

My name is Cherene Birkholz, and I've been a Long Beach resident for 30 years.

When I first purchased my home, the weather was such that I could simply open my windows and doors, and my house would cool off naturally. Thanks to global warming, that doesn't work anymore, so I have had to add AC to my home.

Just like everyone else, when we added AC, our electricity bill went up. So we invested in solar panels to offset our electricity bill in 2019.

I love my solar panels. They are good for the environment, and I feel like I'm making a positive environmental impact because I'm generating clean energy for my home and for the grid.

But we also need way more solar panels on roofs to hit our clean energy goals. Here in Long Beach, less than 10% of homes have solar, and less than 1% have a battery. One of the biggest obstacles to solar is that it can take a lot of time and cost a lot of money to get a permit for solar panels in Long Beach.

We shouldn't put obstacles in the way of people adopting solar, because if it's too hard, people won't do it. We need to streamline the permit process here to make it easier and faster for people to get solar, and the best way to do that is by adopting SolarAPP.

SolarAPP allows code-compliant homes to receive permits automatically. It was developed last year by the federal Department of Energy in partnership with the International Association of Electrical Inspectors and the National Fire Protection Association.

So far, 18 municipalities in California have started using SolarAPP, enabling homes to get solar faster than ever before. SolarAPP is free for cities, and Long Beach could be the first in LA County to adopt it.

I would love to add a battery to my system, and I would also love to install more solar for the granny flats in the back of my house so that my renters can benefit from solar, too. Making it easier and faster to get a permit would help me, and other families like mine, to use more solar.

I'm asking the City Council to help lead the way for more solar by streamlining permitting through SolarAPP so that more people who live here can benefit from the sun's energy.

Thank you for your time.