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## RESOLUTION

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URGING THE CITY ADMINISTRATION TO IMPLEMENT THE SOLARAPP+ TOOL DEVELOPED BY THE NATIONAL RENEWABLE ENERGY LABORATORY TO REVIEW SOLAR INSTALLATION PERMIT APPLICATIONS SEPARATELY FROM THE CITY'S ROBOTIC PROCESS AUTOMATION BUILDING PERMIT APPLICATION SYSTEM.

WHEREAS, residents of the State of Hawai'i ("State") pay among the highest monthly electricity rates in the nation; and

WHEREAS, the State Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism has found that "household electricity burden" – the percentage of household income spent on electricity bills – is one of the key elements contributing to a household's energy insecurity, especially for low-income households; and

WHEREAS, installing solar energy panels is a means by which residents, as well as businesses, can be provided with relief from high energy costs; and

WHEREAS, permitting requirements are a significant cost factor in the installation of solar panels, and lengthy and expensive permitting processes can be an impediment to the implementation of solar energy options; and

WHEREAS, to facilitate consumer adoption of clean energy solutions, the City Council ("Council") enacted Ordinance 20-44, approved on December 23, 2020, which requires expedited permitting procedures for consumer clean energy projects; and

WHEREAS, Ordinance 20-44, among other things, requires the establishment of an internet-based permitting process by which permits required for the operation of a clean energy project are approved or denied within 14 calendar days after the submission of a complete application, subject to certain exceptions; and

WHEREAS, in 2021, the U.S. Department of Energy's National Renewable Energy Laboratory launched the Solar Automated Permit Processing Plus ("SolarAPP+") tool, a free online portal that enables local governments to rapidly approve residential solar installation projects; and

WHEREAS, the SolarAPP+ tool has been adopted by over 130 municipalities within the past four months, processes rooftop solar permits five to 14 times faster than traditional processes, and will soon offer fast permitting for solar hot water systems and electric vehicle chargers; and



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WHEREAS, the SolarAPP+ tool would be provided free for the use of the City and County of Honolulu ("City") and provide fully vetted permit processing approvals, within 48 hours without the City needing additional staff, by automating plan review, permit approval, and project tracking, and standardizing up to 90 percent of standard system plans, as well as providing inspection checklists and final sign-off after installation; and

WHEREAS, the SolarAPP+ tool supports various codes and permits for rooftop photovoltaic systems, residential battery storage, and residential main panel upgrades, which are important for older houses in Hawai'i that may have limited electrical service and cannot support large electrical load items; and

WHEREAS, a White House fact sheet dated January 12, 2022, reported that the SolarAPP+ tool reduced permitting times for residential rooftop solar installations to less than one day; and

WHEREAS, the City Administration recently implemented the new Robotic Process Automation system that automates the online building permit application pre-screening process and potentially reduces the total average processing time for residential building permit applications to 167 days; and

WHEREAS, the Council believes that by utilizing the SolarAPP+ tool, the City Administration may be able to further reduce the permit processing time for solar installation projects and fast-track the implementation of cost-saving solar options for O'ahu households and businesses; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City and County of Honolulu that the City Administration is urged to implement the SolarAPP+ tool developed by the National Renewable Energy Laboratory to review solar installation applications separately from the City's Robotic Process Automation building permit application system; and



**CITY COUNCIL**  
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU  
HONOLULU, HAWAII

No. 22-299

**RESOLUTION**

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that copies of this resolution be transmitted to the Mayor, the Managing Director, and the Director or Acting Director of Planning and Permitting.

INTRODUCED BY:

*A. Fyola*

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DATE OF INTRODUCTION:

**DEC 30 2022**

Honolulu, Hawaii

Councilmembers

**FILED**  
**DEC 30 2023**  
PURSUANT TO ROH Sec. 1-2.5