

HB 300: Solar Technology Trust Fund

Legislative Rubric from Science for Georgia

HB 300 makes solar power facilities responsible for clean-up and restoration of land after the decommissioning of a solar facility on leased land. HB300 also provides financial assurances, determined by a third-party professional engineer licensed in the state, to landowners that the solar power facilities will be properly removed, and their property restored, when the solar power facility lease is terminated. HB300 was introduced 02/08/2023 and crossed over to the Senate on 2/12/2024.

Criteria	Variables			
Impact Who is going to be impacted? Is it equitable? List stakeholders & opinions.	Negative		Positive	
	<p>The <u>stakeholders</u> affected by this bill are landowners in Georgia, solar power facilities in Georgia, Georgia utility companies, installers and project developers, state licensed engineers, community members, environmental groups, the Department of Revenue, and The House Committee on Energy, Utilities, and Telecommunications. Most stakeholders are positively affected by House Bill 300. Landowners benefit from not having the financial burden of clearing and cleaning out unusable technology. The local environment benefits from being restored. The exception being those who would be financially responsible for the removal of the solar power technologies that are being decommissioned on leased land.</p>			
Reach Does it reach its target audience?	0 - No impact on target audience.	1 - Impacts narrow segment.	2 - Impacts majority; exceptions.	3 - Impacts entire target audience
	<p>House Bill 300 reaches its target audience by keeping solar power facilities and utility companies accountable for the environmental impacts they pose on leased land.</p>			
Scientific Merit Does it utilize scientific research accurately?	YES - this does follow scientific research accurately. Here's why....		NO - this does not present scientific research accurately.	
	<p>Solar panel technology can be reused, refurbished, or recycled at specific landfills capable of processing potentially hazardous materials. <u>The Environmental Protection Agency designed a test called the Toxic Characteristic Leaching Procedure (TCLP) to determine the risk of hazardous substances leaching into the landfills, some older solar technology does not pass this test making proper removal and disposal of materials important to keeping the local environment protected and safe to community members.</u> House Bill 300 does follow scientific research accurately by requiring the solar facilities to properly clear, clean, and restore the land they leased for solar use. Companies must also restore the land to acceptable environmental levels, meaning they must remove the foundation that held the equipment and fill the cavities with the same soil, or the same type of soil found on the landowner's property. Compacting in soil and revegetating the area helps with erosion and dust control, which are evidence-based land restoration practices and provide long-term benefits to landowners, the community, and the environment.</p>			

<p>Financial Feasibility Is it financially feasible? or does this have burdensome finances (higher taxes, future costs, etc)?</p>	0 - Extremely high costs	1 - Expensive but can be done	2 - Slight financial burden	3 - No financial burden
<p>House Bill 300 is financially feasible, but holds a slight financial burden, because solar power facilities and utility companies carry the costs associated with cleanup and restoration. However, if the solar power facilities who leased the land are unable or unwilling to clear, clean, and restore the land the Department of Revenue would be financially responsible to the landowners. The Center for Rural Affairs created an estimated cost for a sample list of decommissioning tasks for a 2 MW solar installation. <u>The total cost to decommission the site is estimated to be \$60,200 total or a total of \$98,900 after 20 years with an estimated 2.5% inflation rate.</u></p>				
<p>Political Feasibility Level of opposition and partisan disagreement.</p>	0 - Majority disagreed, regardless of party.	1 – Split along party lines	2 - Minimal Opposition	3 - Complete consensus (zero to five 'Nays').
<p>This Bill is sponsored by members of the Republican party and was reported favorably upon by the House Committee on 02/07/24.</p>				
<p>Measurable Metrics? We recommend looking at these 3 metrics. Is the data available or being measured?</p>	0 - no data	1 - some data / not accessible	2 - most data / somewhat accessible	3 - complete transparency
<p>Information about Georgia’s Solar use is compiled and tracked by <u>Solar Energy Industries Association (SEIA)</u> making it accessible to the public. SEIA has data current through Q3 of 2023 on the amounts of solar installed in the state, the percentage of state’s electricity from solar, number of solar jobs, solar companies, growth projection and ranking, and the number of installations. <u>The Database of State Incentives for Renewables & Efficiency (DSIRE)</u> provides information on renewable energy organizations in Georgia as well as information on financial incentives and regulatory policies.</p>				