

SolaTrim Helps Haleakala Solar Address Aesthetic Concerns of Hawaiian HOAs

Overview:

With demand for solar systems climbing across the Hawaiian Islands, Haleakala Solar has installing more than 13,000 photovoltaic (PV) systems for homeowners, condominium homeowner associations (HOAs), and apartment buildings throughout the state. However, with the solar boom that started in 2010, HOAs and Association of Apartment Owners (AOAOs) became concerned about solar installations, so they have initiated new policies and installation guidelines, including aesthetic requirements for PV systems. To comply with HOA and AOAO requirements to hide the solar system framework using skirting, Haleakala Solar turned to SolaTrim to provide attractive solar barriers that met HOA guidelines and reduce threats from birds and pests.

New Requirements for Solar Aesthetics

Haleakala Solar is one of the oldest solar installers in Hawaii, installing solar hot water and solar PV systems since 1977. The company has seen the solar market change and grow, and then demand for PV began to take off in 2010, the company was getting more demand for PV systems for condominiums and apartment complexes, assuming the installations met with HOA and AOAO policies.

To preserve building aesthetics, property associations established installation guidelines designed to minimize the visual impact of rooftop PV systems. Most of these rules included installing skirting around the solar array to cover the panel framework for a cleaner look.



With the volume of installations increasing, Haleakala Solar needed to find a cost-effective, easy-to-install solution that would conform to HOA guidelines.

The High Cost of a Build-Your-Own Solution

When HOAs first started introducing new aesthetic guidelines, Haleakala Solar approached various vendors looking for a skirt solution that would conform to the new requirements. Unable to find a suitable product among their distributor contacts, the Haleakala Solar team opted to develop their own solution.

To meet HOA requirements, the solar installer would purchase raw aluminum flat stock, then prepare and sand the flat stock to accept a protective coating. They would have to ship the stock to a third-party who could apply the powder coating, then have the aluminum shipped back for use in installation. The installation itself would typically take two to three man days, which added significantly to the cost of the project and lowered Haleakala Solar's operational capacity.

Manufacturing their own aluminum skirts was cumbersome, time-consuming, and costly, but it was the only way to meet HOA aesthetic guidelines.

SolaTrim Provides A Clean Look and Durability

Then the team at Haleakala Solar learned about SolaTrim. Tony Racanelli, SolaTrim's Hawaiian product representative, introduced the Wailea Community Association, one of Haleakala Solar's customers, to



SolaTrim. When the head engineer at Wailea asked Haleakala Solar to take a look at the product, they discovered that SolaTrim addressed all of their needs for a robust, cost-effective skirt.

SolaTrim is a protective, aesthetic barrier that attaches to the frame of any rooftop solar array to cover the framework and prevent rodents and birds from nesting under the solar array. Shipped in four-foot sheets of 0.025-inch aluminum stock,

SolaTrim is finished in an attractive, weather-proof black polyester coating and has diamond-shaped stamping to promote airflow. It can be cut to fit with tin snips and is easily installed using a peel-and-stick adhesive. All the installer has to do is prep the solar frame surface with acetone to create a bond guaranteed to last 20 years. In addition, SolaTrim's unique design will not invalidate the solar manufacturers' warranty because there are no holes to drill.

By using SolaTrim, Haleakala Solar eliminated all the costs associated with manufacturing their own aesthetic skirt, and it cut installation time from days to a few hours with fewer steps and fewer tools. Most importantly, SolaTrim satisfied all the skirting requirements of HOA and AOA customers, and saved those customers money at the same time.

In addition, SolaTrim saves Haleakala Solar money on service calls. Installers were initially concerned that the Hawaiian tropic winds would cause the SolaTrim panels to come loose and flap, but the adhesive system has been tested for military-grade applications and is designed to last for the lifetime of the PV system, no matter what the weather conditions.

About SolaTrim

SolaTrim LLC is an innovator in providing new solutions to protect and beautify residential solar systems as well as protect the homeowner solar investment for the life of the system. The SolaTrim barrier system adds an attractive border to solar arrays while protecting the system from pests, debris and other environmental threats. Solar integrators across the country are turning to SolaTrim as a permanent solution that will beautify rooftop solar while reducing unnecessary service & warranty calls.

Headquartered in Sacramento, California, SolaTrim is committed to developing affordable, dependable, and attractive made-in-the-USA solar aftermarket products to support America's renewable energy initiatives.

For more information, visit www.solatrim.com.