

HOUSE RESEARCH

Bill Summary

FILE NUMBER: H.F. 3074
Version: As introduced

DATE: March 28, 2016

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Subject: Community solar gardens

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H.F. 3074 adds several consumer protection provisions to the plan that an owner of a community solar garden must submit to the Public Utilities Commission for approval before the project can begin operation. Among the new requirements are:

- certification that promotional materials and information provided to prospective subscribers contain an estimate of the amount of electricity to be generated by the solar garden and an estimate of the length of time it will take a subscriber to recover any initial lump-sum payments made to a garden owner through projected monthly bill savings (the commission is to develop formulas that garden owners must use to calculate these values);
- certification that a sufficient escrow fund exists to reimburse subscribers for any losses that may result from a garden's failure to meet the terms of the contract;
- a mechanism allowing subscribers to transfer subscriptions or to cancel them for a full refund;
- the forwarding of consumer complaints to the commission; and
- a warranty for a minimum amount of electricity to be delivered to subscribers.

The bill also requires the commission to approve a plan only if it determines that the plan is financially viable and that the contract between the garden owner and subscribers is fair, reasonable, and not discriminatory.