



## 103RD GENERAL ASSEMBLY

### State of Illinois

2023 and 2024

SB1876

Introduced 2/9/2023, by Sen. Bill Cunningham

#### SYNOPSIS AS INTRODUCED:

20 ILCS 605/605-1110 new

Amends the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity Law of the Civil Administrative Code of Illinois. Provides that it is the policy of the State to promote and encourage the installation of distributed energy resources, such as distributed generation technology and advanced energy storage, and to limit obstacles to their use. Establishes that within 180 days of the effective date of the amendatory Act, the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity shall create and administer a grant program facilitating the implementation of an online permitting process for residential photovoltaic solar energy systems for the purpose of modernizing and reducing the cost and time to obtain building permits for distributed generation. Provides that jurisdictions requiring permits for such systems may apply for a grant of up to \$20,000 from the Department. Requires the Department to allocate a minimum of \$1,000,000 in eligible funds to provide grants under the program. Requires the Department to disclose in a report on its website each jurisdiction which received a grant, the amount of each grant, the anticipated implementation date of the recipient jurisdiction's automated permitting platform, and other relevant information.

LRB103 26887 MXP 53251 b

1 AN ACT concerning State government.

2 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,**  
3 **represented in the General Assembly:**

4 Section 5. The Department of Commerce and Economic  
5 Opportunity Law of the Civil Administrative Code of Illinois  
6 is amended by adding Section 605-1110 as follows:

7 (20 ILCS 605/605-1110 new)

8 Sec. 605-1110. Small Solar Online Permitting Grant  
9 Program.

10 (a) The General Assembly finds and declares all of the  
11 following:

12 (1) It is the policy of the State to promote and  
13 encourage the installation of distributed energy  
14 resources, such as distributed generation technology and  
15 advanced energy storage, and to limit obstacles to their  
16 use.

17 (2) Onsite solar energy and onsite energy storage are  
18 leading renewable distributed energy resource technologies  
19 that will help this State reach its energy and  
20 environmental goals, as well as provide essential  
21 resiliency benefits at times of high energy demand and in  
22 the event of grid outages.

23 (3) Implementation of consistent statewide standards

1 to achieve the timely and cost-effective installation of  
2 solar energy systems as well as energy storage systems is  
3 not a municipal affair but is instead a matter of  
4 statewide concern. The permitting processes governing the  
5 installation of onsite solar energy systems and energy  
6 storage systems vary widely across jurisdictions and,  
7 contrary to the intent of the law, are both obstacles to  
8 the State's clean energy and greenhouse gas reduction  
9 goals and burdensome costs to homeowners, businesses,  
10 schools, and public agencies.

11 (4) The United States Department of Energy, through  
12 its SunShot Initiative, has distributed millions of  
13 dollars in grants to local and state governments,  
14 including a number of State jurisdictions, to reduce the  
15 costs of rooftop solar through automated and standardized  
16 permitting.

17 (5) A modernized, automated, and standardized  
18 permitting process for installations of small-scale solar  
19 technology on residential rooftops, energy storage  
20 technology in residences, and associated distributed  
21 energy resource technology in residences will lower  
22 administrative costs for and time spent by municipalities  
23 throughout the State, while maintaining safety standards.

24 (6) A modernized, automated, and standardized  
25 permitting process for installations of small-scale solar  
26 technology on residential rooftops, energy storage

1 technology in residences, and associated distributed  
2 energy resource technology in residences will lower costs  
3 of the deployment of solar and battery solutions, help to  
4 expand access to lower-income households, provide solar  
5 customers greater installation ease, improve the State's  
6 ability to reach its clean energy goals, expand grid  
7 resiliency solutions, and generate much needed jobs in the  
8 State, all while maintaining safety standards.

9 (7) A modernized, automated, and standardized  
10 permitting process for installations of small-scale solar  
11 technology on residential rooftops, energy storage  
12 technology in residences, and associated distributed  
13 energy resource technology will increase efficiencies in  
14 local government, reducing costs and time requirements for  
15 local jurisdiction staff.

