



2/18/2015

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 2015 TESTIMONY FROM JOSHUA ROSS OF ROSS SOLAR GROUP IN SUPPORT OF PROPOSED S.B. NO. 730 AN ACT PROHIBITING HOMEOWNER OR CONDOMINIUM ASSOCIATIONS FROM INTERFERING WITH OR PREVENTING INSTALLATION OF SOLAR PHOTOVOLTAIC SYSTEMS AND PROPOSED H.B. NO. 6435 AN ACT STREAMLINING THE PERMITTING PROCESS FOR THE INSTALLATION OF SOLAR PHOTOVOLTAIC SYSTEMS.

My name is Joshua Ross and I am one of the owners of Ross Solar Group. Our company is based in Danbury, CT where we employ (26) workers in the Solar PV industry.

Ross Solar Group was established in 2007 and we have grown from family owned business to twenty six full time employees, all of whom are based and live in Connecticut. Our company's focus is on residential and commercial solar energy projects ranging from 3KW to 1.5 Megawatts.

While great strides have been made in the solar permitting process over the past seven years, certain municipalities still create additional barriers which include Architectural Review Board hearings, Homeowner Association reviews and a prolonged and unnecessary Zoning process for rooftop mounted systems. Ground mounted systems also endure a heavy permitting process. Ranging from Wetlands and Zoning approval to involving a soil scientist.

This lengthy permitting process has resulted in delayed installations across the board. We as a company have had to restructure our contracts with clients to coincide with this lengthy delay from the municipalities. While some towns are very easy to work with and have an online permitting process, other towns make it a major pain to submit permits. The City of Stamford has online permitting, but you still need to come in and spend 3 hours getting sign offs from each Department. If you don't have all the signs off (which is always the case), you have to come back another day as the permit applications are only accepted until 10:00AM.

We had one instance in West Haven where they accepted the permit application and check after being dropped off, but did nothing with the permit for three weeks. When we called to inquire they told us their Senior Building Official needed to sign off, and he was on vacation...

Another road block in the installation of solar is homeowners/condominium associations. I do not feel that homeowners associations should dictate whether a homeowner can put solar on their roof. It not only increases the value of the house but saves the homeowner money in the process. They should not have the ability to hold up the process of installation if it is not their residence.

In closing, I feel that the permitting process as a whole can improve. With certain improvements like online permitting and fixed solar fees, we as Solar PV Contractors will be able to deliver the great benefits of solar energy to a customer in a relatively short amount of time. With the elimination of homeowners and condominium associations' input on solar on roofs, customers will be able to decide on their own if solar is right for them.

I thank you for your time

Very Respectfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'JR' with a stylized flourish extending to the left.

Joshua Ross