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National Forum Launched for Solar & Storage Code and Permitting Solutions

A newly launched, three-year project, supported by a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Department of Energy [Solar Energy Technologies Office](#), will bring together diverse stakeholders to identify and develop solutions to solar and solar-plus-storage code enforcement and permitting challenges.

The project builds upon and will significantly expand the work of the Sustainable Energy Action Committee (SEAC), an organization founded in California in 2015 as a forum for collaboration on guidelines for implementation of codes and standards for permitting and inspection practices of renewable energy systems. SEAC brings together authorities having jurisdiction (AHJs)—such as local building and fire departments, contractors, manufacturers, suppliers, utilities, testing labs and other clean energy stakeholders for collaboration and problem solving related to solar PV installation and energy storage projects.

Under the recent U.S. Energy Department award, the [Interstate Renewable Energy Council \(IREC\)](#) will lead the administration of SEAC and facilitate its expansion into a national forum. Other key partners in the project include the International Association of Electrical Inspectors (IAEI), International Code Council (ICC), UL LLC, International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF), National Association of State Fire Marshals (NASFM), Solar Energy Industries Association (SEIA), U.S. Energy Storage Association (ESA) and California Solar & Storage Association (CALSSA).

The project will facilitate improvements in the permitting and inspection of solar and solar-plus-storage projects by developing consensus-based solutions to high-priority codes and standards needs. An analysis will be conducted to determine the gaps in understanding and implementation that complicate code enforcement and can deter clean energy deployment. A consensus process will then be used to develop solutions. The project will also develop a website hosting information on clean energy code and permitting best practices and include extensive outreach to facilitate uptake of these practices.

Clear and comprehensive procedures defining permitting, inspection and other requirements for solar and solar-plus-storage projects are essential to ensure the safety and quality of installed systems. By identifying and addressing unmet needs in this area the project will advance public safety objectives. Additionally, by facilitating awareness and adoption of codes and standards best practices, the project will help reduce the non-hardware “soft costs” of solar and energy storage, thus supporting greater adoption.

“With over 20,000 local jurisdictions in the U.S. that issue permits and inspect PV systems, a consensus-based process to enhance related codes and standards is a powerful opportunity to facilitate greater deployment of solar and energy storage,” said **IREC President and CEO, Larry Sherwood**. “This initiative is unique in providing an open forum for all stakeholders to collaborate on these issues and IREC is honored to act as the program administrator.”

“The National Association of State Fire Marshals is pleased to partner with the Interstate Renewable Energy Council, the Sustainable Energy Action Committee and others on this important project to help provide information on enforcement and permitting solutions for solar and solar-plus-storage projects,” said **Philip Oakes, NASFM National Program Director**. “This project will help address a critical need for State Fire Marshals, AHJs, fire and emergency services, industry and many others in this rapidly growing field.”

“As a founding member of the Sustainable Energy Action Committee (SEAC), to me, there is nothing more exciting than uniting AHJs in one common cause,” said **R. Steven Jones, Assistant Building Official for the City of Oceanside, California**. “I am proud to be part of SEAC's work with industry stakeholders and AHJs to promote safe solar photovoltaic installations and regional consistency.”

“The City of Bakersfield is excited to be a partner in this project as it launches,” said **Pete Jackson, Chief Electrical Inspector, Building Department of the City of Bakersfield** and SEAC Steering Committee Member. “As one of the busiest jurisdictions in the nation for installation of renewable energy systems and a founding member of SEAC, Bakersfield looks forward to using its experience to develop consensus-based recommendations to benefit the safe and efficient installation of sustainable energy systems.”

“The adoption and implementation of building codes and standards plays a major role in supporting community resilience,” said **Code Council Chief Executive Officer Dominic Sims**. “The International Code Council is proud to collaborate on this important project that reinforces critical code compliance efforts across the U.S.”

“In order for solar to supply 20% of U.S. electricity generation by 2030, we’re going to need to work through longstanding code and enforcement challenges,” said **Evelyn Butler, Senior Director of Codes and Standards at the Solar Energy Industries Association**. “This network will provide a space for the

solar industry to proactively work together, resulting in market-friendly and efficient standards for the companies that will ultimately follow this guidance. We're excited to see the SEAC project expand and look forward to working with our members to participate in this important forum."

"We are looking forward to this collaboration," said **Benjamin Davis, Policy Associate with the California Solar & Storage Association**. "Streamlining permitting can go a long way to safely lower soft costs, allowing more customers to go solar and reap the benefits of generating energy from their own rooftops."

"The IAEI looks forward to another partnership opportunity with IREC and these great industry partners," said **Joseph Wages, Jr., Technical Advisor, Education, Codes and Standards at the International Association of Electrical Inspectors**. "We appreciate the opportunity to provide training and safety-related information regarding solar energy storage to the electrical professionals tasked with installing and inspecting these systems. This information is desperately needed as energy storage becomes more and more the norm."

