

Vector Engineers Addresses “Bottleneck” in Booming Solar Energy Industry

The Vector Engineers Solar Service Division, through proprietary processes for preparing Residential Certification Letters, eases a persistent source of delays in the residential solar sales and installation cycle.

(Sandy, UT) November 10, 2015—According to a recent report from the Solar Energy Industry Association (SEIA), during the second quarter of 2015, residential solar installations in the U.S. grew 70% above the same quarter in 2014. With over 135,000 installations in the first half of 2015, nearly 784,000 U.S. homes and businesses have gone solar.¹ This growth rate is expected to continue for the foreseeable future, notes Roger Alworth, Principal Engineer at Vector Engineers, a leading [full-service structural engineering company](#). “The 2015 report from the Energy Information Administration,” says Alworth, “projects renewable energy production to grow faster than any other power source through 2040.”²

The solar business is maturing and evolving from an enthusiast- and craft-driven activity to a competitive, well-run, sophisticated industry. “There are companies installing hundreds, if not thousands, of systems every month,” says Alworth. “Every step in the process is being scrutinized for areas where time and cost can be reduced.”

A chronic source of delay in the process—and thus additional cost—has to do with documentation required for building permits. Once a contract for a solar system has been signed, a detailed site survey is made to determine exactly where and how the system will be installed on the home and connected to the grid. When the survey is completed, engineering drawings are created; the next step is to submit the drawings and a building permit application letter to the local housing authority.

Before that can happen, however, a structural engineering firm licensed in the state where the system is to be installed is often required to review the engineering drawings and issue a Residential Solar Certification Letter. This letter, which is required in most building jurisdictions in the United States, must be submitted to the “Authority Having Jurisdiction” or “AHJ” (often the building inspection department) along with the building permit application and the plans. “The certification letter,” says Alworth, “can be a significant bottleneck. There are companies that have had to wait a week or two—or even three—to get their letter prepared. Meanwhile, equipment and manpower are tied up, and the project is frozen in place.”

Alworth and his colleagues regard this as completely unnecessary. Vector Engineers—with employees licensed in all 50 states, as well as Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia—has developed internal processes that enable the company to deliver rapid turnaround on Residential Solar Certification Letters. Clients can submit materials by FTP, Dropbox, or email, and receive most letters back in a single business day—at a price significantly lower than the industry average.

“Residential and commercial solar are going to play an important role in this country’s future,” says Alworth. “We are committed to this industry, and we are devoted to helping our clients succeed.”

About Vector Structural Engineering:

Founded in 2002, Vector Structural Engineering, LLC is a full-service structural engineering firm with over 2,000 clients throughout the United States. The company’s areas of expertise include multi-family, residential, commercial, telecom, bridges, industrial, and solar. Services include the design of new structures, the analysis and redesign of retrofit and repairs to existing structures, as well as residential and commercial solar structural certifications. Expert witness experience includes structural defects, foundation settlement, building code analysis, and soil and structure stabilization. Vector’s team includes thirty engineers, a full drafting division, and support staff. The company is headquartered in Sandy, Utah, with satellite offices in Layton, Utah, St. George, Utah, and Tustin, California.

1. “U.S. PV Market Surpasses 20 GW Milestone, On Pace to Grow 24% Over 2014,” Solar Energy Industry Association U.S. Solar Market Insight, updated September 9, 2015.

<http://www.seia.org/research-resources/us-solar-market-insight>

2. “Annual Energy Outlook 2015,” U.S. Energy Information Administration, April 2015.

[http://www.eia.gov/forecasts/aeo/pdf/0383\(2015\).pdf](http://www.eia.gov/forecasts/aeo/pdf/0383(2015).pdf)

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