

STAFF REPORT

City Council Business Item

DATE: January 16, 2024

TO: City Council

FROM: Katey Schmidt, Community Development Department

THROUGH: Merritt Perry, City Manager

Subject: **Introduction and First Reading of *Ordinance 2024-768*, Amending Title 15 of the City of Fortuna Municipal Code by Streamlining the Permit Process for Small Residential Rooftop Solar Energy Systems**

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Conduct first reading, by title only, of Ordinance 2024-768 which amends Title 15 - Buildings and Construction of the Fortuna Municipal Code, adding Chapter 15.67.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Under State of California Government Code Section 65850.5(g), local municipalities are required to adopt an ordinance creating an expedited and streamlined permitting process for small residential rooftop solar energy systems that substantially conforms to the California Solar Permitting Guidebook of the Governor's Office of Planning and Research. The SPG was developed through a collaborative effort managed by the Governor's Office of Planning and Research that included solar industry trade groups, state agencies, and other stakeholders.

In accordance with this mandate, the proposed ordinance establishes a streamlined process through amendments to the City of Fortuna Municipal Code provisions relating to the administration of Building Code Regulations. Required streamlining features include use of standardized forms available online; the ability to accept electronic submittals and the consolidating of required inspections into a single comprehensive inspection.

BACKGROUND:

In 2014 the state Legislature passed Assembly Bill 2188 (AB2188) mandating that cities and counties adopt an expedited, streamlined review and permitting process for small residential rooftop solar systems.

In July 2023, the City launched the OpenGov online permitting portal in conjunction with the SolarApp+ pre-approval portal. The SolarApp+ portal conducts an automated permitting review for safety and code compliance following a pre-approval checklist. Projects with SolarApp+ pre-approval will be automatically issued a permit through the OpenGov permit portal, eliminating internal review times. While the City's current process utilizing these portals and pre-approval checklist conforms with the requirements of AB 2188, this ordinance codifies the city's processes and provides conformance with the State's streamlining requirements including electronic submittal, pre-approval checklist, and expedited permit issuance.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no immediate financial impact or budget action necessary as a result of the recommended action.

RECOMMENDED COUNCIL ACTION:

1. Receive staff report;
2. Open Public Comment;
3. Close Public Comment; and
4. Motion to hold the first reading of *Ordinance 2024-768*, read by title only and continue public hearing to February 5, 2024 to conduct the second reading.

ATTACHMENTS:

- *Ordinance 2024-768, An Ordinance of the City Council of the City of Fortuna Adding Chapter 15.67 to Title 15 of the Fortuna Municipal Code to Provide Procedures for Expediting Permitting Processing for Small Residential Rooftop Solar Systems and Determining the Ordinance to be Exempt from CEQA*
- Solar Permit Pre-Approval Checklist