



## 2. ENERGY POLICY: Bipartisan trio of senators draft new solar bill (06/07/2011)

**Katie Howell, E&E reporter**

A bipartisan trio of senators yesterday floated a new measure that would boost the use of solar power in the United States.

The [legislation](#) from Sens. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.), John Boozman (R-Ark.) and Jeff Bingaman (D-N.M.) would set a goal to power 10 million homes and businesses with solar power by 2020, encourage installation of solar energy systems and help reduce the cost of installing solar power.

"This legislation will make it more affordable for families and businesses to install solar, by helping communities reduce the costs associated with solar energy permitting," Sanders said in a statement. "This bill also sets strong targets for American solar energy production, to ensure we compete vigorously with China and Europe for solar energy jobs."

Specifically, the measure aims to achieve an Energy Department goal of making solar cost-competitive with conventional energy technologies. That goal, as stated in DOE's new SunShot program, is \$1 per watt ([E&ENews PM](#), Feb. 4). The new measure would also provide grants to communities to help lower the cost of energy permitting and reward communities that have adopted common policies on solar permits.

"A simplified permitting process will make solar energy more affordable," Boozman said.

The measure would authorize \$50 million in spending each year from 2012 through 2016, but it would use an existing authorization under a broad 2007 energy law. Boozman added that the measure is fully offset.

The legislation so far enjoys the support of the Solar Energy Industries Association, the National League of Cities and the League of Conservation Voters.

Sanders and Boozman are chairman and ranking member of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee's Green Jobs and New Economy Subcommittee. Bingaman is chairman of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee.

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