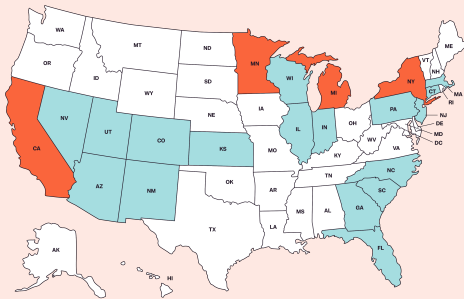


Q2 2023: Impact Report

Powering Clean Energy Progress Across the U.S.



VOTE SOLAR



 Vote Solar States  States Highlighted in This Report

National Overview



25 Legislative Campaigns Across 9 States



38 Regulatory Proceedings Across 15 States



48 Filings and Expert Testimonies Submitted Across 12 States



11 Workshops and Webinars with 360 Participants

① California

In early July, the Golden State approved \$33 million to support community solar in the state. Vote Solar and coalition partners had recommended a more significant investment as community solar and storage is one of the swiftest available options to reach California's reliability needs in the near- and mid-term. Despite a disappointing final budget decision, efforts for equitable clean energy access in the Golden State continue. This funding is a crucial step in accelerating California's transition to a clean grid by 2045, and will allow the enormous potential of the 2022 community solar and storage bill to be realized. We are hopeful this show of commitment from the state will allow California to be competitive for federal funding opportunities which we will work with the Governor's office to shape.

② Michigan

Working alongside coalition partners, Vote Solar released a **'report card'** for Detroit Edison's (DTE's) 20-year Integrated Resource Plan (IRP). Overall, the utility, one of the largest in the state, did not fare well. In particular, the report card noted that DTE failed to ensure affordable rates or equitable access or improve clean energy resiliency for its ratepayers. Although they did win a B- for coal plant retirement, the utility got a much lower grade for avoiding additional gas infrastructure; DTE still seems to see dirty gas as a viable replacement for coal capacity. The utility failed to uphold their obligations over the past year, leaving many Michiganders without power in the heart of winter. Their abject failure necessitated the formation of the House Energy Reliability, Resilience, and Accountability Task Force, which is set to hold a public hearing. Earlier this year, our coalition presented an alternative, cleaner pathway for DTE which included an accelerated timeline for coal plant retirement and a more rapid and comprehensive renewable energy buildout. We will continue to fight to ensure that DTE doesn't shortchange its customers and that Michigan's transition to a clean grid is swift, equitable, and sustainable.

③ Minnesota

Our hard work in Minnesota keeps delivering wins! Hard on the heels of the 100% Carbon-Free Electricity Law passed earlier this year, the legislature passed a budget bill that includes a suite of clean energy provisions. This bill ensures that the North Star State's transition to clean energy directly benefits Minnesotans who are harmed the most by our polluting grid. The new legislation ensures funding to establish a green bank to create inclusive financial products for clean energy projects; supports access to community solar for low- and moderate-wealth households; incentivizes adoption of energy storage and rooftop solar, particularly by low-wealth customers; guarantees the rights of householders to install rooftop solar panels without arbitrary restrictions from homeowners associations; helps clean energy projects connect to the electric grid; and provides compensation for public-interest organizations to participate in utility regulatory proceedings.

And on the regulatory side, our intervention in Xcel Energy's rate case resulted in the Commission slashing the utility's requested rate increase by more than half, rejected investments detrimental to local solar growth, and most significantly, acknowledged the importance of equity in utility ratemaking—a core tenet of the testimony we, alongside our coalition partners, submitted during the proceeding.

④ New York

The passage of the Build Public Renewables Act (BPRA) reaffirms the Empire State's commitment to a clean energy transition. As part of the NY Renewables coalition, Vote Solar played a crucial role over the last few years in shaping equitable clean energy provisions in the BPRA. Passed as part of New York's annual budget, this groundbreaking policy will bridge the disconnect between the state's clean energy targets and the power of the New York Power Authority (NYPA) to reify those mandates through creating and operating programs and projects. It includes a measure to create a program for discounted energy bills for low- and moderate-wealth ratepayers. The BPRA will not only help create thousands of new jobs, but also ensures that displaced fossil fuel workers are prioritized for these jobs, that workers' rights are protected, and that there is specific funding for workforce training in renewable energy. The law also phases out gas peaker plants to be replaced by renewable energy by 2030. New York also made history with a first-of-its-kind statewide legislative ban on fossil fuel usage in new buildings (with a few exceptions), a policy we helped shape through our earlier work with the state's Climate Scoping Plan. Heat and power for buildings account for a third of the state's GHG emissions and has been linked to the high rates of childhood asthma in the state.

A&E Callout: Vote Solar's Access and Equity Advisory Committee (AEAC) is currently hosting its second convening; this year's focus is on interconnection, equity, and what that means for BIPOC, frontline and low-wealth communities that are interested in developing and leading their own community solar projects. Interconnection is the complex network of regulations, integration of clean energy technologies, and processes that dictate how new generators are connected to the utility electric grid—a vital piece in connecting renewables to the grid. Through a series of four virtual sessions, the AEAC Convening aims to collectively explore and define fundamental concepts, challenges and possible solutions regarding equitable interconnection. Vote Solar provided the equity and policy expertise in these guided and interactive discussions, while our long-time partner the Interstate Renewable Energy Council (IREC) provided the technical expertise. The five participants, selected through an application process, are all directly active within and/or provide services to BIPOC and frontline communities and bring a wealth of diversity in terms of their professional and lived experiences. At the end of the process, the AEAC will produce an issue brief that will serve as a critical tool for under-resourced communities.