

Obama launches measures to support solar energy in US

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A ground-mounted solar array is shown on March 25, 2014 in Cleveland, Ohio

The White House Thursday announced a series of measures aimed at increasing solar energy production in the United States, particularly by encouraging the installation of solar panels in public spaces.

President Barack Obama and his Democratic allies in Congress want laws to fight climate change and reduce [greenhouse gas emissions](#), but

Republicans, who hold the majority in the House of Representatives, have blocked all legislative efforts since 2011.

In response, the president has switched tactics, using his regulatory and administrative powers to enact his [climate change](#) policies.

Thursday, the White House launched a program to encourage federal agencies, military installations, and publicly-subsidized buildings in the Washington area to install more [solar panels](#) on roofs, covered parking garages and open land.

And, earlier in the week, the Energy Department guaranteed at least \$2.5 billion in loans for "innovative" solar projects.

The Environmental Protection Agency also pledged Thursday to double the use of renewable energy at its network of 1,500 partners organizations—including schools, public buildings, and businesses—within the next 10 years.

Another \$15 million will be dedicated to local initiatives to boost solar capacity.

According to the White House, the United States today can generate up to 13 gigawatts of energy from solar power, or enough to power 2.2 million homes, up from just 1.2 gigawatts in 2008.

The federal government is working on granting permits which by 2020 would generate enough power to support six million households, it added.

The average cost of solar panels has dropped more than 60 percent since the beginning of 2010, the White House said.

The president also has significant leverage to influence on carbon emission levels through limiting the federal government's energy consumption, especially within the Defense Department, which is the biggest energy consumer in the country.

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