



## A Future for WA Renewables

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Washington State needs a clear, effective path forward for electric customers to share in the benefits of renewable energy. A currently successful program is under threat from legislative inaction and political friction. Since 2006, Washingtonians have been able to spur job creation and economic development through solar installations and incentives. Major utilities, including Seattle City Light and Puget Sound Energy, are soon reaching caps that will limit the opportunity for new customers to participate. Close to 10,000 customers statewide are increasing their energy independence by generating energy from the sun. The incentive program was intended to build a local solar energy industry, including equipment manufacturing, design, and installation. According to a recent [Solar Foundation report](#), there are over 2,000 people working in Washington State's solar market. This industry, and the jobs and economic development associated with it, are at risk of going away if our elected leaders do not act.

House Bill 2346 currently sits in the Senate Ways and Means Committee, and reflects over 3 years of work by stakeholders including utilities, industry, and energy advocates. This bipartisan bill provides a ramp down of incentives over time with predictability, while allowing the industry to grow. A study by [Western Washington University](#) found that the incentive program yields over \$6 of payroll and over \$15 of induced economic activity for every dollar that the state contributes.

HB 2346 also contains important provisions to make the benefits of solar broadly accessible, and lowers barriers so that renters and lower income households can participate in community solar projects. Washington is a pioneer in shared-solar programs with over 3,000 people participating. Expiration of sales tax exemption for solar energy equipment will bring revenue to local government and the state, creating a net positive to the budget in the first biennium.

This bill should move forward, and requires action the week of March 7th to pass. However, the current version of HB 2346 does not provide sufficient motivation for new solar development and includes unnecessary provisions that will kill the program if the Department of Ecology's Clean Air Rule is implemented. The health of the local solar industry should not be held hostage to ongoing carbon regulation arguments. We need fair, predictable policies to create the energy infrastructure of the future. The legislature should pass a clean, effective version of HB 2346 that encourages job growth and economic development in this important sector.

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