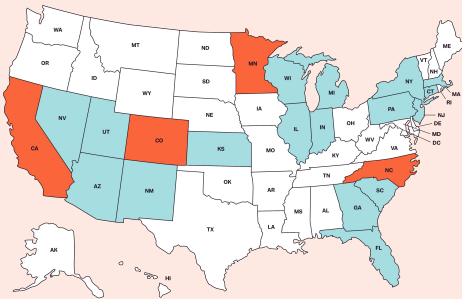


# Q3 2024: Impact Report

Powering Clean Energy Progress Across the U.S.



VOTE SOLAR



## National Overview



**19 Legislative Campaigns Across 7 States**




**42 Regulatory Proceedings Across 20 States**



**46 Filings and Expert Testimonies Submitted**



**9 Workshops and Webinars with 135 Participants**

 Vote Solar States  States Highlighted in This Report

### 1 California

Last year, the California Public Utilities Commission dealt a severe blow to Virtual Net Metering (VNEM)—a version of community solar which allows ratepayers who can't install rooftop solar themselves to still benefit from off-site solar through subscription. The Commission's actions benefited investor-owned utilities and made it harder for schools, small farms, and multifamily buildings to adopt solar. This year, Vote Solar pushed for the passage of [SB 1374 - Becker](#), a bill that supports Virtual Net Metering and could protect and expand solar energy access across California. We helped ensure that the state legislature passed this bill that could potentially play a critical role in increasing solar expansion. As we finalized this report, news arrived that Governor Newsom just vetoed the bill, thus curtailing fair access to clean energy across the state. Despite this setback, we remain undeterred; through our work, we've successfully demonstrated the existence of strong legislative support for clean energy, and we aim to push back on the Governor's opposition over the next year.

### 2 Colorado

In Colorado, our engagement in the equity pre-rulemaking proceeding ensured that the final report from the Commission provides recommendations that advance equity and environmental justice elements. This proceeding was initiated through a 2021 bill mandating the Commission to consider equity and access issues with regard to low-wealth and underserved communities in filings and adjudications. Over the past three years, we worked with coalition partners on this proceeding, holding stakeholder workshops and developing recommendations aligned with Vote Solar's core values. The Commission's report provided a summary of these as well as the recommendations urging the Commission to turn these into actionable items. Our recommendations that were incorporated in this final report include holding utilities responsible in carrying out educational and collaborative programs with community based organizations as well as urging Commissioners to utilize an equity framework to take distributive and procedural justice elements into account during proceedings. Now that this set of recommendations have been released, the Commission will initiate a rulemaking proceeding. We will continue to keep tabs on this process as it moves forward.

### 3 North Carolina

At a time when utilities and fossil fuel companies are blaming solar for runaway electric bills, it is critical that we both assign the culpability where it is due - the utilities themselves - and protect the most vulnerable customers from increases. In North Carolina, our work over the last few years to reduce energy burdens is yielding returns: Duke's Customer Assistance Program (CAP)—the automatic bill reduction plan which received federal assistance—has begun to provide monthly bill credits to customers. Our intervention alongside our allies, the NC Justice Center and the Southern Environmental Law Center in two rate cases with Duke subsidiaries in 2023 and 2024 helped establish CAP. Through CAP, over 43,000 ratepayers are now enjoying a monthly credit of \$42, which translates to approximately \$1.7 million in savings

for North Carolinans from historically disinvested and under-resourced families and communities. Moving forward, we will work with our coalition partners to continue to monitor and improve the program.

### 4 Minnesota

In Minnesota, our regulatory work over the past few years has yielded a transformative shift in how local solar solutions are integrated into energy supply planning. Xcel Energy recently proposed a program similar to a Virtual Power Plant (VPP), a network of solar-powered energy storage hubs, situated on the grid and linked with technology so they can operate in concert with each other. Historically, utilities treated local solar as something that simply happened to customers' demand for energy—a byproduct of customer decisions that required adaptation rather than proactive planning. But with this Distributed Capacity Procurement (DCP) proposal, Xcel is signaling a profound change in how they operate: treating local solar solutions as core components in their energy supply toolkit. This shift is a direct result of the modeling that the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission required Xcel to undertake in its 2022 Integrated Resource Plan (IRP) proceeding, during which Vote Solar and our partners introduced modeling using local solar as an energy resource like any other. This innovative approach has the potential to unlock the full potential of local solar, and we look forward to working with Xcel to make this vision a reality.

#### Access & Equity Callout: Amping Up Regulatory Resources

The Vote Solar Regulatory Advocacy Hub is working to resource partners, especially representing frontline communities, to enter the world of energy regulation and advocate for the challenges their communities are facing and the solutions they need. To this end, the Hub drove the development of [Amp Up the People: A Practical Guide for Energy Justice Advocates in Utility Regulation](#). We worked hand in glove with our partner, the Initiative for Energy Justice (IEJ), in creating this resource to ensure that frontline communities can better understand and actively participate in the clean energy transformation that is underway. This year the Hub also continued the work of convening Vote Solar's Access and Equity Advisory Committee (AEAC), the collective of Black, Indigenous, and experts of color creating innovative policy solutions to enable equitable participation and benefits from clean energy. The AEAC's first in-person convening was held recently to discuss the impact of intentional racism on electric infrastructure. In preparation, the Hub developed *Wiring the Divide: The Impact of Redlining on Electric Infrastructure*, initially a briefing paper to guide the convening, and now, post-convening, the [AEAC's 2024 issue brief](#). The brief dives deep into the ways redlining has shaped energy access across the country, fueling disparities in affordability, reliability, and infrastructure quality. It's designed to be a springboard for further research and action to untangle these systemic injustices, empowering advocates, policymakers, and community leaders alike to explore the intersections of race, class, and energy access.