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Berkeley going solar - city pays up front, recoups over 20 years

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Berkeley is set to become the first city in the nation to help thousands of its residents generate solar power without having to put money up front - attempting to surmount one of the biggest hurdles for people who don't have enough cash to go green.

The City Council will vote Nov. 6 on a plan for the city to finance the cost of solar panels for property owners who agree to pay it back with a 20-year assessment on their property. Over two decades, the taxes would be the same or less than what property owners would save on their electric bills, officials say.