16 (b) For the purposes of this Section:

17 "Economically disadvantaged community" means areas of one  
18 or more census tracts where the average household income does  
19 not exceed 80% of the area median income.

20 "Energy storage system" means commercially available  
21 technology that is capable of absorbing energy and storing it  
22 for a period of time for use at a later time, including, but  
23 not limited to, electrochemical, thermal, and  
24 electromechanical technologies, and may be interconnected  
25 behind the customer's meter or interconnected behind its own  
26 meter.

1       "Jurisdiction" means any unit of local government  
2 providing building or electrical permits to small photovoltaic  
3 solar energy systems.

4       "Photovoltaic solar energy system" means a solar collector  
5 or other solar energy device the primary purpose of which is to  
6 provide for the collection, storage, or distribution of  
7 electricity created from sunlight.

8       "Small residential photovoltaic solar energy system" means  
9 a photovoltaic solar energy system with an installed direct  
10 current capacity no greater than 25 kilowatts.

11       "SolarAPP+" means the most recent version of a web-based  
12 portal, developed by the National Renewable Energy Laboratory,  
13 United States Department of Energy, that automates plan  
14 review, produces code-compliant approvals, and issues permits  
15 instantaneously for small residential photovoltaic solar  
16 energy systems and energy storage systems.

17       (c) Within 180 days of the effective date of this  
18 amendatory Act of the 103rd General Assembly, the Department  
19 shall create and administer a grant program facilitating the  
20 implementation of an automated online permitting process for  
21 residential photovoltaic solar energy systems for the purpose  
22 of modernizing and reducing the cost and time to obtain  
23 building permits for distributed generation. Jurisdictions  
24 requiring permits for such systems may apply for a grant of up  
25 to \$20,000 from the Department. A jurisdiction that accepts a  
26 grant shall implement an online, automated permitting

1 platform, such as, but not limited to, SolarAPP+, that  
2 verifies code compliance and issues valid and usable permits  
3 in real time for eligible technologies. Online platforms shall  
4 include an inspection checklist and be consistent with the  
5 system parameters and configurations of SolarAPP+. As needed,  
6 a jurisdiction may amend its ordinance to authorize a small  
7 solar energy system, an energy storage system, or other  
8 eligible technology to use the online, automated permitting  
9 platform, as well as update its code as pertains to such  
10 technologies to the most recent version of the National  
11 Electrical Code, International Building Code, and  
12 International Residential Code available at that time.

13 A jurisdiction that accepts a grant shall ensure its  
14 online permitting platform includes:

15 (1) a clear description of all information required to  
16 obtain a permit;

17 (2) the electrical, building, and residential code  
18 year governing the jurisdiction's permitting requirements  
19 for small residential photovoltaic solar energy systems  
20 and energy storage systems; and

21 (3) the means to electronically pay for all permits  
22 for solar photovoltaic solar energy systems and energy  
23 storage systems.

24 (d) Nothing in this Section prohibits a jurisdiction that  
25 accepts a grant from using grant funds to modernize its  
26 permitting system for other items within that jurisdiction, so

1 long as the core goals described in this Section are achieved.

2 (e) In establishing the grant program, the Department  
3 shall expedite processing grant applications from local  
4 jurisdictions serving environmental justice communities as  
5 defined by the Illinois Power Agency under the Illinois Power  
6 Agency Act and economically disadvantaged communities.

7 (f) The Department shall allocate a minimum of \$1,000,000  
8 in eligible funds received under the federal Inflation  
9 Reduction Act, federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act,  
10 or other funding sources to provide grants under the program.

11 (g) Each quarter, the Department shall disclose through a  
12 report available on its website each jurisdiction which  
13 received a grant, the amount of each grant, the anticipated  
14 implementation date of the recipient jurisdiction's automated  
15 permitting platform, and other information deemed relevant by  
16 the Department. The Department shall also maintain on its  
17 website a list of jurisdictions utilizing an online automated  
18 permitting platform.