

Obama White House to install solar panels

October 5 2010



The North side of the White House in Washington, DC. President Barack Obama's administration say it will install solar panels on the White House in a bid to encourage Americans in lesser known residences to embrace renewable energy.

President Barack Obama's administration said Tuesday it will install solar panels on the White House in a bid to encourage Americans in lesser known residences to embrace renewable energy.

Former president Jimmy Carter put solar panels on the executive mansion in 1979, but Ronald Reagan took them down. The Obama [White House](#) last month politely rebuffed an activist who showed up with a Carter-era panel.

But [Energy](#) Secretary Steven Chu, addressing a conference on greening the federal government, said that two new solar panels would go up on the White House to show Americans that the technology is ready and reliable.

"This project reflects President Obama's strong commitment to US leadership in solar energy and the jobs it will create here at home," Chu said.

"Deploying solar energy technologies across the country will help America lead the global economy for years to come," he said.

The Energy Department will open up competitive bidding to choose a company to install the panels, said Chu, who earlier ordered temperature-cooling white paint on the roofs of his own agency's buildings.

It is the latest green project for the Obama White House. First Lady Michelle Obama launched a garden on the lawn in a bid to persuade Americans to eat fresher, healthier food.

The Obama administration tapped into last year's [stimulus package](#) to encourage solar and other renewable energies, hoping they will spur a new green economy and reduce [carbon emissions](#) which scientists say is causing dangerous climate change.

The US Senate has balked at mandating cuts in carbon emissions, with critics saying the plan would hurt a fragile economy.

Obama, however, pledged in January that the federal government would do its share by cutting carbon emissions by 28 percent by 2020 compared with levels in recent years.

Bill McKibben, the founder of the climate advocacy group 350.org, last

month brought to the White House one of the original Carter panels -- now stored at Unity College in Maine -- but did not receive a commitment.

McKibben on Tuesday praised the Obama administration, saying it was listening to some 40,000 people who signed a petition for the [solar panels](#).

"If it has anything like the effect of the White House garden, it could be a trigger for a wave of solar installations across the country and around the world," he said.

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Citation: Obama White House to install solar panels (2010, October 5) retrieved 24 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2010-10-obama-white-house-solar-panels.html>

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