



## Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services

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**BILL: HOUSE BILL 469**

**POSITION: LETTER OF INFORMATION**

**EXPLANATION:** This bill will provide that for each construction or renovation project proposed after December 31, 2021, the State shall require the project be designed, engineered and constructed in a manner that allows the roof to withstand the weight of solar panels and provides for the installation of solar panels. Design and construction of correctional facilities can be complex due to the need to balance security equipment, HVAC, and skylights. While the Department supports increasing opportunities for utilization of alternative energy solutions, the bill should include a waiver process or alternative locations for placement of the solar panels.

**COMMENTS:**

- Correctional building rooftops are an integral part of the security support for the facility. The rooftops provide overhead observation posts during security events. Functional security devices mounted to the rooftops such as CCTV cameras require an unobstructed view of the grounds and surrounding buildings.
- In addition, all HVAC equipment is typically mounted on the rooftops of correctional buildings and this equipment is selected, designed, and installed to maintain the lowest profile possible.
- Skylights dominate rooftops of the correctional housing units, support services buildings, and training facilities at ten of the largest facilities maintained by DPSCS. The infusion of daylight into these facilities serve two purposes. First, natural light provides therapeutic value to the indoor environment. Second, the skylights provide a substantial amount of supplemental interior light during daytime operations.
- The structural design of existing State prisons considered environmental conditions by region. Snow loads are part of that calculus. Rooftop equipment is locally supported and was an integral part of the roof design. Any additional load added to the roof structures will require a complete structural analysis and structural upgrades.

- The typical housing unit is a very simple roof deck design. This design presents a significant challenge to modify for additional support beyond the original calculated load.
- When considering the installation of solar panels for correctional facilities, ground based solar panels may be a more desirable option. As such, the bill should include a waiver process or alternative locations for placement of the solar panels.

**CONCLUSION:** For these reasons, the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services respectfully requests the Committee consider this information as it deliberates on House Bill 469.