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Congressional lawmakers earlier this month introduced legislation designed to get photovoltaic solar panels installed on 10 million rooftops across the United States over the next 10 years. The bill, offered by Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) and Rep. Steve Cohen (D-Tenn.), also would increase the capacity of solar hot water by an estimated 10 million gallons over the same period.

The 10 Million Solar Roofs and 10 Million Gallons of Solar Hot Water bill would provide rebates to various property owners to install photovoltaic (PV) and solar hot water heating systems. The maximum rebate for PV systems would begin at \$1.75 per watt and decline to \$0.50 per watt in 2018. The maximum solar thermal rebate would total \$1 per watt.

Eligible recipients include homeowners, businesses, nonprofit entities, and state and local governments. The properties on which the solar systems would be installed would have to be located within the U.S. and meet energy-efficiency criteria designated by the U.S. Department of Energy. Solar systems could not exceed two megawatts. The total rebate could not surpass 50 percent of the net installed system cost after factoring in other rebates, tax credits, and incentives.

These proposed rebates are designed help overcome initial cost barriers that have slowed widespread solar adoption despite 92 percent of the American public agreeing that it is important for the nation to develop and use solar energy.

"Passing this bill would create the world's largest market for solar energy here in the U.S. and bring with it tens of thousands of manufacturing and installation jobs in all 50 states," Solar Energy Industries Association President Rhone Resch said. "The solar industry is ready now to step up to meet the challenge that Sen. Sanders and Rep. Cohen have laid out for our country."

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