

Energy and Technology Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No: HB-5036 / [Bill Status](#) / [Public Hearing Testimony](#)

AN ACT STREAMLINING RESIDENTIAL SOLAR PERMITTING AND

Title: ENERGY INFRASTRUCTURE.

Vote Date: 3/17/2026

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 2/24/2026

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

REQUEST OF THE GOVERNOR PURSUANT TO JOINT RULE 9

CO-SPONSORS OF BILL:

[Rep. Joseph P. Gresko, 121st Dist.](#)

[Rep. Steven Winter, 94th Dist.](#)

[Rep. Mary M. Mushinsky, 85th Dist.](#)

[Rep. Nick Gauthier, 38th Dist.](#)

[Rep. Travis Simms, 140th Dist.](#)

REASONS FOR BILL:

The landscape and procedural obstacles that Connecticut has makes it difficult for the state to lead the country in employing clean energy and electric vehicle infrastructure. This bill aims to create a uniform permitting process for installing residential solar by July 1st, 2028. It also favors the streamlining of state-funded projects, to diminish obstacles that Connecticut faces with deploying clean energy infrastructure.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Ned Lamont, Governor of Connecticut:

Governor Ned Lamont outlines the benefits of this bill, referencing sections 1 and 4 as a means of streamlining the residential solar permitting process, providing uniformity and predictability. He goes on to state that implementing the right automatic platform can uphold safety and regulatory standards, meet strict local requirements, and accelerate solar permitting.

He goes on to discuss the benefits of sections 2 and 3, stating that section 2 would exclude clean energy initiatives on the Connecticut Environmental Policy Act from environmental impact evaluation to accelerate the state's clean energy goals. These sections also allow the state to enter financing arrangements for electrical vehicle charging, renewable energy generation, or energy storage.

Katie S. Dykes, Commissioner, Department of Environmental and Energy Protection (DEEP):

DEEP supports this bill and is willing to discuss it further with the Committee. They go on to discuss how their goals for their 20by20 and 20by26 initiatives align with the Governor's goals to validate HB-5036.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Samantha Dynowski, State Director, Sierra Club:

The Sierra club is in support of this bill, believing it will meet our state's climate and clean energy goals, improve air quality and electric grid, and lower electricity bills. They go on to say that they strongly support streamlining solar permitting, and that there is a way to streamline more quickly than what is proposed in the bill. They suggest the state use the Solar APP+ to automate solar permitting for municipalities and shortening the time frame for moving to automated permitting. They then list the benefits of Solar APP+, stating that it is free for jurisdictions, easy to implement, is efficient, improves inspections, and compliments standard processes.

The Sierra Club opposes Section 2 of the bill, believing that environmental impact statements are necessary to improve projects and are a best practice.

Betsy Gara, Executive Director, Connecticut Council of Small Towns (COST):

COST recognizes the importance of solar photovoltaic systems (PV) meeting the state's energy efficiency goals and reducing customer costs and is continuing to internally discuss the bill to ensure that it both provides fast-track permit approvals and protects the health and safety of the public. They appreciate that the bill ensures that permit applications must comply with applicable building codes and need to be prepared by a licensed architect, engineer, or contractors in order to protect public safety.

They request to engage with lawmakers on the impact on local review/considerations, stating that the bill should clarify that permits issued through the statewide platform will continue to be subject to applicable zoning requirements. They also suggest discussing the timeline for adoption of a statewide platform and clarifying electrical & fire codes. In addition, they would like to review permitting fees and permits as well. They continue, requesting to review alternate platforms and the scope of the bill, opposing the bill's recommendation to include energy storage projects or increase the size of residential PV installations. They also wish to debate reporting requirements, opposing provisions requiring comprehensive "local compliance reports".

