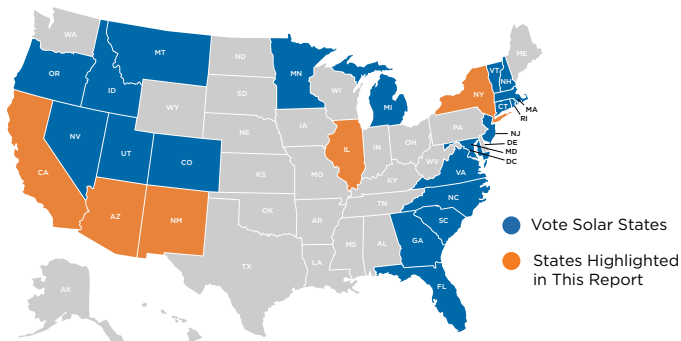


# Q4 2020: IMPACT REPORT



Powering Clean Energy Progress Across the U.S.

VOTE SOLAR



## NATIONAL OVERVIEW:



**3** Legislative Campaigns Across **3** States



**45** Ongoing Regulatory Proceedings



**333** Participants in  
**5** Webinars and Virtual Panels



**52** Filings & Expert Testimonies Submitted

## 1 ARIZONA

Our years of effort led to a massive bipartisan victory in the Grand Canyon state: In November, the Arizona Corporation Commission voted for Arizona to go 100% carbon-free by 2050 with significant interim targets of 50% by 2032 and 75% by 2040, and a 5% energy storage standard. We pushed hard for this carbon-free energy package; we will now shift our focus to the final approval and implementation processes of this new standard, with a particular emphasis on expanding local clean energy options (e.g. solar + storage) and reforming the utility business model.

## 2 CALIFORNIA

Our work in the Golden State resulted in a big step forward for equitable clean energy progress: The CPUC staff released a Proposed Decision recommending a \$200 million Microgrid Incentive Program. With California's new normal of mandated power outages during wildfire season, this program will bring substantive benefits to mitigate that impact by funding multi-customer clean microgrids for critical facilities that serve primarily low-wealth communities at higher risk for electrical outages. This innovative concept will fund development of clean backup generation to maintain critical services during outages. We look forward to the final approval of the program and the formation of a working group to flesh out implementation details in early 2021.

## 3 ILLINOIS

In a crucial victory for rooftop solar, the Illinois Commerce Commission (ICC) rejected Ameren Illinois' attempt to prematurely eliminate full retail net metering. Through our intervention at the ICC, aimed at protecting the value of rooftop solar and distributed generation, we pointed out the egregious flaws in Ameren's methodology for calculating the cap on the number of net metering customers in their service territory. To further boost our case against Ameren, we spearheaded a campaign that resulted in 1,500 public comments and critical media buzz. As a result, this popular solar compensation mechanism is now safe from attack by Ameren and new rooftop solar customers in Southern and Central Illinois can continue to benefit from fair prices for their contributions to the grid.

## 4 NEW MEXICO

In the Land of Enchantment, we halted construction of a \$160 million gas plant. El Paso Electric (EPE), a public utility serving 425,000 customers in Texas and New Mexico, proposed to build a 226 MW gas plant. We argued that the required capacity could be better served through solar + storage alongside energy efficiency, EPE's continued gas reliance did not benefit customers, and they had failed to consider climate risk in this new investment (despite previously acknowledging climate change as a material risk). EPE's application was recently denied by the Public Regulation Commission (PRC) Hearing Examiner, who noted that the utility 'failed to consider New Mexico law'—a decision that exemplifies the significance of legislative commitments for 100% clean energy. That denial was upheld on December 16th, when PRC Commissioners *unanimously* rejected the dirty gas plant.

## VOTE SOLAR WEBINAR

OUR LOOK AHEAD  
TO 2021:

[What's Next for Clean  
Energy Progress?](#)



## 5 NEW YORK

In the Empire State, we are making steady progress on implementing the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act, a groundbreaking equity-centered bill that mandates enough solar to power 1,000,000 homes. Our Northeast Director Stephan Roundtree was appointed to the Power Generation Advisory Panel of the Climate Action Council, a key opportunity to influence the energy economy in the state. This panel is responsible for creating the roadmap to a 100% emissions-free power sector by 2040. We will focus on driving distributed energy resources like solar and energy storage as part of this roadmap and ensuring access to the full array of benefits to disadvantaged communities.

## SOLAR ACCESS AND EQUITY:

**Our Access & Equity Advisory Committee (AEAC)**

is up and running! Conceptualized by our board members Zaid Ashai and Rob Wallace, the AEAC aims to identify and recommend solutions for the unique challenges experienced by low-wealth communities and communities of color when accessing state solar programs. The AEAC, with a membership roster of VS staff and board members as well as our partner organizations, is creating an issue brief to be finalized in 2021. During the inaugural convening, members brainstormed on how automatic enrollment and grant support for community engagement can be used to streamline and expand solar access. These two areas emerged as critical measures to improve low-wealth program implementation from a series of interviews conducted by the AEAC with over twenty environmental justice, industry, and financial sector partners.