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Cc: Adrian Jones

Subject: Solar Energy Permitting Fees

To the Lawrence City Commission and Building Code Board of Appeals:

I am writing on behalf of the City of Lawrence Sustainability Advisory Board to encourage you to revise the permitting fees for solar energy installations. At a time when low prices for solar prices are prompting more people to consider installing solar panels, we think it would be prudent for the city to further encourage this technology by revising the permitting fees for solar so that they are not an impediment to new development. While we think all permitting fees should fully cover the cost of inspections, in the case of solar, it seems tying the permitting fees to the overall cost of the system quickly become larger than necessary. Unlike some installations, such as plumbing, where the complexity of the installation increases with size (and cost), the complexity of solar electric installations, and their inspections, do not normally increase with size and cost.

At the same time, because most solar energy systems connect to the electric grid, they are also subject to inspection by Westar Energy. Westar inspects all new generation sources that feed onto their electric grid and won't allow bad equipment to be energized. This may suggest some redundancy between the two inspections.

We encourage you to review and adopt best practices. Examples of these can be found at the Database of State Incentives for Renewables and Efficiency (DSIRE) at: <http://www.dsireusa.org/solar/solarpolicyguide/?id=16> and more locally, the Mid-America Regional Council (MARC). MARC's Solar Ready program (http://www.marc.org/environment/energy/solar_ready_kc.html) has looked at best practices for solar energy for cities and counties and put out a document of their recommended best practices, which include flat-fee's for permitting: <http://www.marc.org/environment/energy/assets/BMP%20Process%20Step%202-1%20A%20Standardize%20Permit%20Fees.pdf>

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Scott W. White

Chair, City of Lawrence Sustainability Advisory Board