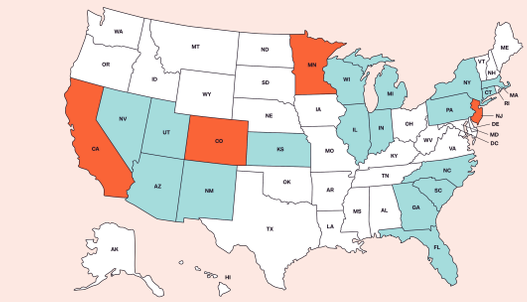
Q2 2025: Impact Report

Powering Clean Energy Progress Across the U.S.

VOTE SOLAR



Vote Solar States States Highlighted in This Report

National Overview

37 Legislative Campaigns Across 22 States

48 Regulatory Proceedings Across 22 States

42 Filings and Expert Testimonies Submitted

16 Workshops and Webinars with 457 Participants

① California

In California, we worked with our partners to push for distributed generation through a bill that can ramp up the establishment of Virtual Power Plants (VPP) statewide. Under this legislation, the California Energy Commission (CEC) would be required to develop a comprehensive and detailed implementation plan for deploying VPPs at scale. Slated to be published in 2026 as part of an integrated energy policy report, this plan would determine milestones, and examine resource potential, policy barriers, compensation frameworks, data access, grid benefits, and cost savings to ratepayers. The bill also mandates a CEC study to assess VPP impacts on system costs, ratepayer savings, and greenhouse gas reductions through 2045. In addition, investor-owned utilities must annually report on progress toward state load-shifting targets. VPPs can save Californians $550–750 million annually, lower peak demand, replace fossil-fuel-based "peaker" plants, and enhance grid reliability. AB 740 passed the Assembly with bipartisan support and is now under consideration in the Senate.

② Colorado

We released a short documentary that focuses on Colorado's clean energy transition, local solar, and Pueblo, a town that is seeking to redefine its energy future. Located in the southern region of Colorado and one of the largest steel-producing cities in the country, Pueblo is a community with a history deeply rooted in the coal and fossil fuel industry. The impending closure of the Comanche power plant—the largest coal-fired unit and the largest source of greenhouse gas emissions in the state—is a watershed moment for the city, a powerful example of how communities with deep fossil fuel histories can navigate the clean energy transition. Our documentary, Pursuing a Clean Energy Future: A Story of Pueblo's Coal History, (watch our preview Power of Local Solar Solutions - Pursuing a Clean Energy Future) highlights how local leaders and residents are navigating the transition, balancing the legacy of coal with new investments in renewable energy and community-focused solutions, aiming to reshape the economy while honoring Pueblo's heritage. Among the community voices included in the documentary is Jamie Valdez, who also served as Vote Solar's expert witness in the regulatory proceeding that led to the agreement with Xcel Energy to shut down Comanche. As we advocate before the utility commission for stronger local clean energy integration, and work to increase awareness about local solar solutions, this documentary gives a glimpse of what is possible and why it is sorely needed.

③ Minnesota

In Minnesota, we fought to protect community solar and won. After robust advocacy from Vote Solar and our partners, state legislators removed the repeal language from SB 2855 (and its House companion), preserving the state's Community Solar Garden program—the cornerstone of Minnesota's clean energy future. This marks a major victory for clean energy access, particularly for low- and moderate-wealth residents, renters, and small businesses. A Minnesota Department of Commerce study projected that the program could deliver $2.92 billion in net benefits to the state, with ongoing savings projected to reduce energy bills by 3-8% for under-resourced customers. With bipartisan support in both chambers, the bill is now headed to the Governor's desk. We also worked with our allies to fend off legislation that would have severely weakened net metering in the state. Minnesota's longstanding net metering program helped make the state an early leader in solar energy, and it will be a crucial driver towards meeting Minnesota's law of 100% carbon-free power by 2040. The proposal to weaken net metering, brought by rural electric coops, made its way to the first draft of the Senate Energy Omnibus bill, but was taken out due to strong pushback from solar advocates, developers, farmers, and more. Alongside our partners, we are celebrating these wins not just policy successes, but a powerful affirmation of community-driven climate action.

④ New Jersey

In New Jersey, we are going all out to support two bills that will advance distributed solar. The first bill will simplify solar permitting, addressing the current complex and costly process that hinders solar projects. The proposed legislation would mandate municipalities use software like SOLAR APP+ for permitting, aiming to reduce costs and prevent project cancellations. The bill has progressed through the Assembly and Senate committees and is expected to reach the governor's desk this summer. Vote Solar, in collaboration with a local coalition, NJ Shines, identified this bill as a priority for 2025, testifying in support and helping to circulate a coalition letter. The second bill, more recently introduced and just passed out of the first committee, proposes to almost double the capacity of the existing community solar program to a hefty 3,000 MW by 2029. Community solar's "Goldilocks size" (larger than rooftop but smaller than utility-scale) allows for quick grid connection and deployment, economies of scale, and benefits to frontline communities, making it a critical tool in enhancing equitable access.

A&E Shoutout:
Virtual Power Plants (VPP) Can Reinvent the Grid

The renewables wave of the future, Virtual Power Plants (also known as distributed power plants) represent a system-change, where a network of decentralized energy resources—such as solar, battery storage systems, electric vehicles, and smart appliances—are coordinated via software to operate like a single entity. VPPs help balance electricity supply and demand in real time, enhancing grid reliability and enabling greater use of renewable energy. This translates to lower energy bills and less pollution that can damage our communities. A recent study found that VPPs can meet peak energy demand at 40-60% lower cost than traditional alternatives. Vote Solar is pushing in multiple states to enable and strengthen the legislative framework needed to establish VPPs. These efforts include a pilot program approved in Arizona earlier this year (which stems from a rate case where we intervened), and specific bills we helped develop and support in states like California, Illinois, Massachusetts, and Minnesota. Although VPPs have the potential to transform the energy landscape across the country, that can only happen when states push for it. And Vote Solar is right there, coining solutions specific to local contexts and ready to deploy our prowess at working at the state-level.