Our energy system and our global climate are both at a crossroads, and the policy decisions that are being made now will have tremendous impact for years and generations to come. We have an unprecedented opportunity to replace the nation’s aging fossil power infrastructure with renewable energy sources like solar that are clean, cost-competitive and capable of improving health, resilience and well-being in communities nationwide.

With the federal government taking a step backward, state-level campaigns are the best opportunity for making real solar progress. In state regulatory and legislative forums, bipartisan progress is not just it’s possible, it’s already happening. And as the 2018 election ushered in a new generation of clean energy leaders in capitols nationwide, the opportunities for state level look even brighter.

Our mission is to repower the U.S. with clean energy by making solar power more accessible and affordable through effective state-level policy advocacy. This is delivering immediate carbon reduction benefits without relying on federal leadership, and - by giving more Americans a stake in the renewable economy - it also increases longer-term political will for continued climate and clean energy progress at all levels of government. With your support, we are making meaningful progress toward a 100 percent clean electricity future that gives all consumers the opportunity to benefit from reliable and affordable clean power.

Thank you for being part of America’s clean energy success story at a time when our communities and our climate can afford nothing less than urgent action.

Onward,
Adam Browning
Founded in 2002, Vote Solar has a proven track record of speeding America’s transition to clean electricity through effective state-level solar policy advocacy. We drive progress in state legislatures and regulatory commissions through a powerful combination of deep policy expertise, partnership and coalition-building, and strategic public engagement. Success means diverse and equitable solar opportunities at the individual, community and utility scales - and a 100 percent clean powered future that benefits everyone.

Creating Diverse Opportunities for Critical Clean Energy Progress
VOTE SOLAR worked in 23 states

IMPACTING
over 20% of the population of the US

PROTECTING
solar rights for over 60,000 rooftop solar owners

20%

TOTTALLING
8 Legislative Campaigns
12 Rate Cases
18 Other Regulatory Proceedings

CONTRIBUTING TO
16.2 GW of new solar commitments

SECURING
enough dedicated solar power to serve over 100,000 low-income or disadvantaged households

2018 by the Numbers
Putting California on a Path 100% Clean Power

In September, California made history by passing SB 100 and committing the world’s fifth largest economy to 100 percent clean electricity by 2045.

Over the past two years, Vote Solar worked alongside a powerful coalition of faith, labor, business, science, municipal, student, climate and environmental justice leaders - both in the capitol and in communities statewide - to get this big clean energy win across the finish line.

The SB 100 effort provides a strong illustration of Vote Solar’s special mix of inside and outside campaign strategies. Our policy and regulatory experts educated lawmakers, provided deep ongoing analysis of the legislation as it moved through the halls of Sacramento—successfully playing defense against harmful amendments that would have stifled more local distributed clean energy development in the state. Meanwhile our communications team took a leadership role in the coalition, providing guidance on digital engagement strategies and making sure our partners all had the resources and content they needed to mobilize grassroots networks into demonstrable public support. This victory is a major milestone for climate progress in California and well beyond, and Vote Solar is proud to have been there every step along the way.
Expanding Solar Opportunity in New Jersey

Vote Solar supports a diverse clean energy market that drives solar development at all scales. In May, New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy signed bold new clean energy legislation to build that kind of strong, diverse and participatory energy system in the Garden State.

These commitments raise the state’s Renewable Portfolio Standard to 50 percent, provide short-term stabilization for the rooftop solar market, and develop a new community solar program to give renters, families with shaded rooftops, businesses that lease, and many others a way to go solar and save for the first time.

Vote Solar provided policy review and guidance, public engagement capacity on both grassroots organizing and media tactics, and played a critical role in pushing the industry and others to bring equity and community groups to the table and ensure that the final policy contain strong provisions for expanding direct benefits to these communities. This effort resulted in the development of a community solar program that includes a significant carve-out for low income customers. Over the next year we will be deeply engaged in the implementation of these new programs.
Protecting Solar Customers in Massachusetts

We believe customers should be able to produce their own solar energy and should receive fair compensation for their contribution to the shared electric grid. Vote Solar worked with clean energy advocates and employers across the state to protect those options by pushing for the removal of restrictive net metering caps and reversing a harmful demand charge imposed by a major utility, Eversource, on solar customers.

