



# Council of the District of Columbia

John A. Wilson Building  
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20004

Brianne K. Nadeau  
Councilmember, Ward 1

**Chairperson**  
Human Services Committee

**Committee Member**  
Housing and Neighborhood Revitalization  
Government Operations  
Health  
Recreation and Youth Affairs

TO: DC Zoning Commission

Anthony J. Hood, Chairman  
Robert Miller, Vice Chairman  
Peter Shapiro  
Michael G. Turnbull  
Peter G. May

CC: Office of Planning

RE: Comment on Z.C. Case 19-21

Dear Chairman Hood and Commissioners,

As the Councilmember for Ward 1, which includes many attached homes and closely abutting properties, I have frequently engaged in conversations regarding rooftop solar installations and have actively supported efforts to reduce energy costs for District residents through solar installation programs. I appreciate the Commission's efforts to balance the District's high priorities of housing construction and solar energy, and I do not want to see private solar installation used as a cudgel to block residential construction – especially given the large impact that infill housing has on reducing our carbon footprint.

However, it is also true that those who install rooftop solar on their properties do so with certain calculated assumptions of return on investment, and the proposed regulations may have a considerable impact on the certainty of those assumptions, and a serious impact on energy costs for those who have either made significant investments, or who have been part of subsidized programs specifically to help those with low incomes. If there is too much subjectivity and discretion given to BZA in these regulations, it may also drive down interest in new solar installation.

With those considerations in mind, I recommend the following be considered before finalizing this rulemaking:

- Language should be added to indicate that, absent an agreement such as a solar access easement or other compensation, there be a maximum ceiling of shading allowed by the new construction. This would have the effect of creating clearer and less discretionary guidelines around the “best efforts” standard.
- The new regulations should only be considered for applications from a date future, so as not to challenge the economic baseline of existing solar installations.

The language governing how Special Exception relief will be considered for solar interference should be specific and distinct from that of relief in the regulations on Architectural Elements and Building Heights given that the placement of language may affect BZA's consideration of those Special Exceptions.

- Considering the many priorities the Zoning Commission is attempting to balance in this proposed amendment, I highly recommend the Office of Planning and BZA coordinate and monitor cases that fall under these new guidelines and issue a report within 1 year to determine their efficacy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brianne K. Nadeau". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Brianne K. Nadeau  
Councilmember, Ward 1