

# California mandates solar panels on new homes starting in 2020

Reuters

Solar technicians install solar panels on the roof of a house in Mission Viejo, Calif., in October 2013.

May 10, 2018

Reuters NEW YORK/LOS ANGELES (Thomson Reuters Foundation) — Builders in California will be required to fit solar panels on most new homes from 2020 under new building standards adopted on Wednesday, a move that is the first in the United States and could provide a big boost to the solar industry.

The decision, adopted unanimously by the five-member California Energy Commission, is part of the state's effort to fight global climate change. It came despite estimates it would raise the up-front cost of a new home by nearly \$10,000 in one of the most expensive parts of the country.

The commission estimated the standards will add about \$40 to monthly mortgage payments, but will compensate for that by saving residents \$80 a month on energy bills.

“We cannot let Californians be in homes that are essentially the residential equivalent of gas guzzlers,” Commissioner David Hochschild said ahead of the vote.

The new building codes include updates to building ventilation and lighting standards. They are collectively expected to reduce the state's greenhouse gas emissions by 700,000 metric tons over three years, a level equal to taking 115,000 cars off the road, according to state officials.

The vote was a major win for the solar installation industry, which already counts California as its biggest market. Demand for solar equipment in California could rise by 10 percent to 15 percent because of the new standards, the Energy Commission forecast in a study earlier this year.

Solar companies cheered the move, saying they hoped such requirements would one day be adopted in other states, too.

“We think it’s another example of California policy preceding what will happen in other markets,” Tom Werner, chief executive of San Jose-based solar company SunPower, said in an interview ahead of the decision.

California has one of the most ambitious renewable energy mandates in the country, with a goal of sourcing half of its electricity needs from renewable sources by 2030. At the end of 2017, it had reached about 30 percent, according to the CEC.

Because of such policies, the most populous U.S. state has frequently been at odds with President Donald Trump’s aggressive rollback of policies to combat climate change. Gov. Jerry Brown is planning a global climate summit this September.

Just 9 percent of single-family detached homes in the state of 39.5 million people currently have solar panels, according to a 2017 U.S. Department of Energy report the Energy Commission cited.

Buildings that are shaded or have a roof that is too small to accommodate panels will be among those exempt, California Energy Commission spokeswoman Amber Pasricha Beck said. [Speech](#)

<http://the-japan-news.com/news/article/0004429522>