

COUNTY OF JEFFERSON

Local Law Intro. No. 1 of the Year 2026

**A LOCAL LAW REQUIRING BUILDING PERMITS FOR ALL COMMERCIAL
RENEWABLE ENERGY CONVERSION SYSTEMS**

By Legislator: _____

BE IT ENACTED by the Board of Legislators of the County of Jefferson as follows:

SECTION 1. TITLE

This Local Law shall be known as “**A LOCAL LAW REQUIRING BUILDING PERMITS FOR ALL COMMERCIAL RENEWABLE ENERGY CONVERSION SYSTEMS.**”

SECTION 2. DEFINITIONS

As used in this law, the following terms shall have the meanings indicated:

Accessory Facilities or Equipment: Any structure and other equipment other than the Renewable Energy Conversion System, related to the use and purpose of reviving, collecting, storing or distributing energy from such a system, located on or associated with the Renewable Energy Conversion System.

Applicant: Owner/Operator/Developer (with authorization from the landowner) of a Renewable Energy Conversion Device/System/Farm.

Building Code: NYS Building Code as currently in effect and as the same may hereinafter be amended.

Code Enforcement Officer: Code Enforcement Officer, including any building inspectors, appointed by the Director of the Jefferson County Fire Prevention and Building Code Office (who shall also be a Code Enforcement Officer).

Permit: A permit issued pursuant to this law granting the holder the right to install, construct and Operate a Renewable Energy Conversion System or its Accessory Facilities or Equipment.

Renewable Energy Conversion System: A system that converts naturally replenishing resources into usable energy, such as, but not limited to, Solar Energy Conversion Systems and Wind Energy Conversion Systems/Wind Turbines.

Solar Energy Conversion System: The components and subsystems required to convert solar energy into electric energy suitable for use. The term includes, but is not limited to, Solar Panels and Solar Energy Equipment.

Uniform Code: New York State Uniform Fire Prevention and Building Code, as currently in effect and as the same may hereafter be amended (19 NYCRR 1201 *et seq.*).

Wind Energy Conversion System/Wind Turbine: A machine that converts the kinetic energy in the wind into a usable form of mechanical or electrical energy (commonly known as a “wind turbine” or “windmill”). The Wind Energy Conversion System includes all parts of the system, including but not limited to the tower, the concrete platform, turbine housing and associated control, electronics and equipment. The turbine may be on a horizontal or vertical axis, rotor or propeller.

All definitions contained in the NYS Building Code, including, but not limited to, renewable energy conversion systems, are incorporated herein by reference and shall apply with respect to the administration and enforcement of this Local Law.

SECTION 3. PURPOSE AND INTENT

A. The purpose of this Local Law is to provide building permits for the construction and operation of Renewable Energy Conversion Systems located within the County of Jefferson, and to regulate their reasonable installation and construction conditions by permit in order to protect public health and safety.

B. The County of Jefferson is committed to the development of renewable energy resources in an effort to promote green energy and to reduce its carbon footprint. Renewable energy systems in Jefferson County, which when converted to electricity, will reduce dependence on nonrenewable energy sources, and decrease pollutants that are traditionally associated with the production of electricity from conventional carbon energy sources.

C. Conversion of energy to electricity requires the construction and operation of systems, consisting of one or more solar arrays, wind/water turbines, battery energy storage, and other accessory structures and buildings, including substations, meteorological towers, electrical infrastructure, transmission lines and other appurtenant structures and facilities directly associated with measuring, converting and transmitting energy produced for electric generation.

D. The construction of Renewable Energy Conversion Systems involves the installation of engineered structures and accessory facilities. Potential failure of these structures and systems, which can adversely affect the health and safety of workers, property owners and the general public, can be minimized by a permit system and procedure which requires periodic inspections to ensure proper installation, construction, maintenance and appropriate safety measures during all processes.

E. The County of Jefferson finds and declares that the impact of Renewable Energy Conversion Systems upon the health and safety of the residents of and visitors to Jefferson County necessitates implementation of building permits for all commercial renewable energy conversion systems.

SECTION 4. APPLICABILITY

A. By enactment of this local law, the County of Jefferson declares that a building permit shall be required and issued prior to the construction and operation of Renewable Energy Conversion System(s). The provisions of this Local Law shall apply to any building or equipment located in Jefferson County and where the town or village where the property is located has relinquished to the County the responsibility of enforcing and administering the Uniform Code pursuant to Section 1202.1 of the Uniform Code.

