

New State Bill Aims To Make Solar Power A Reality For Renters

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Homeowners and renters in California may soon be able to access solar or other renewable energy from community based self-generation programs as an alternative to the power grids offered by the state's three major public utilities. That's the goal of [SB 843](#), a bill currently being debated in the California Assembly.

The state's major public utilities – San Diego Gas & Electric, Pacific Gas & Electric and Southern California Edison – would face new competition from small independent renewable energy producers at the local level if the Bill is passed. Renewable energy producers would be permitted to generate no more than 20 megawatts each, but in doing so would not be regulated as public utilities merely because they are engaged in developing, producing, delivering, participating in, or selling interests in, a community renewable energy facility.

Homeowners and renters acquiring energy from a Community-Based Renewable Energy Self-Generation Program would receive a credit on their utility bill to offset all or a portion of their electricity usage.

The current draft of the Bill limits the program to renewable energy producers located within the service territory of an electrical corporation having 100,000 or more service connections.

Any homeowner or renter within such an area could benefit if they take part. Many potential users are currently unable to access renewable energy because, for example, they (a) rent and don't own their rooftop, (b) can't finance rooftop solar installation or (c) don't receive enough sunlight. [\[Bill Summary\]](#)

Pacific Gas & Electric and Southern California Edison have announced opposition to SB 843 and argue that the cost of energy from their own grids may rise for those who don't take part in the program.

San Diego Gas & Electric supports the bill.

Still, it remains to be seen what impact SB 843 will have on the public utilities, if enacted, and whether the Bill ushers in a new era of renewable energy use by homeowners and renters in the state.

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