Irwin Krieger, Member, Ashford Clean Energy Task Force:

Ashford Clean Energy Task Force supports this bill, believing that it will reduce dependence on fossil fuels and the damage that it has on our health and the environment. They also support the use of automated processes such as SolarAPP+, citing that it was greatly

reduce the time needed for application approval, increase accuracy, and allowing time for town officials to work on other projects. They continue that the final bill should have a short timeline to implementation since there are no budgetary adjustments the municipality needs to make.

Jim Perras, CEO, Home Builders & Remodelers Association of Connecticut (HBRA of CT):

This organization strongly supports HB-05036 because it removes barriers to residential solar adoption and housing delivery. It modernizes the process, establishing an automated solar permitting platform that can issue permits instantly when an application complies with the Connecticut State Building Code. They cite that the bill streamlines the process without weakening safety or local oversight. In addition, they claim that it also lowers soft costs for homeowners and builders, securing savings that support housing affordability and makes residential solar more possible for new construction and renovation projects.

Tom Swan, Executive Director, Connecticut Citizen Action Group (CCAG):

Connecticut Citizen Action group supports the governor's proposal to encourage the adoption of clean energy.

Kyle Wallace, Senior Director of Public Policy, Sunrun:

Sunrun strongly supports HB-05036, citing that it will streamline the permit process while maintaining quality, reducing costs, and provide a better experience for households that choose to install solar in their home. They reference other states implementing similar legislation as justification for Connecticut doing the same. They also cite the success of SolarAPP+ in Guilford and East Hartford as well as other states to advocate for smart solar permitting platforms. Sunrun mentions their own positive experiences issuing permits for hundreds of projects across the country every week with smart solar permitting platforms to advocate for it.

They go on to recommend a few modifications to the bill. One of the recommendations are to include Energy Storage, stating that a failure to do so would drastically reduce the usefulness of the permitting platform in 2028. They also suggest adding electrical permits, bringing attention to municipalities that may require both building and electrical permits. In those cases, being able to obtain only one would negate the benefits of the platform, which is why its so important. Finally, they believe that a 25 kW threshold should be added, referencing the fact that current residential systems are now allowed to be up to 25kW-AC as justification.

Connecticut Hospital Association (CHA):

CHA supports section 2 of HB-5036. They state that Connecticut hospitals have been active adopters of EV charging stations and solar photovoltaics, referencing their installed solar panels in parking facilities feeding EV charging stations. They go on to say that it will help ease regularity burdens, decrease costs, and reduce construction time for important energy infrastructure projects.

Cary Lynch, Climate and Energy Policy Manager, The Nature Conservancy in Connecticut (TNC):

This organization strongly supports the intent in sections 1 and 2 which would promote faster BTM solar buildout. They also cite that it has great potential to quickly reduce costs and

increase grid reliability. It can also lessen environmental impact by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and conserving water, as well. Furthermore, they support the facilitation in the buildout of EV charging stations in the state (present in sections 2 & 3), claiming that Connecticut suffers from some of the worst air quality in the country and policies such as this must be supported to reverse these changes.

Sean Riel, Director of Sales Operations, Earthlight:

Earthlight supports this bill with revisions, which they detail throughout their testimony. First, they ask the committee to change the definition of "Residential solar photovoltaic system" in lines 6-10 from 12kW to 25kW nameplate rating, aligning more with the definition used for "residential customers" in Public Act 19-35.

Secondly, they request the committee incorporate battery storage into the smart solar permitting platform. They claim that homeowners will need to pair solar with battery storage to fully utilize the potential of their energy production and developers will need a tool that can address the battery storage, one of the most common variables in solar deployment. Incorporating this would lower costs for developers and homeowners.

Finally, they request that the committee reduce the number of permits needed for solar projects, detailing how different municipalities sometimes require multiple permits of various types, and state that automated permitting programs should reduce the number of permit applications to one for traditional roof-mounted solar projects.

Connor Yakaitis, Deputy Director, Connecticut League of Conservation Voters (CTLCV):

This organization is in strong support of this bill, stating that it progresses modernizing the state's clean energy infrastructure, lowers costs for families, and accelerates progress towards our climate and zero-carbon electricity goals.

