

RE HB 25 1096, Concerning Automated Permitting for Residential Clean energy projects (solar, heat pump, battery, mdp)
From Pitkin County Commissioner, Jeffrey Woodruff
CC: Joan May CC4A, Levi Borst, Pitkin County
Date 19 March 2025

Automated Permitting for Residential Clean Energy Technology Projects

County specific feedback

1. Automated residential permitting is not suitable for our county building and planning purposes.
2. We have a permitting system for the applicant, contractor and staff. We provide full life-cycle management, including approvals, change orders and payments through our online system.
3. We collect a payment in lieu for projects without onsite or offsite renewables. This software only collects payment and does not look at the full project (renewables and uses, pools, spas, hot tubs).
4. Our municipalities are on their own permitting system, as is the county. We are largely on the same I-codes, but have local ordinances for districts like fire and advances in energy code.
5. Roof top solar is use by right
6. Ground mounted requires site plan and activity envelope
7. Other permits like EV charging and heat pumps are through an electrical and/or mechanical permit. Heat pumps are usually in conjunction with a ERV
 1. EV chargers are free from our utility, just an electrical permit/installation
 2. Heat pumps are subsidized 4x (fed, state, local and local)
8. The county specific GHG reductions are moving toward compliance with the Paris Accord. REDUCE annual GHG emissions by 90% from 2019 levels by 2050.
 1. Stricter energy code than IECC 2021.
 2. All residential development net zero by 2030.
 3. Committed to working with our provider HCE to 100% clean energy by 2030.
9. Cost
 1. The cost of doing business in the Unincorporated Pitkin County is due to materials and labor.
 2. We reduced permitting costs and have offered expedited approvals for all electric projects
 3. We offer four levels of incentives for solar- fed, state, local HCE utility and local CORE

Bill feedback

1. Overreach without proper planning and code compliance.
 1. Solar without battery is outmoded planning. But the battery permitting is shortsighted. This is for battery, but how does it show compliance with NFPA 855? Code compliance?
 2. Main panel update is coordination with the utility provider, not sure why I need a preemptive planning platform from the state?
 3. Main breaker for solar
2. The only use case I envision is a jurisdiction without a permitting system already in place (or without a building department)
3. No human review does not protect the health, safety or welfare of an applicant for a permit.
4. Inspection
 1. post installation is backwards,

2. With about snow load calculations for the roof or wind load? We are adding weight to an aging structure? Does this meet engineering requirements?
3. inspection should be at permit (construction documents) not post (construction administration and commissioning)
4. This software play is an abdication of health, safety and welfare requirements of professionals and the AHJ.
5. The state rather than granting money for permitting software should expand tax credits for homeowners installing residential software and electrifying their residence. This is a waste of taxpayer money on software nobody in our jurisdiction needs or wants. Pay consumers for their good deeds. Don't add another layer of complexity to county or municipal approvals- more software, another CRM platform and more reporting. Our reporting is through our CRM system, locally.
6. Field inspections are allowed at installation, this is poor planning (inspection post rather than approval at construction document and cut sheet phase).
7. Not sure how automation software, automatically produces county code-compliant approvals?
8. The bill does not consider view planes, site planning, set backs, easements.
9. The bill does not distinguish between roof mounted and ground mounted.
10. The use case or prescribed code of the bill of a 200 amp residential home again is largely outmoded as we move to electric homes. Our average home size is 3700 SF and we are updating the main distribution panel to homes for full electrification. A 400 amp or greater service is the norm on most remodels and significant additions.
11. We would rather focus staff community development and building department time on meeting
 1. our own building performance goals and reducing GHG emissions from our own portfolio
 2. Updates to the wildfire code and energy code, as per state adoption
 3. Provide incentives to homeowners to electrify