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Truckee exemption

I became aware of the town of Truckee's petition through my own process of trying to get solar panels installed on my house here in Truckee. After reading through the petition and the staff's analysis, I agree with the Staff's assessment and believe that Truckee's petition is slightly over broad. Rather than having a ground snow load threshold after which the requirement for panels would no longer apply, I agree with the staff that "when the specific characteristics of the PV panels and the roof, including the roof design and PV location on the roof, can be chosen to enable the PV system to meet the snow load requirements, then the 2019 Energy Code PV requirements prevail and PV installation is required." In other words, the design of a home should be required to facilitate the installation of solar panels if at all possible. There will of course be cases where this is not possible but by allowing as broad of an exemption as Truckee seeks, designers may be inclined to offer designs which make the solar panels impractical to save money and construction complication rather than doing a best effort to adapt designs to the conditions and the solar panel requirement.

Several of the examples Truckee showed of high snow load in their petition were houses with deficient designs. They had inadequate pitch or non-slippery roofing materials or obstructions preventing the shedding of snow.

It is my hope that the new requirements for solar will drive solar module manufacturers to design or certify a broader range of panels which can handle the higher snow load.