They highlight Section 1, saying that it can help the state drastically reduce soft costs, eliminate unnecessary delays, and provide more certainty to homeowners and installers. They also claim that permitting inefficiencies are one of the largest non-hardware cost drivers for residential solar, so addressing this issue is a necessity.

They insist that the bill prompts Connecticut to focus on standardized online permitting and interconnection tools in addition to local implementation of instantaneous permitting for eligible installers on qualifying (non-complex) solar projects. They believe that a modernized permitting system should include a simple, accessible, standardized, online platform provided at no cost, establish equipment standards and/or certified equipment lists solar and storage projects, and create/refine system design standards for qualifying solar projects to guarantee code compliance and safety.

They maintain that the bill would create a solar permitting platform that adheres to their principles and reduces costs without sacrificing safety while also respecting the autonomy of local municipalities by giving them the choice to either use the state platform or implement their own automated system that meets the same standards.

They express support for the exemption of certain solar photovoltaic facilities on developed land as well as electric vehicle charging infrastructure from environmental impact evaluations,

as presented in section 2. They maintain that this is necessary to maintain Connecticut's climate commitments and prevent warrant duplicate review processes that cause investment delays and lack environmental benefits. They also advocate for Section 3, stating that it will help ensure state facilities reflect clean energy commitments.

Two testimonies were expressed in support for the bill. These individuals include: [Katherine Bennett](#), [Patrick Henessey](#)

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

[Randy Heckman, President, Connecticut Building Officials Association \(CBOA\):](#)

CBOA opposes section 1 of HB-05036, stating that they are confused about what this section is intended to solve. They continue that if there are issues with jurisdictions processing applications in a timely manner, they should be addressed directly instead of implementing another process that may not address these issues effectively.

[Charles J. Rothenberger, Director of Government Relations, Save the Sound:](#)

Save the Sound opposes section 2 of HB-05036, claiming that it would undermine informed decision-making by state agencies. They state that although they support projects of covered by the proposed exemption, they don't believe its beneficial nature is a valid reason to forgo a review process that evaluates and minimizes any potential adverse impacts. They support section 1, 3, and 4 of HB-05036, citing that it will help reduce energy costs for homeowners and help the state meet its clean energy and climate goals.

[Mike Trahan, Executive Director, Connecticut Solar & Storage Association \(CONNSSA\):](#)

This organization claims that the solar industry in Connecticut needs to prioritize cutting development costs charged by state, utilities, and local municipalities, including the cost home solar installers pass on consumers while solar projects go through the local permit process.

They proclaim that it has been over 10 years since there has been any significant review or action taken to examine and reduce the time and cost needed to permit home solar or solar+ storage in the state. They articulate that there are over a dozen ways to streamline home solar permitting besides instant permit approval applications and provide modification suggestions for the bill.

They go on to say that while they appreciate the bill's intent, they are not confident that the bill will properly reduce electricity prices, something that homeowners desperately need. In addition, compared to similar legislation passed in other states, HB-5036 is inefficient and lacks the necessary enforcement and liability protections to be properly effective. They list their concerns, stating that the timeline for implementation is unnecessarily delayed, forcing state residents to wait 3 years to see relief from the current bureaucratic process without valid reason.

The second concern they list is that scope of eligible projects is too small, stressing that instant permitting efforts should cover established program project size limits (25kW). Thirdly,

they touch on the fact that other states and existing software like SolarAPP+ has the capacity to process applications for even more energy projects than what the bill is proposing, including energy storage systems, main electrical panel upgrades, and main breaker derates.

They go on to highlight the bill's need for strict enforcement. They claim that the bill's lack of strict enforcement will cause municipalities to lag with no repercussions. They cite New Jersey's stricter approach to justify their concerns.

They proceed to advocate for the bill to provide liability protections for public entities and public employees to ease anxiety in utilizing the automated software and protect them from legal harm for permits they did not manually review.