We engaged in a robust suite of policy and public engagement strategies to support the policy change through the legislature. Our organizing efforts culminated in a rally of over 100 solar workers from across the state, converging on the capitol to show lawmakers that real jobs were on the line. The rally at the state house sent a clear message that Massachusetts should act immediately to protect the pillars of its once-booming distributed solar market.

In the end, the state passed major clean energy legislation that rejected the demand charge and put Massachusetts on a path to 100% clean energy within 30 years.
Busting a Multi-Billion Dollar Boondoggle in North Carolina

Building a reliable, participatory 100 percent clean energy system requires changing the way our electric grid is planned and operated. The current utility system was designed around centralized fossil generation providing power to consumers who had no other options for their power needs. It does not currently make efficient and effective use of solar and the full suite of clean energy technologies, particularly when those assets are deployed by customers. Without smart and focused advocacy in this arena, we will likely continue to have a system dominated by natural gas and central-station generation that treats renewable generation as problematic, inconvenient outlier; that does not facilitate or value customer participation in providing solutions; and that increases ratepayer costs with unnecessary infrastructure investments that increase utility profits. We saw the costs of outdated grid planning first-hand this year in North Carolina.

When utility giant Duke Energy proposed $13.8 Billion in misguided ‘modernization’ expenses that would be costly for consumers and slow clean energy progress, our regulatory experts worked with local groups to push back. Vote Solar served as an expert witness in opposition, preparing analysis and testimony that showed the plan, marketed as ‘grid modernization’, was really a wolf in sheep’s clothing that would unnecessarily raise rates, have a negligible impact on reliability, and slow clean energy progress by massively increasing fixed customer charges. The Vote Solar team also provided guidance on public communication activities for the larger coalition which included big names like Google, Facebook, and Amazon.

We’re happy to report that regulators rejected Duke’s proposal.
A New Day in Nevada

In 2017, we helped make history in Nevada by passing 11 clean energy bills through the legislature, an exciting reversal of previous setbacks that cost the state thousands of jobs and put solar out of reach for many customers.

With a calendar that has lawmakers in session only on odd years, 2018 was a year of big regulatory focus for the Vote Solar team in Nevada.

In June of 2018, the Silver State’s clean energy transition got another boost when the state’s largest utility, NV Energy, announced an unprecedented investment in solar and clean energy. Now under review by state regulators, the plan calls for doubling renewable output, adding 1,000 megawatts of new solar, and a commitment to expanding solar options for communities and low-income families at record low prices. Vote Solar played a key role in this outcome, conducting months of calls, meetings and workshops to educate regulators and engage the public. Vote Solar partnered with Earthjustice to intervene in this historic docket, both to show support for the unprecedented amount of new solar capacity in NV Energy’s preferred plan and to encourage NV Energy to replace other high cost fossil fuel resources in their portfolio with renewables.

Nevada took yet another step forward when the Nevada Public Utilities Commission adopted a new framework for the state utilities’ Distribution Resource Plans (DRP). These plans determine what resources and grid upgrades the utility will make to meet demand for electricity, and this new framework will ensure full consideration and optimization of clean, distributed energy resources such as energy storage and rooftop solar. Vote Solar played a key role in passing the 2017 legislation that established this framework and continues to be involved in implementation through the regulatory arena.
Building an Equitable Clean Energy Economy

We believe that everyone should have the ability to participate in, and benefit from, the clean energy economy. In order to drive change at the scale needed to combat climate change and to fully realize solar energy’s potential as a force for social good, we must take a hard look at past and current inequities and work with intention to build a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive clean energy future. That’s why we are committed to advancing policies, partnerships and internal practices that foster broad participation and equitable distribution of the benefits from clean energy.

