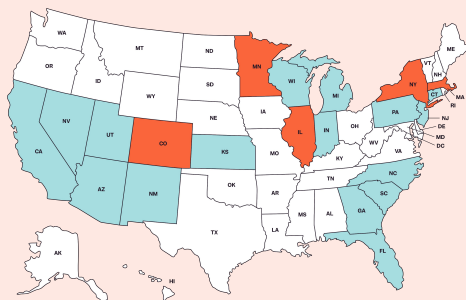


# Q2 2024: Impact Report

Powering Clean Energy Progress Across the U.S.



VOTE SOLAR



 Vote Solar States  States Highlighted in This Report

## National Overview



**36 Legislative Campaigns Across 11 States**



**50 Regulatory Proceedings Across 18 States**



**43 Filings and Expert Testimonies Submitted**



**8 Workshops and Webinars with 190 Participants**

## Access & Equity Callout: Solar, Truly, for All

The launch of the \$7 billion federal Solar for All (SFA) program marks a leap toward realizing the federal commitment to a clean grid by 2050. Vote Solar championed SFA from the very initial stages, working in the House and the Senate to ensure that the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) included funding for communities that stood to benefit the most from clean energy investment. The idea was to ensure benefits to communities that have been forced to endure unaffordable energy bills, pollution from nearby power plants, and a lack of economic benefits from a rich energy economy. We played a crucial role in shaping SFA applications in thirteen states. Now that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has announced the approved applicants, which includes all of the applications we supported, Vote Solar is ready to use our expertise and partner networks to provide technical support for strong program design, develop an implementation-focused policy toolkit, and work to engender critical deep partnerships on multiple levels. The SFA programs will help ratepayers save money on energy bills, create employment opportunities in communities that need them the most, and curb fossil fuel pollution. With over twenty years of experience in deep coalition building, state and local-level implementation, technical expertise, and the ability to carry lessons across state lines, Vote Solar is uniquely positioned to help ensure that the IRA and SFA live up to their potential.

### ① Colorado

In the Centennial State, the governor signed two pro-clean energy bills, once again establishing Colorado as a climate leader. The first, a bipartisan community solar bill, enables the state to leverage millions in federal funding to build over 150 MW of local clean energy, upgrade the grid, lower energy bills, promote energy equity, and launch a new dispatchable distributed generation program. Specific provisions earmark over half of each project to under-resourced Coloradans and ensure energy bill savings of up to 55% for those customers. Vote Solar worked hard to help pass this critical bill and ensure that the program serves the interests of those who will benefit from it the most—Coloradans who were unable to access solar power in the past. The second bill, Powering Up Colorado, pushes the state's largest utility, Xcel Energy, to ensure that their grid infrastructure can meet the challenges of integrating distributed energy resources and future clean technologies.

### ② Illinois

The Illinois Commerce Commission (ICC) approved the state's Renewable Energy Access Plan (REAP), mandated by the 2021 Climate and Equitable Jobs Act. This transmission plan lays out the pathway for Illinois to meet its climate goals, especially decarbonization by 2050, and guide the replacement of fossil fuel generation with reliable and cost-effective renewable energy resources and technologies. The Plan increases the adoption of grid enhancing technologies (GETs)—near-term hardware and software solutions that increase the capacity of existing transmission lines while larger upgrades and expansions are underway. It tasks the ICC with facilitating the adoption process in coordination with utilities and regional transmission organizations. The first draft of the Plan released last year had no mention of GETs. After Vote Solar and our partners provided substantive comments calling for inclusion of these technologies as well as calling out environmental justice concerns regarding expedited transmission siting, these additions were included in the final version approved in May.

### ③ Minnesota

In the North Star State, our partnership work over the past years led to a big win for rooftop and distributed solar. The legislature passed an omnibus bill which we have been pushing for as part of the CLEAR (Clean, Local, Equitable, Affordable, Reliable) Energy Coalition. With the state committing to 100% clean energy last year, this year the focus was on how to get there. This bill improves local rooftop solar permitting, tackles interconnection barriers, and provides sustained funding for solar incentive programs that

include access for under-resourced Minnesotans. Specific provisions include: \$2 million allocated to support local communities in adopting SolarAPP+, a web-based automated tool that will cut down permitting time for rooftop solar; \$5 million annually for ten years to fund Solar Rewards, an incentive program for Xcel customers, with half that money earmarked for low-wealth customers or non-profits or businesses serving low-wealth people; and, addressing interconnection challenges through a state Ombudsman and expanded hosting capacity.

### ④ Massachusetts

In Massachusetts, the Department of Public Utilities (DPU) issued the final order on the revision of the Solar Massachusetts Renewable Target (SMART)—a tariff program that provides financial incentives for solar development. The order included almost all of our recommendations and is a big win for under-resourced residents of the Commonwealth. Our key proposals related to two major utilities: a low-wealth program that we developed in conjunction with Eversource, and the National Grid's proposal, which we opposed. The DPU approved Eversource's program with some minor modifications and rejected National Grid's. The Eversource low-wealth program has the potential to expand solar energy to reach environmental justice populations through new community solar projects and strengthens the Commonwealth's ability to meet their stated Clean Energy and Climate Plan Goals in 2030 and 2050 through the rapid deployment of new solar.

### ⑤ New York

In the Empire State, we worked with our partners in the Public Power NY coalition to craft [Powering Up](#), a roadmap to implement the trailblazing 2023 Build Public Renewables Act (BPRA) through the development of 15 GW of renewable energy. This report envisions a stronger, more resilient New York, urging the New York Power Authority (NYPA) to take an 'all hands on deck' approach. Our recommendations ensure that NYPA, as the largest state public power organization in the nation, fully utilizes its power and resources. These include NYPA allocating at least one fourth of its economic development funds to foster the growth of local manufacturing, using its extensive experience in transmission infrastructure and interconnection to hasten the renewables buildout in conjunction with other state bodies, and building more renewables to ensure reliability. With this white paper, we aim to influence NYPA's forthcoming Strategic Plan by showing what NYPA can achieve with the broader scope and power enabled by the BPRA. Vote Solar remains committed to ensuring that NYPA's vast potential in leading New York's equitable and inclusive clean energy transition is fully realized.