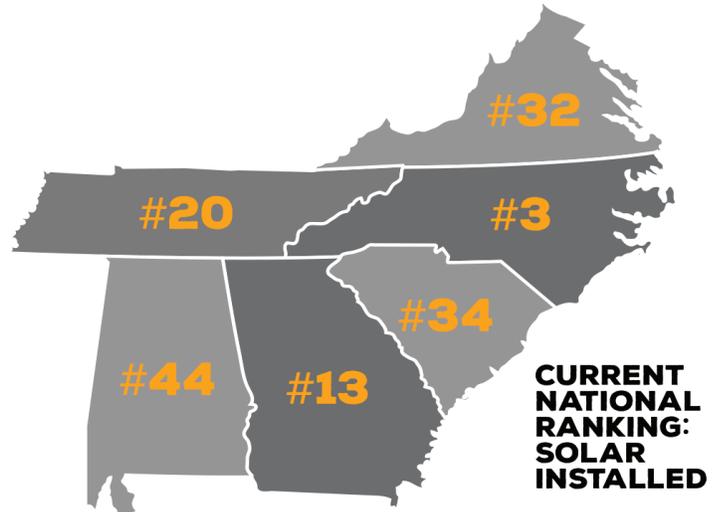


THE STATE OF SOUTHEASTERN SOLAR

The sunny Southeast has some of the greatest solar potential in the nation. Unfortunately, policy barriers in many of our states are thwarting progress toward a clean, renewable energy future. These barriers block southern families and businesses from saving money and tapping into an abundant clean energy source. And they are causing our states to miss out on a significant economic opportunity. With good paying solar industry jobs on the rise nationally—there was an 86 percent increase from 2010 to 2015—the Southeastern states stand to reap considerable economic benefit from solar power if utilities and local governments will only put fair policies in place.

The Southern Environmental Law Center is working with partners on the ground and utility customers in each state in the Southeast to advance policies that unlock our solar potential. Below is a breakdown of current and potential solar production for each state and the policies standing in the way.

As we work to address policy barriers and bring more solar power to the Southeast, the debates can sometimes feel abstract. But at the heart of these battles are real people doing their best to make solar work despite unfavorable regulatory environments. To see some of individuals and organizations helping to expand solar in the Southeast, visit www.stories.solar. From a former coal miner turned solar installer in Alabama to a family farmer in North Carolina, from a pastor in Georgia to high school students in Virginia, everyone has their own reasons for going solar. Stories of Solar features Southerners sharing stories in their own words about why they went solar; what it's meant for their home, business, church, or community; and how solar policies—good and bad—are having real, everyday impacts on their efforts.



ALABAMA

Alabama is behind on solar, and is losing jobs and economic development to its neighbors.

State's rank for solar: 44th

Current solar jobs: 287

Solar currently installed: 2 MW

Solar potential by 2030: 2,300 MW, enough to power 377,200 homes for a year

Policy priorities:

- Policymakers must withdraw Alabama Power's punitive solar tax on its customers, which is clawing back 50% of a customer's average savings from solar.
- Alabama should look to mimic Georgia's investments in solar farms as a way to create good, local jobs, diversify its energy supply, protect customers from increasing costs from fossil fuels, and ensure lower electricity prices.
- Alabama should consider tax credits to jump start its clean energy industry, similar to neighbors Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina and Louisiana.

GEORGIA

While Georgia has made strides in large solar farm development, it needs to take additional steps to develop a robust rooftop solar market.

State's rank for solar: 13th

Current solar jobs: 3,185

Solar currently installed: 454 MW

Solar potential by 2030: 13,100 MW, enough to power 2,148,400 homes for a year

Policy priorities:

- Georgia needs to adopt a better rooftop solar program to give customers fair compensation for solar power they export to the grid.
- Policymakers should explore new ways to expand access to solar power for all Georgians, including renters and low income households, for example, through innovative community solar projects.

NORTH CAROLINA

While North Carolina has been a leader in clean energy policy to date, utilities are trying to roll back important policies to protect their profits.

State's rank for solar: 3rd

Current solar jobs: 5,950

Solar currently installed: 2,294 MW

Solar potential by 2030: 8,200 MW, enough to power 1,344,800 homes for a year

Policy priorities:

- Lawmakers should reinstate the state tax credit for renewable power systems to keep clean energy investments coming to North Carolina.
- Lawmakers should preserve the state's Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Portfolio, which has been a key driver for the state's clean energy economy and success.
- North Carolina should protect customers' right to get fair credit for valuable solar power that they deliver to the grid through net energy metering.
- North Carolina should promote diverse financing options for individuals and organizations interested in investing in rooftop solar.

SOUTH CAROLINA

South Carolina's Solar Act kick-started the state's solar industry, but there is much more to be done.

State's rank for solar: 34th

Current solar jobs: 1,764

Solar currently installed: 17 MW

Solar potential by 2030: 14,500 MW, enough to power 2,378,000 homes for a year

Policy priorities:

- South Carolina should adopt a State Energy Plan that spurs additional investments in solar power and taps into the state's full renewable energy potential.
- Utilities should accurately and fully calculate the benefits and value of distributed solar resources, and account for that value in annual solar program updates.
- Utilities should improve modeling of solar resources within their Integrated Resource Plans and pursue new solar farms for their resource mix to meet energy needs, add diversity to the grid, and provide savings for customers.
- The state should be aggressive about opening up South Carolina to competitive solar leasing that will make solar accessible to more people.

TENNESSEE

Tennessee led the way on solar early on, but has since fallen behind due to the Tennessee Valley Authority's (TVA) severe caps on its solar programs, which have led to a boom-and-bust cycle that hurts local solar installers.

State's rank for solar: 20th

Current solar jobs: 3,798

Solar currently installed: 132 MW

Solar potential by 2030: 3,900 MW, enough to power 639,600 homes for a year

Policy priorities:

- TVA should move to a market-driven solar program that creates certainty and attracts long-term investments in solar by clean energy entrepreneurs.
- TVA and local power companies should embrace community solar programs that expand access to solar to any customer who wants it.
- TVA should move to take advantage of large, affordable solar farm projects that can lower rates for its customers and help companies who locate in Tennessee to achieve corporate sustainability goals.
- TVA and local power companies should commit to wholesale and retail rate designs that do not disincentivize customer investment in solar.

VIRGINIA

Virginia is currently losing out on good jobs and economic development to neighbors Tennessee and North Carolina.

State's rank for solar: 32nd

Current solar jobs: 1,963

Solar currently installed: 22 MW

Solar potential by 2030: 8,700 MW, enough to power 1,426,800 homes for a year

Policy priorities:

- Lawmakers should require utilities to invest in affordable solar power farms from independent solar companies that can lower rates for Virginians.
- The legislature needs to block utilities from imposing punitive charges on homes and businesses that go solar.
- Virginia should promote diverse financing options for individuals and organizations interested in investing in rooftop solar, beyond its currently limited pilot program.
- Utilities should expand access to solar power for all, including renters and low income households, by adopting community solar programs.

Sources:

Current state ranking: Solar Energy Industries Association (www.seia.org)

State job numbers: The Solar Foundation (www.thesolarfoundation.org)

Now: Solar Energy Industries Association, based on the average number of homes powered by solar in each state (www.seia.org/policy/solar-technology/photovoltaic-solar-electric/whats-megawatt)

2030: U.S. Department of Energy, SunShot Vision Study (2012) (www.eere.energy.gov/solar/sunshot/vision-study.html)