

# Solar Panel Stewardship and Takeback Program

## The problem

Washington's clean energy transition is facing a setback if a provision in a 2017 law intended to boost recycling and proper disposal of solar panels goes into effect in 2025. Beginning July 1, 2025, solar panels may not be sold in Washington unless the manufacturer of those panels has a stewardship plan approved by Ecology. Many solar panel manufacturers missed the July 2024 deadline to submit these plans. While Ecology is working to bring manufacturers into compliance, we believe the majority will continue to disregard the law or decide to stop selling panels into Washington.

The law ([RCW 70A.510.010](#)) establishes a solar panel stewardship and takeback program that requires Washington's solar panel industry to share the responsibility of managing what remains of these units after their intended use is complete. The program would be paid for by manufacturers.

Rather than participating in a takeback program, some manufacturers have chosen to not sell solar panels in Washington. Installer groups and large project developers are worried the law will disrupt the supply of panels available for deployment in Washington.

This concern is echoed by the Department of Commerce, who says a disruption could increase the cost and decrease the availability of panels. This could limit the reach of a new federally funded program focused on installing solar to benefit income qualified households across the state.

Unfacilitated stakeholder meetings identified several issues with the law, but not everyone with solar interests participated. Discussions focused on implementing the current law, rather than seeking workable solutions. Without a clear directive to focus on fixes, there has been a failure to reach consensus on a path forward.

## Ecology's proposal

Ecology is requesting to delay the effective date of the law. This will enable the industry to legally continue operating in the state while fixes are developed.

A facilitated advisory committee including solar panel manufacturers, installers, tribal and local government representatives, and an environmental justice organization, will be established to engage stakeholders, identify concerns with the law, and develop recommendations to overcome setbacks.

The advisory committee will develop recommendations for a convenient, safe, and environmentally sound system for solar panel recycling. In making these recommendations, the committee will consider the potential environmental and health impacts on overburdened communities and vulnerable populations, the equitable distribution of environmental benefits, the reduction of environmental harms, and meaningful access to programs and services.

Work of the advisory committee will culminate with Ecology submitting a report to the legislature in December 2026. This report will include recommendations for the future of the solar program and changes to the solar panel law.

## Why this matters

Washington state has been a leader in the national transition to policies that move America towards 100% clean electricity, capping carbon pollution, and electrifying transportation.

Modifying the law will make the takeback program stronger and remove barriers to achieving the goals established in the Washington Clean Energy Transformation Act ([Chapter 19.405 RCW](#)).

If current law stands, it could impair the solar industry in Washington state. A delay will give Ecology, stakeholders, and all other interested parties the tools and time to resolve the issues with the current law.

## Related information

Read about [Ecology's legislative priorities for 2025](#).



Peter Lyon  
[peter.lyon@ecy.wa.gov](mailto:peter.lyon@ecy.wa.gov)  
360-515-8348



To request an ADA accommodation, contact Ecology by phone at 360-407-6000 or email at [SWMPublications@ecy.wa.gov](mailto:SWMPublications@ecy.wa.gov), or visit <https://ecology.wa.gov/accessibility>. For Relay Service or TTY call 711 or 877-833-6341.