Ms. Ref. No.: **JEPO-D-24-05205**  
Title: The impact of setback regulations on PV deployment strategies in Gyeonggi province, South Korea  
Energy Policy  
  
Dear Dr. Jeon,  
  
Thank you for submitting your manuscript to Energy Policy. Your paper has been peer-reviewed. Although our reviewers found it interesting, they could not recommend it for publication. Therefore, we will no further consider your manuscript for publication in Energy Policy.   
  
We have a large number of papers submitted to Energy Policy, far in excess of the available space, and are only able to accept a small percentage of the submitted manuscripts. Only those manuscripts which meet the highest standards for scientific quality and significance, originality, and policy relevance can be accepted for publication in Energy Policy. Furthermore, under journal policy, an editorial decision is final, and we do not enter into discussions regarding the outcomes of rejected manuscripts.  
  
We have included peer review comments in this letter, which we hope you will find useful in revising your paper for submission to another journal.  
  
We are grateful to you for your interest in Energy Policy and thank you for the opportunity to consider your work for publication in the journal. We hope you will continue to consider the journal for your future submissions.  
  
Yours sincerely,  
  
Professor Peng Zhou  
Editors  
Energy Policy  
  
----------------------------------------------------------  
Reviewers' comments:  
  
  
  
  
  
Reviewer #2: The study investigates the impact of setback regulations on photovoltaic (PV) deployment strategies in Gyeonggi Province, South Korea, using GIS-based spatial analysis. It highlights the potential for increased PV capacity and generation with the removal of setback regulations, while addressing efficiency, economic feasibility, and policy implications. The research offers valuable insights into tailored renewable energy strategies in densely populated, land-constrained regions.  
  
The research gap could be more explicitly articulated. Clearly identify how this study advances prior research on PV deployment, particularly in regions with dense populations and constrained land availability.  
  
Incorporate relevant references such as:  
Optimal planning of municipal-scale distributed rooftop photovoltaic systems with maximized solar energy generation under constraints in high-density cities, Energy, 263, 125686  
Optimal deployment of distributed rooftop photovoltaic systems and batteries for achieving net-zero energy of electric bus transportation in high-density cities, Applied Energy, 319, 119274  
  
Enhance the methodology section by emphasizing its novelty. Highlight how the integration of geospatial supply curves and observed PV installation data offers unique contributions compared to existing PV deployment studies.  
  
The results section requires a more comprehensive analysis. Expand the discussion on the implications of reduced land-use and capacity efficiency under the "No Setback" scenario, including potential trade-offs between increased deployment and environmental impacts.  
  
Provide a clearer statement of the study's limitations. For example, explicitly address how the exclusion of intermittency costs and government subsidies in the LCOE analysis might influence the results and policy recommendations.  
  
Strengthen the discussion of policy implications by elaborating on the role of tailored regulations and incentives for different land-use types (e.g., rooftop PV, farmland, mountainous areas) to maximize both efficiency and deployment potential.  
  
The conclusion should better integrate recommendations for future research, such as exploring socio-environmental impacts of PV expansion or integrating storage technologies to enhance intermittent energy utilization.  
Clarify the novel contributions of the proposed deployment strategies (price-based, quantity-based, and full deployment) in achieving renewable energy targets compared to existing approaches in South Korea or globally.  
  
  
Reviewer #3: This article investigates the impact of setback regulations on PV deployment strategies using the case of Gyeonggi Province in Korea. While this research has potential as a case study, its contribution is marginal, and several critical issues must be resolved. Therefore, I cannot agree to the publication of this article.  
  
1. Lack of originality; what new insights do the four highlights offer readers of the journal? All four are general points that can be addressed without research rather than new findings discovered through analysis. This is largely due to the absence of research questions.  
  
2. This paper heavily relies on its unique regional focus rather than introducing novel insights or innovative advancements. Local case studies can provide valuable insights through in-depth policy discussions and cross-national comparisons or international policy benchmarking, which is totally missing in this research. Without substantial modification to account for different regulatory environments, economic contexts, and land-use dynamics in other regions, international readers may find limited direct applicability.  
  
3. While the two-scenario setup (Current Setback vs. No Setback) is straightforward, it does not consider intermediate or graduated setback scenarios, which could more realistically reflect potential policy changes. This binary choice limits our ability to gain insight into incremental and potentially more politically feasible policy reforms. In addition, it is not realistic to completely eliminate setback regulations in countries like Korea.  
  
4. The analysis lacks comprehensive sensitivity testing of crucial variables, such as capacity factors, area utilization, and LCOE inputs. Without these analyses, the robustness of the results under varying conditions is uncertain, which significantly undermines confidence in the conclusions and their broader applicability. For instance, the assumption that 5% of land in mountainous and farmland areas is available for PV installations lacks sufficient empirical justification. This arbitrary choice significantly influences overall PV potential estimates.  
  
5. Slightly out of scope: Although integrating GIS analysis with LCOE calculations has some merit, it is better suited for an engineering journal such as Renewable Energy. The paper is written in an overly dense and technical manner, which reduces its readability, especially for readers without expertise in GIS-based renewable energy assessments or detailed economic evaluations.  
  
  
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