B. This local law is separate from and is in addition to any Federal, State, Local, Town or Village law and/or regulation pertaining to zoning and the location and placement of Renewable Energy Conversion Systems within the County of Jefferson.

SECTION 5. PERMITS

A. No Renewable Energy Conversion System shall be constructed, reconstructed, and/or altered for operation in the County of Jefferson without a permit issued by the County of Jefferson through its Fire Prevention and Building Code Office as provided under this law.

B. A permit under this law shall not be required for mechanical, non-electrical wind turbines utilized for applicant's onsite agricultural activities.

C. A permit under this law shall also not be required for those Renewable Energy Conversion Systems whose end use is limited to the onsite structure where the system is located, to include residential, commercial or agricultural use.

SECTION 6. PERMITTING PROCEDURE

A. Prior to the issuance of a building permit, the Applicant shall have complied with any local municipalities' zoning and planning board procedures and approvals, and shall comply with any other Federal, State, Local government laws, regulations and applicable processes. The applicant shall provide proof of compliance of the above to the Code Enforcement Officer with submission of the permit application.

B. Simultaneously with submission of the application required herein, the applicant shall pay the permit fee established by the Jefferson County Board of Legislators by Resolution, or as may be amended by Resolution of said Board from time to time.

C. Upon review of the application, design documents, specifications, applicable zoning and planning board approvals, if required, together with any other documents the Code Enforcement Officer may request, and the payment of the permit fee, the Code Enforcement Officer may issue a valid permit for a period of up to three (3) years or until the project is completed, whichever event occurs first. If the Renewable Energy Conversion System is not completed within said period of time, the Applicant must re-apply and submit a request for renewal of the permit for an additional period of time to be determined by the Code Enforcement

Officer. The Applicant must pay an additional permit fee upon such re-application/renewal in accordance with the permit fee in effect at that time.

D. The County of Jefferson designates the onsite engineers of the owner/operator/developer and the third party inspection agents employed by the owner/operator/developer as "special inspectors". Such special inspectors are responsible for geotechnical evaluations, inspections of reinforcement and concrete slump and placement, tower foundation anchorage, structural erection of the tower, certification of all welded/bolt connections, certification of electrical, mechanical, life safety and final commissioning of the Renewable Energy Conversion System and associated equipment and facilities. Said certifications shall be submitted to the Code Enforcement Officer.

E. If at any time during the permitting process the owner/operator/developer fails to abide by the procedures and technical building specifications of the Code Enforcement Officer, the owner/operator/developer may be subject to a Stop Work Order issued by the Code Enforcement Officer.

F. Upon completion of the project and prior to distribution of energy to the Grid, the special inspector(s) employed by the owner/operator/developer shall certify in writing to the Code Enforcement Officer that the foundation, structural components, and equipment are all sound and meet the manufacturers' recommended specifications and warranties.

G. Upon completion of the project and prior to distribution of energy to the Grid, the special inspector(s) employed by the owner/operator/developer shall certify in writing to the Code Enforcement Officer, that the electrical systems(s) is in compliance with accepted electrical engineering practices and pursuant to the provisions of the National Electrical Code as adopted by New York State.

H. Upon completion of the project and prior to distribution of energy to the Grid, the special inspector(s) employed by the owner/operator/developer shall certify in writing to the Code Enforcement Officer that systems are compliant with manufacturers' installation recommendations and design specifications.

I. Upon receipt of any and all required certifications from the special inspector(s), the Code Enforcement Officer shall make a final visit, and if all is in satisfactory condition and compliance, shall issue a Certificate of Compliance.

SECTION 7. SEVERABILITY

If any clause, sentence, paragraph, subdivision, section or part of this law shall be adjudged by a court of competent jurisdiction to be invalid or unconstitutional, such order or judgement shall not affect, impair or invalidate the remainder thereof, but shall be confined to its operation to the clause, sentence, paragraph, subdivision, section or part of this law, or in its application to the person, individual, corporation, firm, partnership, entity or circumstance in which such order or judgement shall be rendered.

SECTION 8. EFFECTIVE DATE

This local law shall take effect immediately upon its being duly filed in the office of the Secretary of State of the State of New York in accordance with Section 27 of the Municipal Home Rule Law.

Seconded by Legislator: _____