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NEW DOB PROGRAM WILL SPEED APPROVAL OF SOLAR INSTALLATION PROJECTS & SUPPORT ONENYC

Program Will Eliminate Wait Times for Qualifying Solar Panel Permit Approvals

*With Solar Project Filings Up Over 1000%, New Risk-Based Plan Exam Permitting Process Will
Help Spur Investment in Sustainable Energy & Reduce Costs*

NEW YORK – Buildings Commissioner Rick Chandler announced today that starting January 1, most small-scale solar panel installation projects will be eligible for Professional Certification, rather than requiring approval from a Department plan examiner. Professional Certification allows Registered Architects and Professional Engineers to certify against their licenses that plans submitted to the Department are in full compliance with all applicable regulations in the New York City Construction Codes and Zoning Resolution.

“Applications for the installation of solar panels have skyrocketed since the beginning of Mayor de Blasio’s administration, and that’s a great thing for our City’s environment. We’re acting to meet this demand and encourage even more investment in sustainable energy,” said **Buildings Commissioner Rick Chandler**.

A key part of the Department’s [Building One City](#) plan is to simplify the permitting process for low-risk applications, such as those for solar panel installations, and ensure that Department resources are efficiently allocated toward more complex projects. Professional Certification of qualifying solar panel installations will eliminate wait times and reduce costs, helping incentivize homeowners to invest in renewable energy technology and further the Mayor’s [OneNYC](#) sustainability plan.

“Speeding the approval of simpler, low-risk projects is a significant priority for the Department. This model will make green-energy projects more affordable, encourage development, and uphold safe construction practices,” **Commissioner Chandler** added.

To qualify for the program, solar photovoltaic panels must meet the following conditions:

- Produce a maximum of 10 kilowatts of power;
- Be installed on one or two family homes; and
- Be installed on pitched roofs with equal to or less than a twenty degree slope.

Under Mayor de Blasio’s [OneNYC](#) sustainability plan, the administration and the Department of Buildings are committed to spurring the growth of solar energy in New York City in both public and private buildings, as the City works toward the Mayor’s goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions 80 percent by 2050. The City has committed to installing 100 megawatts (MW) of

solar power on public buildings and spurring the installation of 250 MW on private buildings by 2025.

"We've found that one of the biggest obstacles to expanding solar energy in New York City has been how complicated it's been to get solar panel installations approved," said **Nilda Mesa, Director of the Mayor's Office of Sustainability**. "This takes away a sizeable hurdle, and will lead to homeowners and residents being able to save money and use clean energy sooner than ever before. Hats off to Commissioner Chandler and his team."

Since the beginning of Mayor de Blasio's administration, solar panel installation projects have more than doubled throughout the city. Applications to install solar photovoltaic panels have increased from approximately 60 jobs to over 1,200 filings, a change of more than 1000%, since 2012. Seventy percent of these applications are for low-risk projects.

Projects eligible for Professional Certification under the risk-based review model will be subject to an enhanced auditing structure to ensure compliance with the New York City Construction Codes and Zoning Resolution.

"Solar energy is one way to help drastically reduce our carbon footprint, so any step our City takes to facilitate the installation of solar panels is a great step forward," said **Queens Borough President Melinda Katz**. "Red tape should not stand in the way of harnessing the power of the sun. This excellent new initiative announced by Commissioner Chandler will encourage the use of solar energy by easing the permitting process for installing solar panels."

Council Member Costa Constantinides, Chair of the City Council Environmental Protection Committee, said, "This new initiative to make small-scale solar panel installation qualified for professional certification will make it faster and easier to install solar panels, as well as encourage more homeowners to install them. Solar panel applications have grown 1000% since 2012 - a testament to our City's eagerness for sustainable energy innovations. Increasing and incentivizing the use of solar energy will be a significant part of meeting our goal of reducing our carbon emissions by 80% by 2050. Buildings Commissioner Chandler's commitment to this initiative and his leadership on this important issue will pave the way to make it easier to utilize solar in NYC."

"Sustainable CUNY and our NY Solar Ombudsmen are proud to have been working with NYC agencies to remove barriers to wide scale solar adoption in America's largest city," said **Tria Case, University Director of Sustainability at the City University of New York**. "The incredible growth of solar in NYC is a testament to our collaborative efforts and we applaud Commissioner Chandler for implementing measures that will continue to encourage the growth of renewable energy and attract industry jobs."

"Streamlining solar installations is necessary to green our City's building stock," said **Russell Unger, Executive Director of the Urban Green Council**. "This initiative rips away red tape holding homeowners back from joining the solar wave."

"Clearing the thicket of barriers standing in the way of solar energy's progress will reduce harmful pollution, create local jobs and spur New York City's economy," said **Rory Christian**,

New York Director of Clean Energy for the Environmental Defense Fund. “Taking full advantage of the falling price of solar is key to fighting climate change and turning the City’s vision of a clean energy future into reality.”

“This step to simplify the process for installing solar will go a long way towards enabling New Yorkers to take advantage of all the benefits this clean, renewable resource has to offer,” said **Donna De Costanzo, Director of Northeast Energy and Sustainable Communities at the Natural Resources Defense Council.** “The removal of this regulatory barrier will help the City to achieve its strong solar and climate goals, while also improving air quality and creating local jobs.”

"This is important for the future of solar in New York City. New Yorkers who want solar energy shouldn't have to wait months because of the permitting process. Reducing local permitting barriers is an important step towards making solar affordable for all New Yorkers. Commissioner Chandler is showing real progress in this new initiative, and we look forward to continuing to work with the City to make New York a premier solar market," said **Shaun Chapman, Vice President of Policy & Electricity Markets at SolarCity.**

"Thanks to the de Blasio administration and Commissioner Chandler, this effort to streamline the solar permitting process is a big step forward in reducing administrative barriers to solar adoption in NYC," said **Chris Collins, Executive Director of Solar One.**

“With this announcement Mayor de Blasio is clearing the red tape from the Buildings Department and green lighting a clean energy future for New York City. For every solar installation that is promoted through this reform we will reduce the need for dirty fossil fuel power plants that choke the life out of communities with the highest rates of asthma in our One NYC,” said **Cecil Corbin-Mark, Deputy Director of WE ACT for Environmental Justice.**

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