SENATE COMMITTEE ON HOUSING
Senator Jesse Arreguín, Chair
2025 - 2026 Regular

Bill No:	AB 2612	**Hearing Date:**	6/24/2026
Author:	Schultz		
Version:	5/18/2026 Amended		
Urgency:	No	**Fiscal:**	Yes
Consultant:	Hank Brady		

SUBJECT: Building standards: qualified plug-in photovoltaic systems

DIGEST: This bill permits the California Building Standards Commission (BSC) to adopt, approve, codify, and publish building energy standards for building electrical circuit features to enable a qualified plug-in photovoltaic (PV) system to function as an energy source within the electrical circuit of single-family residential dwelling, multiunit residential dwelling, or nonresidential development. This bill also directs the BSC to commence this update with the first triennial edition of the California Building Standards Code (Title 24 of the California Code of Regulations), adopted after June 1, 2031.

ANALYSIS:

Existing law:

1) Authorizes the BSC to approve and adopt building standards. Every three years, BSC, in coordination with relevant state agencies, undertakes rulemaking to revise and update the California Building Standards Code (Title 24 of the California Code of Regulations). These building codes serve as the basis for the design and construction of buildings in California.

2) Prohibits the BSC and any other adopting agency, from October 1, 2025, until June 1, 2031, from considering, approving, or adopting any proposed building standards affecting residential units, with limited exceptions. Prohibits a city or county from making changes or modifications to building standards affecting residential units, including to green building standards, from October 1, 2025 until June 1, 2031, with limited exceptions. Requires BSC to reject a modification or change to any building standard affecting a residential unit filed by the governing body of a city or county, from October 1, 2025, until June 1, 2031, with limited exceptions.

This bill:

1) Defines "qualified plug-in PV system" to mean a device that meets all of the following conditions:

   a) It is designed to be connected to a building's electrical system through a standard electrical outlet;

   b) It is intended to offset the customer's on-site electricity consumption;

   c) It meets the standards of the most recent version of the National Electrical Code, as published by the National Fire Protection Association, and of the California Electrical Code, as specified; and,

   d) It is certified as a plug-in photovoltaic system by the Underwriters Laboratories as specified.

2) Authorizes BSC, beginning with the first triennial addition of the California Building Standards Code adopted after January 1, 2031, to adopt, approve, codify, and publish building energy standards for building electrical circuit features to enable a qualified plug-in PV system to function as an energy source within the electrical circuit of a single-family residential dwelling, multi-unit residential dwelling, or nonresidential development constructed after the adoption of the first triennial edition of the California Building Standards Code after June 1, 2031.

3) Requires BSC and the Department Housing and Community Development (HCD) to do all the following in the process of developing building standards relative to a qualified plug in PV system:

   a) Consult with interested parties, including, but not limited to, the California Energy Commission (CEC), electrical safety standard setting bodies, photovoltaic and battery equipment manufacturers, commercial building and apartment owners, and the building industry;

   b) Invite the participation of the public at large in the development of those building standards through open consensus-based processes;

   c) Propose new construction building electrical standards that allow a qualified plug-in photovoltaic system with appropriate grid protective functions and rapid shutdown features to function as an energy source for a building's electrical circuit by connecting to a standard alternating current electrical outlet; and,

d) Propose building circuit design features to allow a qualified plug-in photovoltaic system to provide limited backup power functions during outages.

Background

Building Standards. The California Building Standards Law establishes the process for adopting state building standards by the BSC. Statewide building standards are intended to provide uniformity in building across the state. The BSC's duties include the following: receiving proposed building standards from state agencies for consideration in each triennial and intervening building code adoption cycle; reviewing and approving building standards submitted by state agencies; adopting building standards for state buildings where no other state agency is authorized by law; and publishing the approved building standards in the California Building Standards Code.

Most building standards currently in use in California are developed and vetted at the national level every three years by technical organizations, academics, and trade associations that develop national consensus standards, which are then incorporated into the International Building Code (IBC), the national model code used by most US jurisdictions. At the state level, state agencies with authority over specified occupancies then review the IBC and amend as necessary for California's specific needs. There are approximately 20 state agencies that develop building standards and propose them for adoption to the BSC.

After the proposal of building standards by state agencies, the standards undergo a public vetting process. A code advisory committee composed of experts in a particular scope of code reviews the proposed standards, followed by public review. The proposing agency considers feedback and may then amend the standards and re-submit them to the BSC for consideration. BSC reviews and adopts the standards and files them with the Secretary of State for codification and publishing, and there is a 180-day period during which local agencies file modifications and changes to the state codes (though they are not limited to this window). The new codes then take effect January 1 of the subsequent year following publication. Updates and changes to building standards are adopted on two timelines: through the triennial code adoption cycle which occurs every three years. Regulatory activities for each cycle begin over two years before the effective date of the codes.

