Siting Solutions Project

clean tomorrow

INSIGHT REPORT

The State of Siting: 2025 Legislative Round-Up

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Executive Summary

It has been a busy policy year for the renewable energy industry: while Congress and the White House slashed federal support for clean energy, legislators in nearly every state together introduced hundreds of bills to change the rules under which large-scale wind, solar, and battery storage projects receive state and local approvals.[1]

At the midway point of 2025, as most states conclude their legislative sessions[2], we have an opportunity to reflect upon the landscape of renewable energy siting policy. With the support of colleagues, Clean Tomorrow's Siting Solutions Project tracked, analyzed, and reported on approximately 300 state-level bills that touched on renewable energy siting policy, including increased setback distances, decommissioning and financial security requirements, policies mandating more local control over zoning, and more.[3] Grounded in our expertise on state policy approaches to renewable siting, this report summarizes state legislatures' efforts to change clean energy siting policy in 2025.[4]

Key Findings

National Trends

- Siting legislation was introduced in almost every state, with most bills likely to make clean energy deployment more difficult.
- Restrictive policy approaches are gaining momentum in states with large amounts of clean energy and recent permissive reforms are under attack.
- Republican lawmakers introduced many more—and more restrictive—bills than their Democrat colleagues, but bipartisan bills were more likely to advance.
- Renewable energy broke even, with a balance of wins and losses, and only trifecta states passed siting policy reforms.
- Technology-agnostic legislation was more likely to advance in states with at least one Republican chamber but environmental advocates take issue with "all-of-the-above" reforms.
- Non-traditional coalitions effectively blocked or limited the impacts of restrictive legislation in conservative states.

State-Specific Insights

- Indiana, Ohio, and Oregon passed siting legislation with modest benefits for clean energy deployment.
- Legislators in Texas, Oklahoma, Arizona, Arkansas, and Louisiana were busy trying to restrict clean energy deployment and scored few minor victories.
- Mixed results were delivered for renewables in Maryland and South Carolina legislation.

1 Brad Plumer, "How the G.O.P. Bill Will Reshape America's Energy Landscape," New York Times, July 3, 2025. https://www.nytimes.com/2025/07/03/climate/congress-bill-energy.html.
2 As of June 15 when our data was collected, 14 state legislatures were actively meeting in session or special session, including CA, OR, AZ, WI, MI, OH, PA, NC, DE, NJ, CT, MA, NH, ME
3 Clean Tomorrow, "Newsletters," 2025. https://cleantomorrow.org/category/newsletters/
4 Alex Breckel & Nelson Falkenburg , "Insight Report: State Policy Approaches to Renewable Energy Siting," Clean Tomorrow, April 2025. https://cleantomorrow.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/cleantomorrow_siting-solutions-project_insight-report.pdf

In addition to key findings from the 2025 session, we offer a 2026 legislative forecast for six states: Colorado, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Louisiana, Indiana, and Oklahoma. We anticipate legislative action on siting policy in these states next year, but they will not be alone—additional states will almost certainly introduce and advance siting legislation.

