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Puerto Rico Governor Sued by Federal Board Over Net Metering Law Amendments

The control board's legal action seeks to prevent political interference in the net metering program, arguing for the autonomy of the Puerto Rico Energy Bureau, as concerns rise about long-term legislative impacts on rooftop solar initiatives

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Solar panels installed on the roofs of homes in Puerto Rico provide clean energy contributions to the grid **By. GETTY IMAGES**

The federal control board overseeing Puerto Rico's finances has filed a lawsuit against recent amendments to the island's net metering law, which compensates solar-equipped households for their contributions to the grid. This move has sparked a significant backlash.

In April, the board ordered Governor Pedro Pierluisi and Puerto Rico's legislature to amend or repeal the law, which prevents the energy bureau from making any changes to the net metering program until 2031. The lawsuit, filed against Governor Pierluisi, also states that the law requires the energy bureau to honor the program's current terms for an additional 20 years, potentially extending some terms until 2051.

The board argues that the lawsuit is necessary to protect the independence of the Puerto Rico Energy Bureau, allowing it to "continue to operate free from political influence." The board emphasized that its intention is not to end net metering or impose changes to the program. The board clarifies that if the lawsuit is successful, there will be no changes to the current rooftop solar program on the island.

A spokeswoman for Governor Pierluisi stated that he is analyzing the lawsuit and will respond soon, according to the Associated Press.

The control board's action aims to ensure the energy bureau can regulate and adjust the net metering program as needed, without being bound by long-term legislative constraints. This flexibility is deemed essential for maintaining an adaptive energy policy framework for Puerto Rico.

The lawsuit's outcome could significantly impact the future of renewable energy initiatives and the financial stability of the energy sector in Puerto Rico.