SolarAPP Campaign: Cutting Red Tape for Rooftop Solar

The **Solar Automated Permit Processing (SolarAPP) Campaign** will create a low-cost, seamless process for rooftop solar installations, while enhancing safety and reliability. It will improve the process for permitting, inspection, and interconnection by automating simple tasks and allowing building officials to focus their efforts on areas that would benefit from additional attention. Solar energy is now mainstream for homes and businesses, with over 2 million U.S. solar customers. However, solar in the U.S. is a long way from realizing its full potential. Direct and indirect costs of permitting, inspection and interconnection add about $7,000 ($1.00 per watt) to the cost of a typical residential solar energy system.

That is about the same as the value of the 30% federal investment tax credit for solar, which is set to begin phasing out at the end of 2019. A patchwork of permitting and interconnection processes create installation and activation delays, increase cancellations and impose costs on solar installations that are far higher than in other mature solar markets.

5 Years SolarAPP Impacts =

2.4 Million Solar Homes + **$7,000 in Savings per Solar System** + **About 30,000 Solar Jobs**

The SolarAPP Campaign seeks to:

1. Develop and provide free and simple online permitting tools for local governments.
2. Help local governments provide instantaneous permitting and innovative inspections for qualifying solar projects.

Achieving these objectives would help millions of Americans choose affordable solar and storage for their homes and businesses over the next five years. Local governments will also benefit from added revenues from increased adoption.

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Key Deliverables for SolarAPP

The SolarAPP Campaign seeks a fundamental reshaping of solar permitting at the federal, state and local levels. This will allow most routine rooftop solar projects to receive instantaneous approval and efficient inspections, while enhancing safety. To make this possible, the SolarAPP Campaign will:

- **Facilitate regional collaboratives** for local governments, solar companies, and policymakers to discuss the direction of this campaign and adoption of its products.

- **Develop a simple, standardized, and free online application portal** with and for local governments that will enable qualifying solar installers to register their systems and receive immediate approval from local governments to proceed with install.

- **Incorporate an inspection score tracking system into our online permitting portal** that will enable virtual inspections, as well as reduced inspections or audits for top installers.

- **Partner with certification and code bodies** to improve and centralize a national certified equipment list while also providing local governments and jurisdictions with simple explanations of these certifications via the online portal.

- **Create safety training(s) and new best practices** for permitting and interconnection solar and solar with battery storage.

Expected Results

The SolarAPP Campaign aims to achieve the following results by 2025:

- Make solar energy more affordable and accessible for homeowners and businesses at a wide range of income levels.

- Save a typical solar consumer more than $7,000 in red tape tied to installation costs.

- Help local governments and jurisdictions operate more effectively and efficiently without compromising safety or quality of solar systems.

- Save taxpayer money by reducing local government staff time and costs associated with permit review and inspections at the local level.

- Open new market opportunities for solar installers, manufacturers, developers, owners, and operators, resulting in more American jobs.

The SolarAPP Campaign's activities will be coordinated by The Solar Foundation, in collaboration with industry partners such as the Solar Energy Industries Association (SEIA) and other implementing supporters, including the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL), Interstate Renewable Energy Council (IREC) and many other solar companies, industry groups and nonprofit organizations!

Achieving the SolarAPP Campaign's vision will require sustained commitments from policymakers and the solar industry. Visit http://www.thesolarfoundation.org/solarapp to get involved!

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