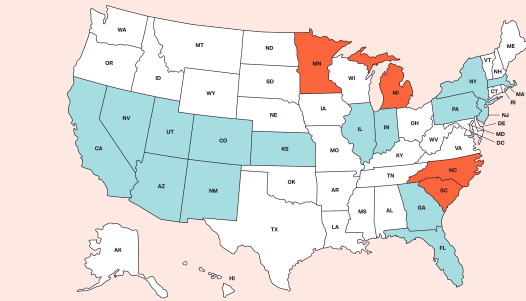



Q1 2023: Impact Report

Powering Clean Energy Progress Across the U.S.



VOTE SOLAR



 **Vote Solar States**  **States Highlighted in This Report**

National Overview



30 Legislative Campaigns Across 11 States



38 Regulatory Proceedings Across 16 States



52 Filings and Expert Testimonies Submitted



5 Workshops and Webinars with 101 Participants

① Michigan

Working with the newly formed Environmental Justice Caucus, our Midwest team members showed up in Lansing alongside partners to brief legislators on the recent harrowing blackouts in DTE territory and to push for utility accountability. Many customers had to survive without power in the peak of winter for up to a week, further emphasizing that DTE customers paid the most money for the worst service in the Midwest. Presenting with our partners, We the People Michigan and the Michigan Environmental Justice Coalition (MEJC), the brief outlined the problems in detail, reflected on DTE's responsibility in the crisis, and also provided a solution framework. Vote Solar focused on how the regulatory structure and the Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC) could work to ensure that utilities are held accountable to ratepayers. This inspirational briefing was attended by at least 20 legislators who were appreciative, engaged and thinking forward to solutions to safeguard the ratepayers.

② Minnesota

In a massive victory, Governor Walz signed a clean energy bill into law making Minnesota the newest state to commit to 100% clean energy. A result of our deep partnership work with the 100% Campaign and the Just Solar Coalition over the last few years, the newly minted omnibus law mandates 100% carbon-free energy by 2040, with interim goals of 80% carbon-free electricity by 2030, and 90% by 2035. In addition to placing the state solidly on the path to equitable economy-wide decarbonization, the bill includes specific provisions that advances environmental justice by reducing environmental health disparities and unjust energy burdens, and positively impacts public health, workforce transition, and bill affordability in historically underserved communities. Vote Solar will continue to fight to make sure that the bold promise of this landmark bill translates to policies and programs that benefit *all* Minnesotans.

③ North Carolina

In North Carolina, alongside our coalition partners at People Power NC, we released a report card evaluating the state's first Carbon Plan—showing that it received failing grades. The Plan was issued by the North Carolina Utilities Commission; however, it appears to be a carbon copy of a draft Plan submitted by Duke Energy. The Plan ignores alternative plans submitted by intervenors that would have better served the people of North Carolina and meet the state's emissions reduction goals. Our report card critiques the approved Plan for extending the life of several coal-fired power plants, making additional investments in dirty fossil gas, and the lack of urgency regarding climate issues directly affecting North Carolinians. Our report urged the Commission to “make a much more robust and rapid commitment to renewables, battery storage, and energy efficiency.” We will continue to monitor future iterations of the Carbon Plan to ensure that the interests of North Carolinians are put ahead of shareholder profits.

④ South Carolina

In South Carolina, the Commission approved a rate case settlement we reached with Duke Energy Progress. This agreement will reduce costs for Duke's customers, expand funding for low-wealth energy efficiency and ensure that future grid planning will seek input from the people Duke Energy is meant to serve. During the hearing, Commissioners inquired about equity issues in rate design as well as questions that were clearly driven by input received during public hearings. Specific measures in the settlement slashes Duke's proposed \$89 million rate increase to around \$52 million, doubles the budget for income-qualified programs to \$1 million by 2025, and creates a pilot program that will provide upfront financing for energy efficiency improvements that customers would pay back over time, while ensuring net bill reductions. The utility also committed to developing an equity-focused demonstration project that prioritizes underserved communities and studies how clean energy can achieve both social and technical grid needs.

A&E Callout: Being 'Included and Noticed' in the Regulatory Sphere

Vote Solar has continued our efforts to expand access to regulatory hearings by partnering with community organizations; our goal is to increase understanding of these opaque and technical proceedings and enable community participation in critical energy decisions. One example of this is our recent intervention in the Nevada Transportation Electrification Plan (TEP) docket, which stems from the 2021 omnibus Clean Energy Economy Act. The outcomes of this docket could determine access to clean energy transport for communities across the state. As part of our engagement, we worked with the Faith Organizing Alliance (a community organization working with low-wealth and environmental justice communities in northern Las Vegas), a first-time intervenor. Together, we conducted outreach activities and sought insight into community needs from ratepayers from different income strata. We also assisted Pastor Marlon Anderson from the Alliance to directly intervene in this proceeding through written testimony and participation in the formal hearing at the Public Utility Commission of Nevada. Both Vote Solar and Pastor Anderson incorporated the needs voiced by community members into direct testimony. Pastor Anderson's testimony also focused on specific recommendations for the Commission to hold the utility accountable. Community feedback made clear the high stakes riding on the TEP for the most vulnerable: that, without adequate infrastructure and programs in place, people would see a significant portion of their household budgets going to purchase gasoline yet lack the resources to transition to or access electric vehicles or public transit. Included in participant responses following a webinar we hosted was the comment that the virtual forum had made them “feel included and noticed”—a shining testament to the value of outreach, inclusion, and engagement.