

A bill for an act
relating to energy; establishing a working group; requiring a report; appropriating
money.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA:

Section 1. **SOLAR CITIES WORKING GROUP ESTABLISHED.**

Subdivision 1. Establishment; members. A solar cities working group is
established. Members are appointed jointly by the chairs of the senate and house of
representatives committees with primary jurisdiction over energy policy, and consist of
representatives of at least the following:

(1) cities designated as solar cities under the United States Department of Energy
Solar America Initiative;

(2) a public utility providing electric service to consumers in the cities identified
under clause (1);

(3) one or more businesses providing or intending to provide solar energy installation
services to residential, small business, or small institutional electricity consumers;

(4) one or more businesses providing or intending to provide solar energy installation
services to large commercial, institutional, or industrial electricity consumers;

(5) one or more businesses providing or intending to provide solar thermal
installation services to residential and business customers;

(6) one or more nonprofit organizations providing energy conservation and energy
efficiency services to electricity consumers; and

(7) one or more nonprofit advocacy organizations promoting solar energy.

Subd. 2. Goal; activities. The goal of the solar cities working group is to develop
strategies to accelerate the rate of solar thermal and electric energy installations in all

building types. To achieve that goal, the working group shall undertake the following activities:

(1) identify legal, administrative, financial, and operational barriers to increasing the installation of solar energy, and measures to overcome them;

(2) identify financial and regulatory mechanisms that stimulate the development of solar energy;

(3) identify ways to link solar energy development with energy conservation and energy efficiency strategies and programs;

(4) integrate efforts and initiatives taken by the cities identified in paragraph (a), clause (1), with broader Minnesota efforts and initiatives; and

(5) monitor trends in technologies and costs for solar generation.

Subd. 3. **Reports.** By October 1, 2009, and October 1, 2010, the working group shall submit a report by each date to the Legislative Energy Commission on its activities, including recommendations for increasing the utilization of solar energy in Minnesota.

Sec. 2. **APPROPRIATION.**

\$7,000,000 is appropriated from state energy program funds received under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, Public Law 111-5, to the commissioner of commerce for grants to increase the installation of solar energy projects in Minnesota. At least \$3,500,000 must be used for innovative projects located in the proposed light rail central corridor in cities that have been designated solar cities by the United States Department of Energy. The remainder of the economic stimulus funds allocated for solar energy development under this section must be used for programs to reduce the costs of solar projects statewide. The commissioner shall consult with the working group in developing solar incentive programs for all building types.