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SMITH BILL TO REQUIRE NEW HOME DEVELOPERS TO INSTALL SOLAR ENERGY SYSTEMS IF REQUESTED APPROVED IN COMMITTEE

TRENTON – A bill sponsored by Senator Bob Smith which would require developers of new residential development in New Jersey to offer to install solar energy systems for home buyers was unanimously approved by the Senate Economic Growth Committee today.

“Solar energy represents one of the best renewable energy sources that we can tap to offset home energy needs,” said Senator Smith, D-Middlesex and Somerset, and Chairman of the Senate Environment Committee. “For new home construction, home buyers have a lot of say in negotiating for improvements upon the base blueprint, including an expanded kitchen, a fireplace, or a fully-loaded bathroom. Through this legislation, we’re saying that renewable energy systems – and the energy cost savings they bring – are just as important as having the Jacuzzi soaking tub or granite kitchen countertops in new home construction.”

The bill, S-2265, would require a developer of new residential development of 25 or more dwelling units to offer to install a solar energy system when a prospective owner enters into negotiations with the developer to purchase a dwelling unit. Under the bill, developers would be required to disclose in advertizing that a prospective owner may have a solar energy system installed in any unit; the total cost of installation; and an estimate of the potential energy cost savings associated with the solar energy system option. The Commissioner of Community Affairs, in consultation with the Board of Public Utilities, would be responsible for setting technical standards for the solar energy equipment through the legislation.

“For a lot of these new residential developments, the ideal and most cost-effective time to install a solar energy system is during the construction phase,” said Senator Smith. “By requiring new home developers to discuss with prospective home buyers the option of installing solar energy panels to offset their home energy needs, we are taking a big step in promoting solar energy to meet our future residential energy needs. This bill would make sure that future residential development in New Jersey is done in such a way to give home buyers the option to go green and take advantage of the cost savings associated with renewable energy.”

The bill now heads to the full Senate for consideration.