

Expanding Access to Solar on Public Buildings in Southwest Virginia



Solar helps localities save taxpayers money and creates local jobs, but a utility in southwest Virginia stands in the way.

Appalachian Power Company's (APCo) contract with local governments and school districts is blocking new solar installations.

Local governments and schools in APCo territory negotiate the Public Authorities Contract with the utility every three years. These negotiations determine the rates municipalities and schools pay for electricity and their ability to install solar.

The three key barriers in the current contract that block solar installations for schools and local governments in Southwest Virginia are:

Limits on net metering

The current contract imposes an arbitrary cap on net metering, a billing system in which solar customers receive a fair, full retail credit for the energy produced by solar but not used at the time. The current contract limits **total** net metering capacity for all public authority customers in APCo territory to 3 MW. This small number has already been reached and is **stopping new installations from moving forward.**

Lack of clarity on financing

The current agreement is unclear and effectively prohibits the use of third-party ownership, or power purchase agreements (PPAs). This type of financing gives governments, schools, and non-profits access to solar with no upfront costs and generates immediate energy savings. The current contract suggests that the host school or local government must own and operate the solar system, effectively prohibiting these structures.

Insufficient alternatives

APCo proposes to offer a more expensive "green power" program that utilizes renewable energy attributes from out-of-state facilities and leaves out the key benefits of cost savings and investment in local solar jobs.

How local governments and school districts can take action:

Negotiations for the new Public Authorities Contract are happening right now, and your voices are needed to ensure you are getting a fair deal from the utility. Contact Chelsea Barnes (chelsea@appvoices.org) to learn how to engage in the public authority negotiations.

Ask the Public Authority Steering Committee for a fair energy contract that will:

- Remove the arbitrary cap on net metering.
- Clearly allow for 3rd party financing structures that make solar more cost-effective and accessible to schools and governments buildings.
- Allow on-site solar that enables local governments to save money on their energy bills, create local jobs, and provide educational opportunities for students.

How citizens can take action:

Sign this online petition and let your local elected officials know that your community should have access to the energy savings, local jobs, and climate protection that going solar provides.

<https://www.solarunitedneighbors.org/virginia/take-action/dont-let-appalachian-power-block-solar-on-schools-government-buildings/>

How to learn more:



**Appalachian
Voices**

Chelsea Barnes
chelsea@appvoices.org



**SOLAR UNITED
NEIGHBORS**

Aaron Sutch
aaron@solarunitedneighbors.org



Generation180

www.SolarForAllSchools.org