They reference language that begins on line 166 of the bill regarding photovoltaic facility construction on developed land, suggesting that the line either be eliminated or that all projects be exempt from environmental impact evaluations.

They believe that the legislature should take steps to require:

1. One standardized municipal application form for rooftop solar+ storage battery permits.
2. All municipalities to accept electronic filings.
3. Municipal officials to adopt instant permitting for home rooftop solar and batteries.
4. Limit review of rooftop solar/home battery permit applications to protect safety only.
5. Limit review of rooftop solar applications to the local building department.
6. Remote municipal project inspection option.
7. One inspection per project unless the first inspection fails.
8. Qualified third parties to conduct inspections (electrical inspector, master electrician).
9. Cap municipal permit fees for solar and solar+ storage projects.
10. "flexible interconnections," to throttle electric exports (curtail) to safe grid levels.
11. No including finance charges in determining permit fees on 3rd party owned (TPO) systems.

Regarding the first item, they bring attention to the fact that some municipalities require solar installers to fill both the Connecticut Standardized Solar Photovoltaic Permit Application Supplement and the standard application, which makes the permitting process longer and more expensive. The addition of home battery storage products has also made applications more expensive and complex. They argue that state law should be changed so that an updated Standardized Application is exclusively used by local governments. They also assert that uniform building codes (including rooftop solar and home batteries) should be applied as well and cite similar legislation in use by other states to justify their stance.

Concerning item 2, they believe that all municipalities should be required to accept electronic filings and reference a similar bill proposed by New Jersey to facilitate the permitting process.

On item 3, they raise the national widespread use of automated permitting software and its availability for zero cost. They cite their testimony during the 2024 session, in which they advocated for the state-wide implementation of SolarAPP+ and once again bring up the plan they presented to DEEP that same year.

About item 6, they describe the utilization of remote home inspections during covid, and the subsequent ending of such inspections once covid lockdowns were lifted. They continue, stating that in-person inspections are wasteful of both time and resources, also creating delays. They advocate for remote inspections, stating that both the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) and the International Code Council (ICC) have created standards for remote inspections.

As regarding item 9, They bring attention to the large differences in prices that permitting, and inspection fees can range from between municipalities. They say that these fees can range between \$200 and \$1,000+. They go on that the loss of the federal tax credit and the need to reduce project costs; solar permit costs should match the costs of resources used by the permitting office.

They acknowledge that the committee may not be capable of proposing a 15% state income tax credit for residential solar installations, mirroring a similar program in Massachusetts that have produced long-term success; but similar attempts should be made. Despite established programs, Connecticut lacks a direct state income tax incentive to combat the increased cost of solar hardware after the expiration of the 30% federal residential solar tax credit on December 31st, 2025. They then cite the benefits that Massachusetts's program has had on their solar industry.

Two testimonies were expressed anonymously, opposing the bill. These individuals include: [Anonymous 16](#), [Anonymous 1](#)

GENERAL COMMENTS:

Shannon Laun, Vice President, Conservation Law Foundation (CLF):

CLF strongly supports section 1, claiming that it will make it cheaper and easier for residents to install rooftop solar, reduce their electricity bills, and contribute to the state's clean energy and climate goals. They do not support section 2, but clarify that they do support the goal of accelerating clean energy and electrification. They encourage the committee to gather data on the current regulatory impact on such projects to inform both public debates and lawmakers make the correct decisions. They go on to say that a statewide permitting platform should be implemented and advocate for the statewide implementation of SolarAPP+. They elaborate that a statewide permitting platform would reduce municipal costs and encourage towns to charge more reasonable and consistent fees. They state that streamlining solar permitting would reduce project cancellations as well. Finally, they claim that more data is needed to inform where EV Charging Infrastructure and certain solar projects should be exempt from environmental review.

**Reported by: Tatyana Massa, Assistant Clerk
Abigail Lockwood, Clerk**

Date: March 23rd, 2026