COMMERCE DEPARTMENT
DIVISION OF ENERGY RESOURCES

Questions & Answers

SolarAPP+ Solar Permitting Software Incentive for Local Units of Government

RFP Reference Number: COMM-SOLAPP01-20250228

Response Date 05/29/2025

#	Question	Response	Date Responded
	SECTION I. Incentive Overview		
	SECTION II. Incentive Funds		
1.	**For a local unit of government eligible for an incentive, are there any restrictions on how those funds (bonus incentive and/or base incentive payments), can be used?**	**No, there are no restrictions on how the incentive can be used by the local unit of government.**	**5/29/2025**
	SECTION III. Technical Assistance		
2.	How does this system integrate with zoning code? Especially how does it identify non-conforming structures to make sure they comply with zoning code requirements?	SolarAPP+ is built to perform structural and electrical analysis for building and electrical code compliance and can relay a jurisdiction's unique zoning requirements to the installer. SolarAPP+ has the capability to integrate with jurisdiction-provided GIS layers such as zoning to identify and surface specific requirements that apply to different zoning codes. SolarAPP+ can also accommodate bulk uploads of zoning restrictions by address, such as historical neighborhoods that require manual review, and either reject or require additional info per the AHJ's needs. Unpermitted structures are not eligible for SolarAPP+ review. If a project requires building structural updates, the installer would need to pull their permit via the traditional process in their jurisdiction. It is the contractor's responsibility to ensure that the structure they install the system on has been properly permitted.	3/12/2025
3.	If I am understanding correctly; this program is looking at building code and fire code. The state of MN has 66 counties who have NOT adopted building code and do not have staff who are inspecting code requirements. In these areas - State Electrical inspectors are doing the inspections of electrical components. For Counties who have not adopted building code; they are issuing zoning permit.	SA+ is geared towards structures permitted in compliance with the International Residential code. The Installer must attest to those minimum requirements in the permit application. If the AHJ has a GIS layer for zoning, SA+ can incorporate it.	3/12/2025
4.	To confirm, Solar App+ is design for building permitting, it is not addressing permission from the electric utility for interconnections?	Minnesota has a separate interconnection process with the electric utility.	3/12/2025
5.	How much does SolarApp+ to implement?	SolarApp+ is free software.	3/12/2025

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6.	Do you have a list of the permit software that solarapp+ integrates with?	Yes, a list is available at: https://help.solar-app.org/article/120-how-does-solarapp-work-with-existing-ahj-permitting-software	3/12/2025
7.	Who enforces removal of an installed panel if the installer gives false information about the structure, and it is a non-conformity? Is that then the County's burden?	The onus for mitigation is on the contractor. The adoption of an automated review tool doesn't change liability.	3/12/2025
8.	What kind of feedback are you getting from jurisdictions and developers using the program? What does the implementation learning curve typically look like?	Jurisdictions exploring SolarAPP+ are often drawn to the platform for its ability to automate plan reviews and improve permitting efficiency—and many are pleasantly surprised by the additional benefits it brings. AHJs consistently report that SolarAPP+ not only speeds up approvals but also improves code compliance and raises installer workmanship quality by catching errors early, reducing poor-quality submissions, and clarifying the rules for approval. This has a ripple effect, streamlining downstream processes like inspections and interconnection, making the entire solar permitting workflow smoother and more predictable. The implementation learning curve is straightforward—most jurisdictions are up and running in a matter of weeks with comprehensive support and training from our team. Once live, permitting staff quickly see time savings and reduced backlogs, allowing them to focus on more complex projects. Developers also appreciate the faster turnaround times and the clarity SolarAPP+ brings to the process, making it easier to meet local standards from the start.	3/12/2025
	SECTION IV. Eligibility		
9.	Are Minnesota Tribal Nations eligible for this incentive?	Minn. Stat. 216C.48 states that eligible applicants must be permitting authorities, with "permitting authority" further defined as a "unit of local government in Minnesota that has authority to review, and issue permits to install residential solar projects and solar plus energy storage system projects within the local government's jurisdiction." There is a statutory basis to interpret "local unit of government" to include Tribes, but a Tribe would still have to qualify as a permitting authority to be eligible for incentives under this program.	4/7/2025
	SECTION V. Application		
10.	Is this a competitive incentive?	No, this incentive and application process is non-competitive. Applications are reviewed on a first-come, first-serve basis and the incentive will remain available until all funds are utilized or until June 30, 2028, whichever comes first.	4/7/2025
	SECTION VI. Timeline		

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	SECTION VII. Questions		
	SECTION VIII. Exhibits and Attachments		
	SECTION IX. Notifying Applicants		
	SECTION X. General Requirements		