

Draft Solar Ordinance

New Hampshire permits the regulation of solar energy systems by municipalities and supports solar energy system usage by statute. Freedom fosters good stewardship of the environment and fully adopts the state regulations pertaining to solar energy systems, specifically RSA 672:1, I and III-a, which encourages access to sunlight and prohibits unreasonable limits imposed on solar energy systems by municipal zoning powers. Therefore, Freedom will permit rooftop solar installations by right in all zoning districts.

Because Freedom recognizes the importance of solar energy systems and the need to balance state solar energy regulations with the wishes of the community to “retain the rural character and small-town feel”, the following restrictions are placed on solar energy systems as authorized by the state:

- Location
 - All ground-mount and pole-mount systems shall be located in inconspicuous locations, such as the side and rear yards, low to the ground and screened to limit visibility
- Buffers
 - All solar systems shall have a reasonable visual buffer providing screening along public ways and from abutting views
- Setbacks
 - All solar systems shall comply with building setback requirements from lot lines for the entire system – including the panels
- Lighting
 - All solar systems lighting shall be minimal, limited to access and safety, downcast and shielded from abutting properties

If property owners or residents wish to install a ground or pole mount system, they must come to the planning board for a conditional use permit that shows they have met the conditions listed above.

Decommissioning

Solar systems shall be deemed to be abandoned if operations have discontinued for more than 6 months without written consent of the municipality (such as for reasons beyond the control of the owner). An abandoned system shall be removed and the site restored within 6 months of abandonment by the owner.