

## Permit Power Testimony on FY 2027 Executive Budget Proposal: Environmental Conservation and Energy

January 28, 2026

Thank you for the opportunity to weigh in on Governor Hochul's FY 2027 Executive Budget Proposal on Environmental Conservation and Energy. Permit Power's mission is to make it cheaper and easier for American families to power their lives. Our advocacy is focused on breaking down the bureaucratic barriers that get in the way of consumers installing rooftop solar, home batteries, and other energy upgrades.

Rooftop solar and home batteries are among the most powerful tools households have to lower their utility bills. But, in New York, permitting red tape is driving up the cost of these systems and putting them out of reach for too many families. This is a policy choice that effectively traps New Yorkers looking for a way to reduce skyrocketing electricity costs.

As the Legislature deliberates on the budget, we ask you to fix the broken approval process for residential solar and give New Yorkers back control of their energy future. *You can do this by including an instant permitting requirement for home solar and battery systems in the final budget, together with \$500,000 for NYSERDA to set up an instant permitting platform.*

New York is in the midst of an energy affordability crisis. Families are facing electricity rates that are [48% higher than the national average](#). Rooftop solar is one of the few mechanisms families have to find direct and immediate relief from soaring utility bills. According to [NREL](#), *households that install solar in New York can see approximately \$2,200 in monthly energy cost savings, and as much as \$74,000 in total bill savings over the life of the system.*

Deploying more distributed solar and batteries also saves money for all ratepayers by reducing the need for costly new grid infrastructure and expensive peak power purchases. A newly released Synapse Energy Economics [analysis](#) confirms that *if New York accelerates distributed solar and meets its 2035 storage targets, ratepayers will save more than \$1 billion every single year in avoided energy and capacity costs.*

Unfortunately, local permitting for simple home solar installs is standing in the way of these affordability benefits. [Inconsistent and outdated permitting practices within and between municipalities](#) add thousands of dollars to the cost of going solar in New York and lead more than 20% of consumers who start the process to simply give up. In 2024, our state had some of the slowest residential solar permitting timelines in the country.

The solution to this problem is instant solar permitting: software that modernizes and standardizes the review process by performing the necessary code compliance checks and issuing feedback and

approvals in real time. If adopted statewide, instant permitting could [reduce the price tag of a standard home solar install by more than \\$5,000 and lead an additional 355,000 systems to be deployed.](#)

*Instant permitting is tested, safe, and free for jurisdictions to adopt.* Hundreds of municipalities, including major cities like Los Angeles, Denver, and Houston, already use these platforms. And, five states—California, Texas, Florida, Maryland, and New Jersey— have passed legislation universalizing access to instant permitting for consumers.

Importantly, instant permitting is a win for local governments as well as for families looking to lower their energy bills. Automating the code compliance review for simple solar installs [reduces administrative burden and frees up permitting staff time](#), while preserving local authority over building codes, safety standards, and enforcement decisions.

There is significant demonstrated support for instant permitting in New York. In a statewide poll conducted in November, [respondents believed permits needed to be easier to obtain by a margin of 2:1, and 70% of respondents backed online, rapid permits for rooftop solar specifically.](#) Senator Harckham and Assembly Member Cunningham are sponsoring active legislation ([S5781-A / A6270-B](#)) that would address this ([S5781A/ A6270B](#)) by requiring jurisdictions of 5,000 people or more to offer instant permitting for home solar and battery installs. The bill currently has 25 sponsors in the Senate and 52 in the Assembly, as well as the backing of numerous industry groups, consumer and environmental advocates, and local elected officials.

*We respectfully ask you to include an instant permitting requirement for New York in the final budget, along with \$500,000 for NYSEDA to implement a statewide platform.* This is a chance to stop bureaucracy from blocking progress, and to ensure that New Yorkers who want to save on their utility bills with rooftop solar can do so.

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