AB 130 (Committee on Budget, Chapter 22, Statutes of 2025) imposed a six-year moratorium on the proposal or adoption of new state building standards and modifications to building standards affecting residential units (new and existing) from October 1, 2025 until June 1, 2031.

Comments

1) *Author's statement.* "AB 2612 (Schultz) aims to expand access to affordable solar energy for Californians who have historically been excluded from rooftop solar benefits — particularly renters, apartment dwellers, and low-income households. The bill directs the California Building Standards Commission to develop and adopt mandatory building standards that would allow portable, plug-in solar generation devices (small solar panels that connect directly to a standard electrical outlet) to safely function as an energy source within residential and nonresidential electrical systems. By establishing safety certifications and circuit standards for these devices, the bill seeks to give renters and multifamily residents a practical, low-cost way to generate their own clean energy onsite, reduce their electricity bills, and improve energy resilience — without requiring the permanent rooftop solar installations that have long been out of reach for non-homeowners."

2) *California Building Codes.* California's Building Standards Code has 12 parts. Each covers a different discipline (such as mechanical, plumbing, electrical, energy, or fire), and each part has both a proposing agency (which drafts standards) and an adopting agency (which formally and lawfully approves them). Addressing how plug-in solar products interact with electrical circuits would fall under Part 3 – the California Electrical Code. Under this section and specifically for residential electrical standards, HCD is the proposing agency and BSC is the adopting agency. Other agencies, such as the CEC, may participate in an advisory capacity. Recent legislation delayed any adoption of new building codes (with some exceptions) until June 1, 2031, for residential units. Development of relevant building codes for nonresidential units remains ongoing. For example, the CEC adopts new building energy efficiency standards every three years, and standards become effective one year after their adoption. The 2025 Energy Codes went into effect January 1, 2026, and the CEC is already in development on their 2028 Energy Codes.

3) *Plug-in Photovoltaic System.* Plug-in solar, small photovoltaic systems are small, portable solar panels, typically under 2 kilowatts that can be plugged directly into a wall outlet to offset a portion of a households energy consumption. These devices have become popular in Europe and are gaining popularity in the United States as simple, inexpensive options for reducing energy costs. Plug-in photovoltaic systems can be mounted on fences or on balconies and can be moved from one residence to the next, an attractive option for renters. These systems do not power an entire house like rooftop solar, but can offset consumption.

This bill allows new building electrical codes to be established for plug-in solar systems to safely function as an energy source by ensuring compatibility with electrical circuits. The goal of this bill is to ensure that plug-in solar systems are able to safely connect to a building's electrical system, providing the user of the product with the benefits of a distributed energy resource.

4) *Future proofing?* This bill does not establish safety standards or direct the appropriate state agency to adopt safety standards for these devices. The focus of this bill is on updates to building codes for the electrical circuit changes needed for safe plug-in solar use. If the new codes are established, they will apply only to new construction. This means that there will be older buildings without adequate protection for plug-in solar products. Moreover, the building standards called for in this bill cannot be adopted until after June 1, 2031, as a result of recently passed legislation that prohibited any new residential building standards codes from being adopted. Because plug-in solar products are already commercially available and the technology is rapidly evolving, this bill is unlikely to meaningfully address the safety concerns surrounding these products in the near term. It is plausible that by 2031, when the requirements in this bill would go into effect, these plug-in solar products will be mainstream.

5) *Amendments.* The author identified a typographical error in the bill that specifies that HCD shall propose "building energy standards," rather than "building standards.: Due to timing the author was not able to amend the bill to correct this issue before committee. ***The Committee may wish to adopt this author's amendment.***

Related/Prior Legislation

SB 868 (Wiener, 2026) —would exempt portable solar devices from state law and electric utility rules regarding requirements to connect to the electrical distribution system, known as interconnection. *This bill is pending in the Assembly Appropriations Committee.*

AB 130 (Committee on Budget, Chapter 22, Statutes of 2025) — prohibits the BSC and any other adopting agency, from October 1, 2025, until June 1, 2031, from considering, approving, or adopting any proposed building standards affecting residential units, with limited exceptions. Prohibits a city or county from making changes or modifications to building standards affecting residential units, including to green building standards, from October 1, 2025 until June 1, 2031, with limited exceptions. Requires BSC to reject a modification or change to any building standard affecting a residential unit filed by the governing body of a city or county, from October 1, 2025, until June 1, 2031, with limited exceptions.

FISCAL EFFECT: Appropriation: No Fiscal Com.: Yes Local: No

POSITIONS: (Communicated to the committee before noon on Wednesday, June 17th, 2026.)

SUPPORT:

Advanced Energy United
California Apartment Association

OPPOSITION:

None received.

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