To learn more about this initiative and how to get involved, visit the Sustainable Energy Action Committee website at: <https://www.seacgroup.org> or sign up for updates at <https://cutt.ly/seac-signup>.

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About SEAC: The Sustainable Energy Action Committee (SEAC) provides the forum for all stakeholders to collaboratively identify and find solutions for issues that affect the installation and use of solar energy systems, energy storage systems, demand response, and energy efficiency. Stakeholders include, but are not limited to, AHJs, designers, engineers, contractors, first responders, manufacturers, suppliers, utilities and testing labs. The purpose is to facilitate the use of affordable, clean and renewable energy in a safe, efficient, and sustainable manner. Learn more at <https://www.seacgroup.org>.

About IREC: The Interstate Renewable Energy Council (IREC) builds the foundation for rapid adoption of clean energy and energy efficiency to benefit people, the economy and our planet. IREC develops and advances the regulatory reforms, technical standards, and workforce solutions needed to enable the streamlined integration of clean, distributed energy resources. Learn more at www.irecusa.org.

About IAEI: International Association of Electrical Inspectors (IAEI) is a 501(c)6 not-for-profit professional trade association committed to public safety from electrical hazards by providing expert, unbiased leadership in electrical code and standards development and premier education and certification for electrical professionals. IAEI was established in and has been in continuous operation since 1928. Active members and partners in the association include but are not limited to electrical inspectors, building construction inspectors, electrical installers, electrical contractors, engineers, testing agencies, standards organizations, manufacturers and distributors. Learn more at <https://www.iaei.org>.

About ICC: The International Code Council (ICC) is a nonprofit association that provides a wide range of building safety solutions including product evaluation, accreditation, certification, codification and

training. It develops model codes and standards used worldwide to construct safe, sustainable, affordable and resilient structures. Learn more at <https://www.iccsafe.org>.

About UL: UL helps create a better world by applying science to solve safety, security and sustainability challenges. We empower trust by enabling the safe adoption of innovative new products and technologies. Everyone at UL shares a passion to make the world a safer place. All of our work, from independent research and standards development, to testing and certification, to providing analytical and digital solutions, helps improve global well-being. Businesses, industries, governments, regulatory authorities and the public put their trust in us so they can make smarter decisions. To learn more, visit [UL.com](https://www.ul.com). To learn more about our nonprofit activities, visit [UL.org](https://www.ul.org).

About IAFF: The International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) represents 320,000 professional fire fighters, paramedics and EMTs in the United States and Canada. Nearly 85% of the population in the U.S. is protected by IAFF members. Learn more at www.iaff.org.

About NASFM: The membership of National Association of State Fire Marshals (NASFM) comprises the most senior fire officials in the United States. NASFM's mission is two-fold: to protect human life, property and the environment from fire, and to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of State Fire Marshals' operations. State Fire Marshals' responsibilities vary from state to state but typically include fire safety code adoption and enforcement, fire and arson investigation, fire incident data reporting and analysis, public education and advising Governors and State Legislatures on fire protection. Learn more at <https://www.firemarshals.org>.

About SEIA: The Solar Energy Industries Association® (SEIA) is leading the transformation to a clean energy economy, creating the framework for solar to achieve 20% of U.S. electricity generation by 2030. SEIA works with its 1,000 member companies and other strategic partners to fight for policies that create jobs in every community and shape fair market rules that promote competition and the growth of reliable, low-cost solar power. Founded in 1974, SEIA is a national trade association building a comprehensive vision for the Solar+ Decade through research, education and advocacy. Visit SEIA online at www.seia.org.

About ESA: The U.S. Energy Storage Association (ESA) is the national trade association dedicated to energy storage, working toward a more resilient, efficient, sustainable and affordable electricity grid – as is uniquely enabled by energy storage. With 190 members, ESA represents a diverse group of companies, including independent power producers, electric utilities, energy service companies, financiers, insurers, law firms, installers, manufacturers, component suppliers and integrators involved in deploying energy storage systems around the globe. Learn more at www.energystorage.org.

About CALSSA: The California Solar & Storage Association (CALSSA) has advanced the common interest of the solar and storage industry for over 40 years, making California the most robust market in the U.S. The association is the state's largest clean energy business group with over 550 member companies representing an array of businesses that manufacture, design, install, finance and provide other resources to the growing local solar and storage market in California. Learn more at www.calssa.org.

About Bakersfield: The City of Bakersfield is the ninth-largest municipality in the state of California, home to nearly 400,000 residents. Our organization is proud to provide a vast array of public services to those residents, businesses that are based here and to visitors from all around the world. Bakersfield is a founding member of SEAC and has been supporting the goals of the organization since 2015. Here in Bakersfield, you will truly find the Sound of Something Better! Learn more at www.bakersfieldcity.us.

About the Solar Energy Technologies Office: The U.S. Department of Energy Solar Energy Technologies Office supports early-stage research and development to improve the affordability, reliability, and performance of solar technologies on the grid. Learn more at energy.gov/solar-office.