Anticipated Deployment Impact of Enacted Bills

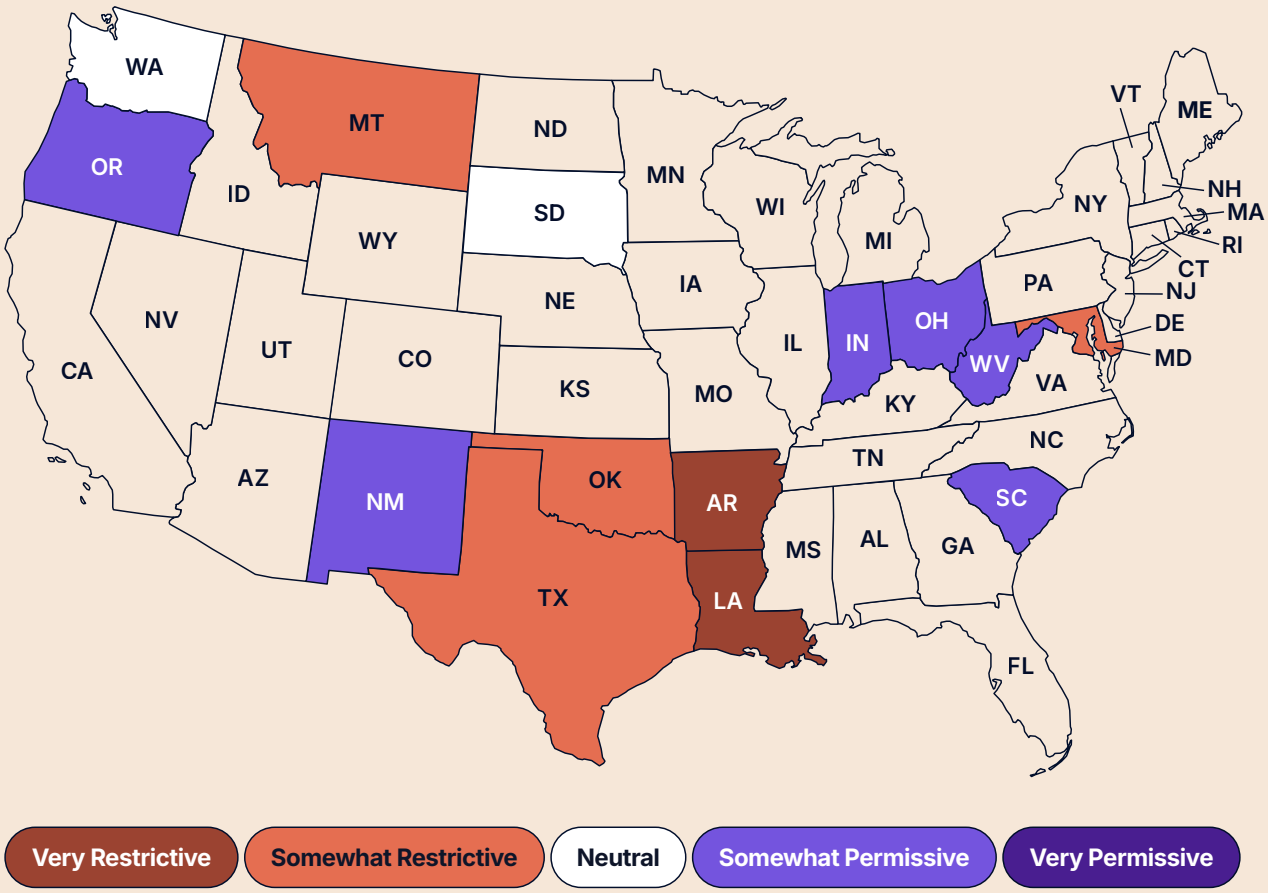

Figure 1: The likely impact of enacted renewable energy siting legislation, by state.

National Trends

Siting legislation was introduced in almost every state, with most bills likely to make clean energy deployment more difficult.

For renewable energy siting legislation, the 2025 session has been extraordinary in its scope and intensity. Clean Tomorrow identified more than 305 siting-related bills introduced across 47 states. Of these, we found that 148 (49%) were "restrictive," and would likely make clean energy deployment more difficult versus 66 bills (22%) that were "permissive," and likely to facilitate more rapid deployment. We found that 89 bills (29%) would have a neutral or ambiguous impact, making small procedural or technical adjustments to the permitting process.

