$20m Unlocked for Expediting Solar Permitting

By: Southern California Edison (SCE) and California Solar & Storage Association (CALSSA)
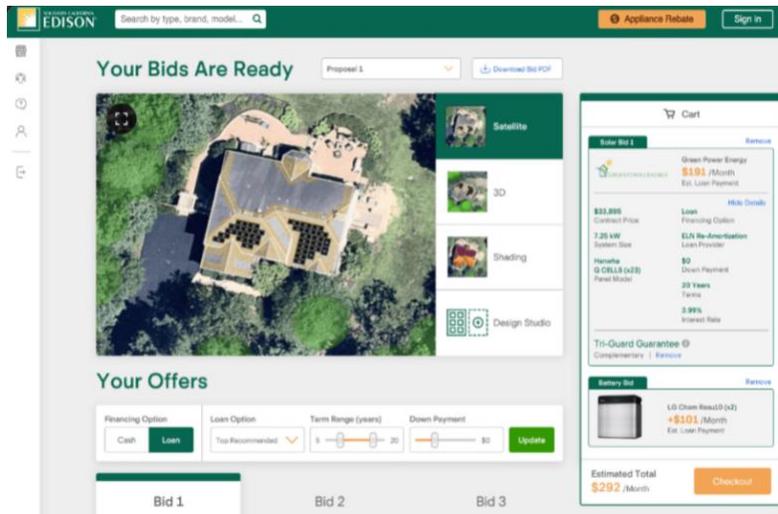

The **Solar Automated Permit Processing** application **(SolarAPP+)** was developed by the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL). It is a software application that streamlines permitting for new residential rooftop solar and storage systems. Last month, public officials and environmental organizations from across the nation gathered to kick off the official launch of SolarAPP+.

Locally, Governor Newsom also signed the California state budget with $20 million in funding for local government officials to explore the use of automated permit processing within their jurisdictions. Utility providers like Southern California Edison (SCE) view these recent developments as an exciting opportunity for local jurisdictions to explore their options to streamline processes.

SCE's Pathway 2045 analysis forecasts almost half of all single-family homes in California will have solar by 2045, providing an additional 30 GW of solar generation and 10 GW of storage. This will complement the 80 GW of new carbon-free, utility-scale generation and 30 GW of utility-scale storage needed to achieve California's environmental goals. Streamlining the permitting process for customer-owned solar and storage can help us get there faster.

The $20 million in California state budget funds is intended to support a non-competitive grant program for cities and counties to conduct technical assistance targeted for local jurisdictions planning to adopt expedited permitting software such as SolarAPP+. The California Energy Commission (CEC) is charged with expending these funds by June 30, 2023 and liquidating them by June 30, 2027. City and county permitting departments may use SolarAPP+ for free.

SCE, who has connected nearly 400,000 residential projects over the last 15 years, and last year launched an [online solar shopping marketplace](#), currently aims to bring these solar and storage systems to the grid in under 15 business days. Improvements over time have often emerged thanks to regulatory leadership, technical improvements, and industry expertise. All three of these elements have come together to inform the SolarAPP+ project.

NREL has worked with local governments, building safety officials, solar industry experts, and more to develop SolarAPP+ to speed up and increase the accuracy of residential solar and storage project permitting. Nearly 90 jurisdictions across the nation have discussed adopting SolarAPP+, with California cities and counties leading the way. The City of Menifee officially launched SolarAPP+ last week, the City of Stockton and County of Sonoma are scheduled to follow suit by September 1, 2021, and the City of Pleasant Hill became one of the first jurisdictions of the nation to launch SolarAPP+ in May. By [some estimates](#), the move towards automated solar permitting for residential projects, could translate to $7.5 billion in cost savings and 780,000 jobs in the solar industry. Get started with SolarAPP+ by learning more [here](#), and contacting the SolarAPP+ team directly at team@solar-app.org.