**Model Policy 2**

Accompanying Memo

Encouraging the Use of Automated Permitting and Inspection Software to Accelerate Rooftop Solar Permitting

**Purpose**

To reach federal and state clean energy deployments goals, more rooftop solar and storage projects will need to be permitted and installed on homes across America. And yet, despite the need and consumer demand, most local governments have little experience permitting these facilities.

Often, communities have attempted to apply requirements that make little sense in the context of solar, or have struggled with key details around solar permitting, or are further burdened with a large volume of permits to approve.

In part because many state governments have established aggressive clean energy goals, state policy makers have a key role to play in providing guidance and technical support to local governments that are making these permitting decisions.

This model policy encourages “authorities having jurisdiction” (AHJs) such as city, town, and village governments to adopt automated tools that make processing permits easier and more efficient.

Developed by the National Renewable Energy Laboratory in collaboration with code officials, local governments, and solar companies, SolarApp+ was launched to run compliance checks and speed up the permitting of rooftop solar projects.

Therefore, this model policy, to be adopted by state legislatures, defines residential solar and storage projects, and encourages AHJ’s to use SolarApp+ to help streamline solar permitting.

**Provisions Summary**

Definitions

This model legislation includes definitions for “authorities having jurisdiction,” “automated permitting and inspection software,” “residential energy storage systems,” and “residential solar energy systems.”

Other Provisions

Creates a technical and financial assistance program to encourage AHJs to adopt automated permitting software and makes funds available from existing state or federal resources.

Clarifies that AHJs must adopt permitting ordinances that are consistent with the states adopted energy, fire and building codes.

Ensures that applicants can seek variances from permitting ordinances by AHJs.

Limits fees charged by AHJs to the costs of reviewing and approving the permit application.

Prevents AHJs from adopting ordinances unreasonably restricting solar energy systems and residential energy storage systems.