Overall Deployment Impact Distribution

Restrictive bills significantly outnumber permissive ones

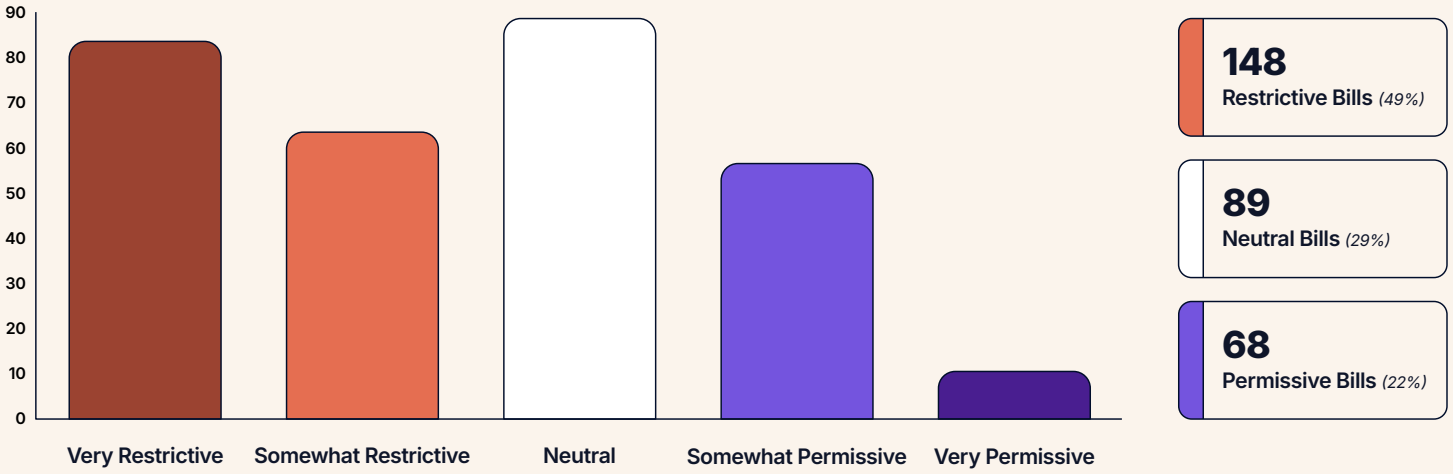

Figure 2: The likely impact of all introduced legislation across the US.

Restrictive policy approaches are gaining momentum in states with large amounts of clean energy and recent permissive reforms are under attack.

The introduction of a slew of bills to restrict renewable deployment are most common in states that have witnessed the most wind and solar capacity additions over the last decade.[5] Legislation to require more local approvals, expand restrictive setback requirements, and increase local control over zoning (see the full list on page 6) were most prevalent in Texas, Oklahoma, Illinois, New York, and Virginia. Texas and Oklahoma rank first and second for most wind capacity added over the last 10 years, while Illinois checks in at number six on that list. Virginia and New York rank eighth and ninth for solar capacity additions over the same period. All five states were among the most active in the siting arena (see Figure 3, below).

Clean energy opponents also sought to overturn laws in states that recently enacted permissive siting reforms. California,[6] New York,[7] Illinois,[8] Michigan,[9] and Washington[10] all passed major siting reforms in the last four years. In each of these states, policymakers sought to repeal or water down these laws, and to enact new laws restricting clean energy deployment in other ways.

5 Climate Central, "A Decade of Growth in Solar and Wind Power: Trends Across the U.S.," April 3, 2024. https://www.climate-central.org/report/solar-and-wind-power-2024#wind-powered-states-in-2023

6 Laura Zager, Julie Jones, Camarin Madigan, et al., "California Expands Energy Commission's Jurisdiction to Bolster Clean Energy Development," Perkins Coie, July 18, 2022. https://perkinscoie.com/insights/update/california-expands-energy-commissions-jurisdiction-bolster-clean-energy-development.

7 Michael B. Gerrard and Edward McTiernan, "New York's New Statute on Siting Renewable Energy Facilities," Columbia Law School Scholarship Archive, 2020. https://scholarship.law.columbia.edu/faculty_scholarship/3026/

8 ArentFox Schiff, "Illinois Enacts New Law to Standardize Local Permitting for Renewable Energy Facilities," January 31, 2023. https://www.jdsupra.com/legalnews/illinois-enacts-new-law-to-standardize-4587029/

9 Michigan Public Service Commission, "Renewable Energy and Energy Storage Facility Siting Workgroup," 2025. https://www.michigan.gov/mpsc/commission/workgroups/2023-energy-legislation/renewable-energy-and-energy-storage-facility-siting

10 H.B. 1216 2023-24, 2023 Reg. Sess. (Wash. 2023). https://app.leg.wa.gov/b`illsummary?Year=2023&BillNumber=1216.

Michigan's 2023 law, PA 233, created a new, optional state siting process for large wind, solar, and battery projects while standardizing local siting processes, and is widely seen as the vanguard of effective clean energy siting policy.[11] Last year, opponents of the law challenged the new policy through a failed ballot initiative.[12] This year, attacks came via the courts[13] and the legislature.[14] As of publication, the legislative reversal of PA 233's permissive siting reforms is unlikely to advance while the court challenge is ongoing. Backers of the ballot initiative and legislation have said they will be back on the offensive in 2026.[15]

Illinois passed HB 4412 in 2023 directing local governments to integrate state standards for wind and solar projects into local zoning ordinances.[16] The standards include limitations on setback distances, height requirements, sound restrictions, and more, effectively establishing novel guardrails on local government approvals. Since the bill's passage, a small number of Illinois counties have been sued by renewables companies over non-compliant ordinances.[17] In response, counties are attempting to reassert their power over renewable siting in 2025 with legislators introducing numerous bills to amend the state standards.[18]

