



## Legislation Text

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**File #:** 15-0681, **Version:** 1

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Recommendation to request City Attorney to prepare an ordinance regarding State mandated regulations related to the installation and permitting of certain solar energy systems.  
(Citywide)

Rooftop solar energy systems generate electricity from the sun. It is an emissions-free source of electricity that provides many benefits, both economic and environmental, to residents of the City. To encourage the use of rooftop solar energy systems, the City, in 2009, developed procedures to streamline and standardize the plan review, permit issuance, and inspection process for rooftop solar energy systems installed at single-family dwelling and duplex properties. As a result, the City currently expedites applications for such installations by reviewing, approving, and issuing permits over the counter on the same day, and performing required inspections by the next business day.

On September 27, 2012, the Governor approved Senate Bill 1222, enacting Government Code Section 66015. Section 66015 establishes the policy of the State to promote and encourage the installation and use of solar energy systems by minimizing the permitting costs of such systems. In furtherance of that objective, Section 66015 provides that permit fees for rooftop solar energy systems are not to exceed the estimated reasonable cost of providing the service for which the fee is charged, and generally cannot exceed five hundred dollars (\$500.00), unless certain findings are made.

On September 21, 2014, the Governor approved Assembly Bill 2188 which requires the City to adopt an Ordinance creating an expedited and streamlined permitting process for small residential rooftop solar energy systems, and establishing certain administrative procedures relative to the permitting process.

This matter was reviewed by Assistant City Attorney Michael J. Mais on June 25, 2015, and by Budget Management Officer Victoria Bell on June 30, 2015.

### SUSTAINABILITY

The proposed Ordinance should improve the City's ability to reach its sustainability and clean energy goal, and the State's objective to develop 12,000 megawatts of small-scale,

localized renewable electrical power in California by 2020. A modernized and standardized expedited permitting process should help to encourage the installation of small-scale renewable energy; provide solar customers greater installation ease; increase energy reliability for residents by generating electricity near where it is consumed; expand access of such systems to lower income households; reduce reliance on imported energy sources; provide stable electricity prices; and decrease air pollution in the City, all while maintaining safety standards.

State law requires that the effective date of the proposed Ordinance be on or before September 30, 2015. City Council action is requested on July 21, 2015, in order to comply with this State-mandated deadline.

There will be no fiscal impact as a result of the recommended action. Costs are recovered through the collection of existing plan review and permit fees. These fees meet the requirements of SB 1222.

There will be a positive impact on local jobs as a result of this recommended action.

Approve recommendation.

AMY J. BODEK, AICP  
DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

APPROVED:

PATRICK H. WEST  
CITY MANAGER