

# Permitting

## Solar Policy Survey

October 2016



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The NESEMC Solar Policy Survey compiles information on state-level policies that significantly influence the solar energy market. The survey was produced with the help of the Pace Energy and Climate Center’s team of student researchers. The vast majority of the information contained within this document has been obtained from [the Database of State Incentives for Renewables & Efficiency](#) (DSIRE) with additional information and research obtained from various sources.

**Note:** These factsheets are updated periodically to reflect policy changes within each state. If you notice a mistake or out of date information, please contact Nick Martin at [nmartin@nesemc.com](mailto:nmartin@nesemc.com).

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### POLICY BACKGROUND

Generally, local jurisdictions will require building and/or electrical permits to be obtained prior to the installation of a solar PV system. These permits help local governments ensure public safety. However, they can often be a significant barrier to solar PV markets if the permitting process is relatively expensive or time consuming. Additionally, permitting processes may vary significantly across jurisdictions, which can create additional costs and barriers for solar PV installers that work in multiple areas.

States and localities can take steps to reduce solar PV permitting costs by creating streamlined processes for standard installations. Additionally, states and localities can work together to standardize permitting processes and requirements with neighboring areas to reduce costs for installers that work across jurisdictional lines.

**SUMMARY**

**PERMITTING**

<b>CT</b>	Connecticut does not have a statewide standard application or fee for obtaining necessary permits for solar PV projects. Although there are requirements for PV use in municipal buildings.
<b>ME</b>	Maine does not have a statewide standard application or fee for obtaining necessary permits for solar PV projects.
<b>MA</b>	Massachusetts does not have a statewide standard application or fee for obtaining necessary permits for solar PV projects. However, there is a report issuing a model process for permitting.
<b>NH</b>	New Hampshire does not have a statewide standard application or fee for obtaining necessary permits for solar PV projects.
<b>NJ</b>	New Jersey does not have a statewide standard application or fee for obtaining necessary permits for solar PV projects.
<b>NY</b>	New York does not have a statewide standard application or fee for obtaining necessary permits for solar PV projects. However, there was a collaborative effort to design a standard permit.
<b>PA</b>	Pennsylvania does not have a statewide standard application or fee for obtaining necessary permits for solar PV projects.
<b>RI</b>	Rhode Island does not have a statewide standard application or fee for obtaining necessary permits for solar PV projects.
<b>VT</b>	Vermont state law has created a state-wide expedited permitting process for solar PV projects 15kW or less.

## CONNECTICUT

### **Standardization:**

Connecticut does not have a statewide standard application or fee for obtaining necessary permits for solar PV projects.

Connecticut state law requires municipalities to incorporate residential solar PV systems into their building permit application process. Beyond incorporation, the law also requires the municipality to inform the applicant whether the system is approved or disapproved within 30 days.<sup>1</sup>

Connecticut state law allows municipalities to exempt Class I renewable projects (including solar PV) from paying building permit fees.<sup>2</sup>

### **Guidance:**

Energize Connecticut issued a [report](#) in May 2014 that contains guidance for municipalities for developing their solar permitting processes.

## MAINE

### **Standardization:**

Maine does not have a statewide standard application or fee for obtaining necessary permits for solar PV projects.

### **Guidance:**

State specific permitting guidance documents were not found for Maine.

## MASSACHUSETTS

### **Standardization:**

Massachusetts does not have a statewide standard application or fee for obtaining necessary permits for solar PV projects.

### **Guidance:**

Navigant Consulting, on behalf of the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources, developed a [report](#) on recommended model permitting processes and structural review guidance for rooftop solar PV.

## NEW HAMPSHIRE

### **Standardization:**

New Hampshire does not have a statewide standard application or fee for obtaining necessary permits for solar PV projects.

### **Guidance:**

State specific permitting guidance documents were not found for New Hampshire.

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<sup>1</sup> [PA 15-194—HB 6838](#)

<sup>2</sup> [PA 15-194—HB 6838](#)

## NEW JERSEY

**Standardization:**

New Jersey does not have a statewide standard application or fee for obtaining necessary permits for solar PV projects.

**Guidance:**

State specific permitting guidance documents were not found for New Jersey.

## NEW YORK

**Standardization:**

New York does not have a statewide standard application or fee for obtaining necessary permits for solar PV projects.

**Guidance:**

NYSERDA, New York Power Authority (NYPA), and The City University of New York (CUNY) collaborated to develop a [standard solar electric permit](#) for New York municipalities.

## PENNSYLVANIA

**Standardization:**

Pennsylvania does not have a statewide standard application or fee for obtaining necessary permits for solar PV projects.

**Guidance:**

State specific permitting guidance documents were not found for Pennsylvania.

## RHODE ISLAND

**Standardization:**

Rhode Island does not have a statewide standard application or fee for obtaining necessary permits for solar PV projects.

**Guidance:**

State specific permitting guidance documents were not found for Rhode Island.

## VERMONT

**Standardization:**

Vermont state law has created a state-wide expedited permitting process for solar PV projects 15kW or less.<sup>3</sup> Customers installing a solar PV system less than 15kW must inform the Vermont PSB of the project as well as comply with all interconnection requirements. The utility has 10 days to flag any issues, otherwise the PSB issues a

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<sup>3</sup> [30 V.S.A. § 219a](#)

Certificate of Public Good, and the customer may proceed with installation.

## About NESEMC



The **Northeast Solar Energy Market Coalition** brings together solar energy business associations and other stakeholders in the Northeast United States to harmonize regional solar energy policy and advance the solar energy market. We are funded by the U.S. Department of Energy SunShot Initiative as a cooperative agreement through 2017.

Our vision is a thriving, efficient regional market for solar photovoltaic energy generation in the Northeast.

We will realize our vision by encouraging and engaging regional solar businesses in advancing market policy to lower costs and increase solar market opportunity. We will educate stakeholders and policy makers throughout the region directly, and by empowering our member organizations with robust analysis and timely information.

Visit us at [NESEMC.com](http://NESEMC.com)

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