



## The Secretary of Energy

Washington, DC 20585

### Open Letter to American Mayors from Secretary Jennifer M. Granholm Speeding Solar Energy Deployment in Your Community

September 11, 2021

Dear Mayors,

Mayors in this country play a pivotal role in shaping America's clean energy future, and the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) is proud to support your efforts.

Transitioning to clean energy combats climate change, increases energy reliability, and spurs economic opportunities that will provide jobs to millions of Americans deploying clean energy technologies. We must enable this transition to the best of our ability, making it faster, cheaper, and more effective for all Americans to participate.

The [Solar Automated Permit Processing Plus \(SolarAPP+\)](#) is an online tool that instantly reviews residential solar permits. Until now, obtaining permits to install solar can take days, weeks, or even months in some parts of the country, and can be a complex and costly process. At a time when we are using technology to create life-saving vaccines, connect with colleagues and family virtually, and explore outer space, it seems implausible we are still shuffling paper to process applications for solar permits. And the process varies across the Nation. Solar developers often avoid working in areas that are slower to deliver permits.

SolarAPP+ cuts permit processing time to less than one hour, all while maintaining quality and safety. This can accelerate solar energy deployment and bolster businesses across the country – by reducing the time and complexity of solar permitting, and also by lowering costs, making solar more accessible to low- and moderate-income Americans.

With SolarAPP+, local governments can ease their administrative burden and costs by getting solar projects up and running faster. We have seen this happen already. After automating its residential solar permitting process, San Jose, California, saw a [600 percent increase in approved projects](#). In Tucson, Arizona, SolarAPP+ reduced permitting reviews from about 20 business days to zero.

In July, DOE kicked off the “Summer of Solar” campaign with an ambitious goal of getting 125 communities to engage with us and learn more about the SolarAPP+ tool by the end of September. I am inviting you to join us in this effort — a rare easy opportunity to cut red tape and empower residents of our cities to more easily install solar energy systems and help achieve a carbon-free electricity sector.



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To learn more, please reach out to our SolarAPP+ team at the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) at [team@solar-app.org](mailto:team@solar-app.org). An all-star team of experts led by NREL and comprised of safety experts, solar industry leaders, local governments, and environmental organizations made this possible and are standing by to help local governments across the country adopt SolarAPP+.

I hope you will join us.

Sunny Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Granholm".

Jennifer M. Granholm  
Secretary of Energy