



Delegated Action of the Executive Director

PROJECT

Text Amendment Regarding Community Renewable Energy Facility Definition and Permitted Use Location - DC Office of Planning

Washington, DC

REFERRED BY

Zoning Commission of the District of Columbia

NCPC FILE NUMBER

ZC 19-04

NCPC MAP FILE NUMBER

00:00(06.00)44892

DETERMINATION

Approval of report to the Zoning Commission of the District of Columbia

REVIEW AUTHORITY

Advisory

per 40 U.S.C. § 8724(a) and DC Code § 2-1006(a)

The Zoning Commission referred an emergency text amendment to the Zoning Regulations that would apply city-wide and facilitate implementation of community solar installations, known as Community Renewable Energy Facilities (CREF). The text amendment both defines the CREFs and identifies which zoning districts they would be permitted. These installations would provide the benefits of solar energy to residents who are not able install systems on their residences. It accomplishes this by allowing members to receive a credit on their electricity bill each month for their share of a solar installation not located on their residence. The District states that community solar installations are a key component of efforts to meet the target of 100% renewable energy by 2032 included in the Clean Energy DC plan to implement the Clean Energy DC Omnibus Act of 2018. As part of these efforts the District Department of Energy and the Environment (DOEE) launched its Solar-for-All program to reduce the electric bills of at least 100,000 District low-income households with high energy burdens by at least 50% prior to December 31, 2032. DOEE has issued \$13 million in grants under the Solar-for-All program for community solar installations which must be completed prior to the end of this fiscal year on September 30, 2019.

The Office of Planning notes as background in the text amendment that "...the Zoning Regulations do not specifically regulate solar arrays as a use, community solar installations have been deemed to fall within the "Basic Utility" use category requiring a special exception to operate. DOEE is concerned that requiring community solar installations to obtain a special exception adds delay and expense and would adversely impact DOEE and the District's achievement of the solar and renewable energy targets of the Clean Energy DC plan by potentially jeopardizing the 22 megawatts of planned community solar projects funded by DOEE's Solar-for-All program."

This map amendment affects several zoning districts citywide by allowing solar energy system as a use. Since no specific locations are identified with the text amendment and the Federal Element Comprehensive Plan includes policies that support the use of alternative energy sources, staff would be supportive of it.

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Pursuant to delegations of authority adopted by the Commission on August 6, 1999 and per 40 U.S.C. § 8724(a) and DC Code § 2-1006(a), I find that the text amendment regarding the Community Renewable Energy Facility definition and its permitted use in various zones will not be inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan or any other federal interests.

// Original Signed //

March 1, 2019

Marcel Acosta
Executive Director

Date