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## **Small Clean-Energy Producers Get a Boost**

By [Kristina Shevory](#)



(Credit: Justin Sullivan/Getty Images) Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger of California signed legislation aimed at helping the state reach its renewable energy goals.

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger of California signed two bills into law on Sunday that may help the state meet its ambitious renewable energy goals and beef up its solar industry.

One [bill](#) requires utilities to buy power from a larger pool of small solar generators for above-market prices. The idea, modeled after similar programs in Germany, is to increase market access for small-scale producers of solar power — to 3 megawatts from 1.5 megawatts.

The California Public Utilities Commission has yet to determine the price that utilities will be required to pay for such power, said Christopher Chow, an agency spokesman. But establishing the price at above-market rates — called a feed-in tariff — is designed to spur growth of the renewables market.

The [other bill](#) would require utilities to pay homeowners for excess energy they generate from their wind turbines or solar panels over the course of a year. Homeowners previously were not compensated for extra energy they sent back to the grid.

California must generate 33 percent of its power from renewable sources by 2020, but it will need to triple the amount of renewable electricity it generates to meet the goal, according to a California [Public Utilities Commission report](#) released last summer.

In September, the governor signed an executive order that [increased the state's renewable goal](#) to 33 percent from 25 percent.

To meet greenhouse gas emission reduction goals and a standard of 33 percent by 2020, Gov. Schwarzenegger wrote in a [letter](#) [pdf] to the State Senate, “we will need to use all of the tools available under our existing programs to get to that goal.”

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