



SEIA's Solar Bill of Rights

Help Americans Go Solar Campaign

More than 92 percent of Americans think it is important to develop and use more solar. SEIA has launched the Solar Bill of Rights which consists of eight rights to allow the solar industry to compete on equal terms and expand the use of solar energy in our nation. These rights are the critical policies that need to be in place to advance solar. SEIA's Solar Bill of Rights declares the solar industry's freedom to compete on equal terms and no more than the liberty for consumers to choose the energy source they think best. This is a campaign to expand Americans' access to clean, abundant solar energy. This campaign helps educate opinion-leaders, communities, neighbors, friends and elected officials on the solar industry and highlight the policy changes necessary to make the U.S. develop its solar energy potential.

The Eight Solar Rights

1) Americans have the right to put solar on their homes or businesses.

Millions of Americans want to put solar on the roof of their home or business, but many are prevented from doing so by local restrictions. Some homeowners associations have prevented residents from going solar through neighborhood covenants, which allow for the association to veto any changes to a property's aesthetics. Some utilities and municipalities have also made it prohibitively time-consuming and/or expensive to have a system permitted or inspected.

2) Americans have the right to connect their solar energy system to the grid with uniform national standards.

Currently, each state (in some cases, each utility) has a unique process for connecting solar systems to the local electricity grid. National interconnection standards will create a uniform process and paperwork, creating a simple process for the homeowner and a standardized physical connection for manufacturers. Connecting a home solar system shouldn't be any more complicated for the homeowner than setting up an Internet connection.

3) Americans have the right to Net Meter and be compensated at the very least with full retail electricity rates.

Residential solar systems generate excess electricity in the middle of the day, when the owners aren't usually at home. Net metering requires the utility company to credit any excess generation to the customer at full retail rates *at a minimum* – effectively running the electricity meter backwards when the system is generating more electricity than the occupants of the house are using. Allowing customers to net meter is critical to making solar an economically viable option for most homeowners.

4) The solar industry has the right to a fair competitive environment.

The highly profitable fossil fuel industries have received tens of billions of dollars in subsidies from the federal government for decades. In addition, fossil fuel industries are protected from bearing the full social costs of the pollution they produce. The solar energy industry and the public expect a fair playing field, with all energy sources evaluated based on their full, life-cycle costs and benefits to society. Therefore it is critical that solar energy receive the same level of support, for the same duration, as the fossil fuel industry.



5) The solar industry has the right to produce clean energy on public lands.

America has some of the best solar resources in the world, which are often on public lands overseen by the federal government. But even though oil and gas industries are producing on 13 million acres of public lands, no solar permits have been approved. Solar is a clean, renewable American resource and solar development on public lands is a critical component of any national strategy to expand our use of renewable energy.

6) The solar industry has the right to sell its power across a new, 21st century transmission grid.

Over the last 100 years, the transmission grid in the United States has been built as a patchwork of local systems, designed and planned to meet local needs. As the needs of customers have changed, so has the way the electric industry does business. What haven't changed are the rules crafted in an era of coal-fired power plants. What is needed now is an investment in infrastructure to connect areas rich in solar resources with major population centers.

7) Americans have the right to buy solar electricity from their utility.

Many utility companies have never considered offering their customers the option to purchase clean solar energy, rather than dirty energy from coal or other fossil fuels. Nation-wide over 90% of people support increased use of solar energy, and over three-quarters believe it should be a major priority of the federal government. Despite this, only around 25% of utility customers in the US have the ability to actually purchase clean, renewable power from their utility, and only a fraction of those programs offer solar energy. Utilities should be required to offer the electricity source that their customers want.

8) Americans have the right to – and should expect – the highest ethical treatment from the solar industry.

Solar energy systems are an investment as much as a physical product. Consumers deserve top-quality information and treatment from solar energy providers and installers. Consumers should expect the solar industry to minimize its environmental impact through panel recycling and other programs, and communicate information about available incentives in a clear, accurate and accessible manner. Finally, consumers should expect that solar systems will work better than advertised, and that companies will make every good faith effort to support solar owners over the life of their systems.

To sign on, please go to www.SolarBillOfRights.org

About the Solar Energy Industries Association

Established in 1974, the Solar Energy Industries Association is the national trade association of the U.S. solar energy industry. As the voice of the industry, SEIA works with its 1,000 member companies to make solar a mainstream and significant energy source by expanding markets, removing market barriers, strengthening the industry and educating the public on the benefits of solar energy.

For a referenced version of this factsheet and more information, please visit www.seia.org.