



Giving Jurisdiction

**This free, crowdsourced
AHJ registry could eliminate
code research costs**

By **Matthew Hirsch**

A group of software engineers led by SunSpec Alliance and Blu Banyan has a gift for the solar industry — a crowdsourced, public AHJ registry that aims to eliminate the cost of code research altogether. The user interface is simple. Search a street address or a set of latitude and longitude coordinates and see the AHJs for that location. The registry has a record for all 43,096 AHJs in the United States, including municipal, county and state agencies.

» The Buzz

By using the AHJ Registry, system integrators can avoid costly mistakes associated with manual data entry and proprietary company databases. Get the AHJ assigned for free. Stop having multiple people — sales associates, system engineers, consultants — perform this task.

In addition to the SunSpec user interface, the AHJ Registry can easily integrate into a variety of software applications. It's currently accessible through Blu Banyan's SolarSuccess, a NetSuite application optimized for the specific operational needs of solar installers. Developers at Aurora Solar, National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL), Raise Green and 17Terawatts are also integrating the AHJ Registry into their solutions.

Titan Solar Power, a rooftop solar installer and a Blu Banyan customer, says that 97 percent of data sourced from the AHJ Registry matches human-assigned AHJs, according to preliminary findings.

"The ability to automatically assign AHJs eliminates human error and further streamlines our pre-installation process," says Aaron Casillas, Titan Solar's national logistics director. "This allows our teams to potentially install solar systems quicker and ultimately achieve our end goal of a completed project and a happy customer."

The Construction Progress Coalition, an industry association supporting data standards for builders, has expressed interest in using the AHJ Registry too.

Crowdsourcing data from multiple industries, as well as AHJs themselves, gives this project a real chance to drive down non-hardware-related project costs, typically 65 percent of an installation's cost and a lingering challenge for residential solar.

See it for yourself at ahjregistry.sunspec.org.

Crowdsourced data

Wanting an initial dataset with a high degree of accuracy, Blu Banyan seeded the registry with data for AHJs in Connecticut and North Carolina. Going forward, it will be up to users of the registry and AHJs themselves to fill in details and confirm that the data stays up to date.

Widespread adoption releases the true value of standardized data. A large user base in the solar and construction industries can quickly and easily crowdsource data for the AHJ Registry. Each addition to the registry contributes to an information commons that improves data accuracy and reduces time and money spent on manual data entry. Step by step, this work takes us closer to the future of project permitting.

Instant, online solar permitting, enabled by NREL's SolarAPP platform has many advantages. It improves efficiency. By eliminating the need to visit the local permitting office, it saves time and enhances public safety during the COVID-19 pandemic. It can also support equity and inclusion. If nobody knows

what a permit applicant looks like, there's less risk of discrimination.

The AHJ Registry is one of several active projects using data standards to drive down solar soft costs. With leadership from Blu Banyan and SunSpec Alliance, the Orange Button working group is also developing a common product registry. Starting with modules and inverters, the registry will make it possible for manufacturers to upload product datasheets once and give the entire industry access to all product data, including specifications, certifications and more, at the push of a button.

"Code talks," says Tom Tansy, SunSpec Alliance chairman. "Major customers come in because they want to solve one big problem. When we solve it, they come back to solve a different problem."

Other Orange Button projects will improve customer engagement, taking details about project status and reporting back to the homeowner. It will support asset management, sharing monthly operating reports with investors who contribute project finance. And it will simplify operations and maintenance, integrating field service data into a platform that represents the single source of truth for solar projects.

Users of AHJ Registry and other Orange Button services can join SunSpec Alliance to support continued development.

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What a deal

Panasonic and Service Finance Co. announced PowerOn, a new home energy storage financing program exclusively for Panasonic EverVolt Certified Installers that enables them to offer 100 percent financing to homeowners who buy a complete energy storage system including EverVolt battery storage and Panasonic brand solar modules, or EverVolt battery storage.