HB 1304 – Portable "Balcony" Solar

Legislative Rubric from Science for Georgia

HB 1304 - This bill allows for the use of certified portable solar devices. Electric generation devices below 1,200 watts are exempt from interconnection requirements – meaning that individuals can set up the solar generator, plug it in, and enjoy solar power. Service providers cannot enact criteria on their use. Liability is limited, and sale of electricity coming from these devices is prohibited.

Criteria	Variables			
Impact **Who is going to be impacted? Is it equitable? List stakeholders & opinions.**	Negative		**Positive**	
	Exempting plug-in solar from utility connection agreements significantly increases access to the benefits of solar power generation for consumers seeking to lower their utility bills. Currently, utility connection agreements, permitting, and installation costs increase the cost of portable solar by nearly twofold. Portable solar also allows for more flexible resilience to consumers. Solar power generation has a positive effect on climate change, as they do not emit greenhouse gases. There may be safety risks associated with plug-in solar, especially for lineman. However, plug-in solar systems can get certified with the "UL" label for safety. Georgia, like other states with similar bills, requires this or an equivalent certification. Additionally, according to the U.S Department of Energy, since plug-in solar was enacted in Germany, no safety incidents were reported when panels were used as intended.			
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**
	This bill would allow consumers to use portable solar, also known as plug-in or balcony solar, to cut their energy bills. They would need to use certified equipment by the UL or equivalent certification services, and devices must be less than 1,200 watts.			
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.	
	According to a study in Europe, one million portable solar units were sold in Germany with no safety incidents reported in regular use. Three technical safety concerns arise in touch-safe plugs, breaker masking, and bidirectional GFCIs. UL certified units meet the first requirement, protecting linemen. More certifications may be needed on breaker masking in the U.S. No bidirectional GFCIs exist and are not required for UL certification. Overall, implementation in Europe has been shown to be largely very safe. Increasing safety for U.S. markets is possible but may require work to address these concerns in the UL standard.			

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Financial Feasibility **Is it financially feasible?** **or does this have burdensome finances (higher taxes, future costs, etc)?**	0 - Extremely high costs	1 - Expensive but can be done	2 - Slight	**3 - No financial burden**
	Currently, utility connection agreements, permitting, and installation costs double increase the cost of portable solar. This bill would significantly reduce costs for consumers but would reduce revenue for utility companies.			
Political Feasibility **Level of opposition and partisan disagreement.**	0 - Majority disagreed, regardless of party.	1 – Split along party lines	**2 - Minimal Opposition**	3 - Complete consensus (zero to five 'Nays').
	The bill has 4 Democrat and 2 Republican sponsors.			
Measurable Metrics? **We recommend looking at these 3 metrics. Is the data available or being measured?**	0 - no data	1 - some data / not accessible	**2 - most data / somewhat accessible**	3 - complete transparency
	Study data on implementation safety is available on the European market. New studies for the U.S. market could measure the safety of these units over time. Variation from individual consumer use, potentially outside of intended use, could affect these observational studies.			