In that spirit, we worked with partners to produce three key resources in 2018:

LOW INCOME SOLAR POLICY GUIDE:
For millions of low-income Americans, access to solar can lower energy costs, provide good local jobs, and improve community health. Realizing this potential requires policies and programs specifically designed to address the unique barriers faced by this market segment. In June, Vote Solar, in partnership with GRID Alternatives released the updated Low Income Solar Policy Guide—a resource that provides an overview of those barriers, key principles that should underpin any policy, and a suite of policy tools from successful programs around the nation. This guide is an incredible resource to communities and policymakers in the drive to increase solar access for marginalized communities. Building on the success of this guide, we are now working to create an additional, stand-alone guide that addresses the specific challenges faced by residents and owners of multifamily affordable housing—a population of approximately 49.8 million households.

INCLUSIVE SOLAR FINANCE REPORT:
In August 2018, in partnership with Sustainable Capital Advisors, we released a new Inclusive Solar Finance Report. Targeted at the solar industry, policy makers, finance leaders, and community organizers, this report aims to help unlock solar access to the ~78 million low-income, low-credit U.S. households by outlining specific finance and market barriers and identifying actionable solutions. This report represents a huge amount of work by our Access and Equity team and will, we hope, go a long way in expanding solar options for this significant and underserved segment of U.S. energy consumers.
THE VISION FOR U.S. COMMUNITY SOLAR:
A Roadmap to 2030: Rooftop solar energy is giving families and businesses a way to lower energy bills and invest in America's new energy economy. However, physical and financial barriers prevent up to 75 percent of consumers from going solar on their own rooftops. Well-designed community solar programs give customers like these a way to go solar and save by enabling them to participate in a shared solar installation located somewhere else in their community and receive a credit on their utility bill for their share of the power produced. Working with the Coalition for Community Solar Access, we commissioned a study from GTM Research on the U.S. community solar market potential and state policy recommendations for delivering on that enormous and largely untapped potential to serve American households and businesses with affordable and reliable solar power. The report found that the U.S. community solar market could grow up to 80 times its current size by 2030, equating to serving nearly nine million new solar customers, including four million low-to-moderate income households, and amounting to $120 billion in capital investments.
Our Growing Team

Our small but mighty team works day in and day out to overcome opposition from our nation’s entrenched energy interests and speed the transition to clean energy.

Thanks to support from our generous donors, Vote Solar grew from 16 to 27 staff over the past three years.

At the end of 2018, we have dedicated campaign and regulatory staff in six regional hubs: West, Interior West, Midwest, Northeast, Mid-Atlantic, and Southeast. We also added critical operational roles - such as development staff, human resource staff, and communications staff - to grow and sustain a healthy organization.
Since 2002, Vote Solar has been at the forefront of state-level solar policy advocacy, working to protect and expand diverse solar markets. In that time, solar has become one of our nation’s lowest cost and fastest growing energy resources.
Vote Solar depends on support from individuals, foundations, and corporations. Thank you for your generous support over the past year! We truly could not do this work without you.

2018 was a year of strong and steady growth—primarily due to significant new funding from institutional foundations. These new investments enabled expansion of our regional programs in the Southeast, Southwest, and our Equity and Access program. Support from individual donors contracted over 2017 performance and corporate giving grew slightly. We had great success with our Fall Equinox event, moving from the location from New York City and staging our first event in Washington, D.C. in November 2018.

The additional new funding plus a 5% underage in our annual expenditures, negated the planned $300,000 budget deficit and meant we ended the year with a significant surplus. This surplus will be rolled over to support increased program work in 2019 and to strengthen organizational reserves.

**REVENUE**

- CONTRIBUTIONS $5,913,990
- FUNDRAISING EVENTS $195,275
- IN KIND DONATIONS/SERVICES $201,135
- OTHER REVENUE $12,618

**TOTAL REVENUE $6,323,017**

**EXPENSES**

- PROGRAM $4,404,165
- MANAGEMENT AND GENERAL $475,257
- FUNDRAISING $672,986

**TOTAL EXPENDITURE $5,552,407**

**CHANGE IN NET ASSETS $770,600**