

Navigating New Solar Energy Regulation in Caddo Parish, Louisiana

**What Renewable Energy Developers
Need to Know in 2025 and Beyond**

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Executive Summary

Renewable energy development in Louisiana is entering a new regulatory era. In 2025, the Louisiana Legislature enacted Act 279, establishing statewide permitting, siting, and decommissioning requirements for large-scale renewable energy facilities, including solar power generation projects. In parallel, Caddo Parish Ordinance No. 6600 introduced comprehensive local regulations governing solar farm placement, permitting, environmental review, and long-term site management.

Together, these state and parish-level regulations significantly change how solar projects are planned, permitted, and executed in northwest Louisiana. Developers pursuing projects in Caddo Parish must now navigate layered regulatory oversight, expanded environmental and land-use review requirements, and more stringent siting, buffering, and decommissioning standards.

This white paper provides an overview of these new requirements, highlights key compliance considerations for solar developers, and outlines how early environmental and regulatory planning can reduce risk, avoid delays, and support successful project delivery.

Regulatory Landscape Overview

Louisiana Act 279 (Statewide Framework)

Act 279 creates a new chapter within the Louisiana Revised Statutes establishing regulatory authority over renewable energy development, including solar power generation facilities. The Act applies primarily to large-scale, non-residential projects and introduces formal permitting and siting standards administered by the Louisiana Department of Energy and Natural Resources (DENR).

Key objectives of Act 279 include:

- Establishing statewide permitting thresholds
 - Requiring financial security and decommissioning planning
 - Creating minimum siting and operational standards
 - Preserving local authority through parish opt-out provisions
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These requirements apply to solar facilities with a footprint of 75 acres or more, with provisions taking effect for projects beginning construction after January 1, 2026.

Key State-Level Requirements for Solar Projects

Permitting Thresholds

Under Act 279, any solar power generation facility with a footprint of 75 acres or greater must obtain a permit from DENR prior to construction, installation, or operation. Smaller or residential-scale solar installations are excluded.

Jurisdiction and Local Authority

While DENR retains primary jurisdiction, Act 279 allows parishes that have adopted their own solar ordinances to opt out of the state siting standards by formal resolution. Caddo Parish has exercised this authority by adopting Ordinance No. 6600, making local requirements particularly critical for developers in the region.

Facility Siting and Design Standards

State siting requirements include:

- Mandatory setbacks from residential properties, public roads, and water bodies
- Vegetative screening using native plant species
- Noise limitations relative to ambient background levels
- Landscape plans stamped by licensed professionals

These standards are designed to address visual, environmental, and community impacts associated with large-scale solar development.

Decommissioning and Financial Security

Developers must submit a decommissioning plan and demonstrate financial security sufficient to ensure proper facility removal and site restoration at the end of project life.

Caddo Parish Ordinance No. 6600

Purpose and Scope

Caddo Parish Ordinance No. 6600 amends the Parish Code of Ordinances to establish detailed regulations for solar power plants, supplementing existing zoning requirements. The ordinance applies to utility-scale solar projects intended for wholesale or retail electricity generation.

The stated goals include promoting safe and efficient solar development while protecting public infrastructure, environmental resources, and community character.

Parish-Level Review and Approval Requirements

Comprehensive Project Review

In addition to zoning compliance, solar projects in Caddo Parish are subject to Parish Commission review. Developers must submit detailed documentation addressing:

- Project rationale, phasing, and anticipated project life
 - Siting considerations and avoidance of sensitive resources
 - Economic impacts to the parish
 - Wildlife habitat and threatened or endangered species
 - Environmental impacts to soils, water resources, and cultural assets
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Environmental and Permitting Coordination

Caddo Parish requires confirmation of compliance with all applicable local, state, and federal permits, including but not limited to:

- Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plans (SWPPP)
- Louisiana Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (LPDES) permits
- Air and water quality authorizations
- Federal environmental reviews, if applicable

Where no federal or state environmental review is triggered, the parish may still require an independent environmental analysis.

Infrastructure and Public Safety Considerations

Additional requirements include:

- Traffic and transportation plans
- Drainage plans meeting parish standards
- Noise analyses demonstrating compliance with parish ordinances
- Road maintenance guarantees tied to construction impacts

Decommissioning, Abandonment, and Long-Term Obligations

Caddo Parish imposes robust decommissioning requirements beyond those required at the state level. Key provisions include:

- A recorded, notarized decommissioning plan
- bond covering anticipated decommissioning costs
- Full removal of equipment, foundations, and access roads (unless waived by landowners)
- Environmental remediation of any remaining hazards
- Defined timelines for site restoration following abandonment or project termination

Failure to comply may result in permit revocation, bond forfeiture, or enforcement actions.

Implications for Solar Developers

The combined impact of Act 279 and Caddo Parish Ordinance No. 6600 introduces:

- Increased upfront planning and documentation requirements
- Expanded environmental review expectations
- Greater coordination between state and local agencies
- Higher emphasis on early site screening and risk management

Developers who proactively address environmental constraints, permitting pathways, and stakeholder concerns early in the project lifecycle will be best positioned to avoid delays and unexpected costs.

Strategic Role of Environmental Planning

Early engagement with experienced environmental and regulatory consultants can help solar developers:

- Identify fatal flaws and permitting risks
- Navigate overlapping state and parish requirements
- Prepare defensible environmental analyses
- Streamline agency coordination and approvals
- Reduce the risk of costly permitting delays and redesigns

As solar development continues to expand in northwest Louisiana, regulatory preparedness will be a critical differentiator for successful projects.

Conclusion

The enactment of Louisiana Act 279 and Caddo Parish Ordinance No. 6600 signals a shift toward more structured and comprehensive oversight of solar energy development. While these regulations introduce new challenges, they also create a clearer framework for responsible, well-planned projects.

Solar developers operating in Caddo Parish should anticipate heightened regulatory scrutiny and plan accordingly. With informed strategy, early environmental due diligence, and proactive compliance planning, projects can move forward efficiently within this evolving regulatory landscape.