act is intended to encourage timely and cost-effective installation of solar energy systems, promote the use of solar energy systems, and to limit obstacles to their use.

- Economic factors such as financial incentive deadlines, state/local rebates, proposed tax credits, and utility rate changes could create an increase in the demand for solar and the quantity of PV permit applications.

## **5. Recommendation(s):**

Many of the solutions simply require a greater education, relationship, and communication of expectations between the AHJ and the Installer.

The following are practices to consider assisting permit applicants and jurisdictions:

- 1) Use of the California Solar Permitting Guidebook (CSPG) checklists and standard plan – refer to additional resources (3). Checklist and permitting documentation details should be clear and made available on the jurisdictions website.
- 2) Consider the use of PV permit application software which automates the toolkits provided in the CSPG. Refer to SEAC website for currently available PV permit software.
- 3) In accordance with AB2188, jurisdictions shall clearly inform applicants of all the documentation required and the method of submission.
- 4) Training for applicants and jurisdictions in the use of the CSPG Submittal Requirements Bulletin (Toolkit Document #1) and the Eligibility Checklist (Toolkit Document #2) is provided by the CSE – details can be found at: <https://energycenter.org/>
- 5) Use of the SEAC website as an information resource for the solar industry – SEAC publishes all Recommended Practices on its website to further assist the solar industry on common issues, these Recommended Practices can be found at: [www.seacgroup.org](http://www.seacgroup.org)
- 6) Increased communication between all industry stakeholders to decrease PV permit application inconsistencies through active participation in local organization meetings such as SEAC, CALBO, IAEI, ICC, CalSEIA and CSE.

## **6. Benefits:**

The above recommendations will aid in achieving a successful implementation and adoption of AB 2188 permitting process. The recommendations will significantly simplify the process, reduce human error, reduce inconsistencies as well as standardize the permit application process, and decrease application review time. The successful adoption of expedited permitting will help the State of California reach its clean energy and environmental goals and in turn, improve our communities.

## **7. Applicable to whom:**

The recommendations would apply to all solar energy stakeholders.

**Disclaimer:** The Recommended Practices of SEAC are tools and information to benefit the solar energy industry. Recommended Practices published by SEAC are non-binding and/or regulatory.

Additional Resources:

- (1) Assembly Bill 2188 Muratsuchi  
[http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill\\_id=201320140AB2188](http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201320140AB2188)
- (2) California Government Code, ARTICLE 2. Adoption of Regulations [65850 - 65863.13]  
[http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes\\_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=GOV&sectionNum=65850.5](http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=GOV&sectionNum=65850.5)
- (3) California Solar Permitting Guidebook Spring 2015  
[https://www.opr.ca.gov/docs/California\\_Solar\\_Permitting\\_Guidebook\\_Spring\\_2015.pdf](https://www.opr.ca.gov/docs/California_Solar_Permitting_Guidebook_Spring_2015.pdf)
- (4) California Solar Rights Act  
<https://lib.sandiego.edu/law/documents/centers/epic/Solar%20Rights%20Act-A%20Review%20of%20Statutes%20and%20Relevant%20Cases.pdf>
- (5) Senate Bill 1222 Leno  
[http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill\\_id=201120120SB1222](http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201120120SB1222)

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