



KING COUNTY

1200 King County Courthouse
516 Third Avenue
Seattle, WA 98104

Signature Report

September 27, 2011

Motion 13566

Proposed No. 2011-0360.2

Sponsors Phillips and von Reichbauer

1 A MOTION relating to solar energy; requesting the
2 executive to review the renewable energy system cost
3 recovery program and provide a report to the council on
4 options for the county to participate in community solar
5 projects as part of the renewable energy system cost
6 recovery program under RCW 82.16.110, 82.16.120,
7 82.16.130 and 82.16.140; and requesting the executive
8 develop options to protect solar access by January 15,
9 2012.

10 WHEREAS, King County's Growth Management Comprehensive Plan
11 recommends that the county seek to reduce energy use and greenhouse gas emissions
12 from all facets of its operations and foster the development and increased use of clean,
13 renewable and alternative fuels and energy technologies, and

14 WHEREAS, King County's Growth Management Comprehensive Plan policies
15 E-208, F-316 and F-317 specifically encourage the use of solar energy both at King
16 County facilities and in the community, and

17 WHEREAS, producing renewable energy can also reduce greenhouse gas
18 emissions, and

19 WHEREAS, despite a rainy climate, solar energy in the Northwest has proven to
20 be a viable energy option, and

21 WHEREAS, promoting solar energy can encourage new energy technologies and
22 green jobs that support a sustainable economy and energy independence, and

23 WHEREAS, solar access is the availability or access to unobstructed, direct
24 sunlight, and

25 WHEREAS, one of the barriers to solar installation is a lack of solar access
26 protection from development on neighboring properties, and

27 WHEREAS, at the local level, communities use many different mechanisms to
28 protect solar access, including solar access ordinances, development guidelines requiring
29 proper street orientation, zoning ordinances that contain building height restrictions and
30 solar permits, and

31 WHEREAS the 2008 Growth Management Comprehensive Plan Policy F-316
32 establishes that King County should study measures to protect solar access and
33 implement best practices in this area, and

34 WHEREAS, Washington state established the renewable energy system cost
35 recovery program in RCW 82.16.110, 82.16.120, 82.16.130 and 82.16.140 that
36 authorizes an incentive payment to help offset the costs associated with the purchase and
37 use of renewable energy systems located in Washington state that produce electricity, and

38 WHEREAS, the concept of a community solar project was added to the state's
39 renewable energy system cost recovery program in 2009 in order to expand local solar
40 energy projects and encourage a broader participation in the development of solar energy,
41 and

42 WHEREAS, the expansion of the energy system cost recovery program allowed
43 for the formation of community solar project ventures so individuals could pool resources
44 and install solar panels on local public facilities that might have better access to full
45 sunlight, and

46 WHEREAS, community solar projects allow individuals, regardless of whether
47 they own property, to own all or part of a solar energy system that generates up to
48 seventy-five kilowatts of electricity and receive incentive payments, and

49 WHEREAS, solar systems manufactured in Washington state receive a higher
50 incentive payment, and

51 WHEREAS, the incentive payments offered for the energy generated by
52 community solar projects are some of highest in the world and can thus benefit citizen
53 investors and participating local governments, and

54 WHEREAS, the incentive payments authorized under RCW 82.16.110,
55 82.16.120, 82.16.130 and 82.16.140 expire June 30, 2020, and

56 WHEREAS, community solar projects are an exciting opportunity for local
57 governments to participate in the expansion of solar energy because the program calls for
58 the placement of the solar energy system on the property owned by a cooperating local
59 government and also allows for the cooperating local government entity that owns the
60 property on which the solar energy system is located to also be a member of the company
61 that owns the solar system, and

62 WHEREAS, Seattle City Light has launched the first community solar installation
63 in King County, to be installed in Jefferson park in Seattle, and

64 WHEREAS, King County owns land and buildings throughout the county which
65 may be good candidates for community solar projects, and

66 WHEREAS, community solar projects offer many opportunities; further analysis
67 is needed to determine the most effective way for King County to participate in the
68 community solar projects envisioned in RCW 82.16.110, 82.16.120, 82.16.130 and
69 82.16.140;

70 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT MOVED by the Council of King County:

71 A. The executive is requested to review the renewable energy system cost
72 recovery program established under RCW 82.16.110, 82.16.120, 82.16.130 and
73 82.16.140 and provide a report to the council by January 15, 2012, on options for King
74 County to participate in community solar projects as authorized under RCW 82.16.110,
75 82.16.120, 82.16.130 and 82.16.140. The report shall be filed in the form of a paper
76 original and an electronic copy with the clerk of the council, who shall forward electronic
77 copies to all councilmembers; and

78 B. The executive is requested to develop options to protect solar access for
79 consideration in the 2012 Comprehensive Plan Update by March 1, 2012.
80


Motion 13566 was introduced on 8/22/2011 and passed by the Metropolitan King
County Council on 9/26/2011, by the following vote:

Yes: 8 - Mr. Phillips, Mr. von Reichbauer, Mr. Gossett, Ms. Patterson,
Ms. Lambert, Mr. Ferguson, Mr. Dunn and Mr. McDermott
No: 0
Excused: 1 - Ms. Hague

KING COUNTY COUNCIL
KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON


Larry Gossett, Chair

ATTEST:


Anne Noris, Clerk of the Council

Attachments: None