Top 10 Most Active States in 2025 by Bills Introduced

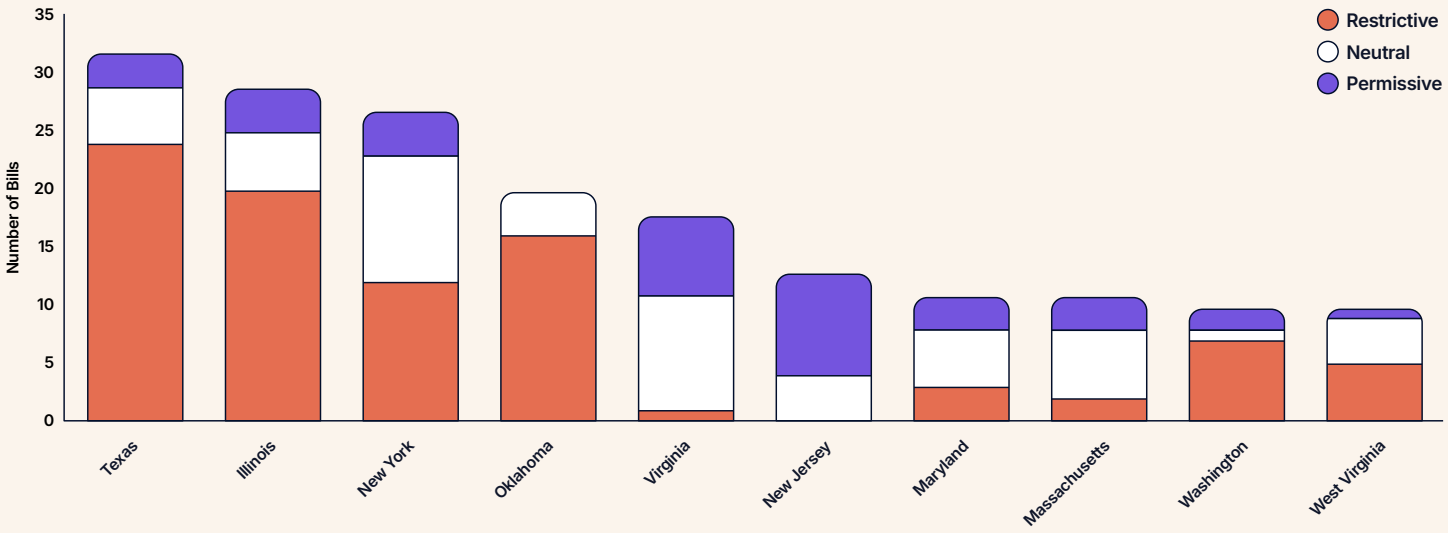

Figure 3: The number of bills introduced and their likely impact in the 10 most active states.

11 P.A. 233, 102nd Legislature, 2023 Reg. Sess. (Mich. 2023) https://www.legislature.mi.gov/documents/2023-2024/publicact/htm/2023-PA-0233.htm
12 James David Dickson, "Ballot effort seeks to repeal Lansing control of solar, wind siting," January 6, 2024. https://www.michigancapitolconfidential.com/news/ballot-effort-seeks-to-repeal-lansing-control-of-solar-wind-siting
13 Potomac Law Group, "Michigan Townships File Appeal of Public Service Commission's Siting Order," November 14, 2024. https://www.potomaclaw.com/news-Michigan-Townships-File-Appeal-of-Public-Service-Commissions-Siting-Order
14 Alissa Rivera, "Farmers, Clean Energy Trades Urge Michigan Lawmakers to Oppose Anti-Business Legislation," April 22, 2025, Advanced Energy United. https://blog.advancedenergyunited.org/articles/farmers-clean-energy-trades-urge-michigan-lawmakers-to-oppose-anti-business-legislation
15 Gongwer News Service, "Effort to repeal renewable energy projects siting law stalls," May 28, 2024. https://www.crainsdetroit.com/politics-policy/effort-repeal-renewable-energy-projects-siting-law-stalls
16 H.B. 4412, 102nd Gen. Assemb., Reg. Sess. (Ill. 2022). https://www.ilga.gov/Legislation/BillStatus.asp?DocNum=4412&GAID=16&DocTypeID=HB&LegId=137757&SessionID=110
17 Illinois State Association of Counties, "Wind and Solar Facility Litigation Survey of Counties," April 16, 2025. https://www.isacoil.org/Resources/d182c3b6-e8df-4243-9679-f854790e1d2c/Wind%20and%20Solar%20Litigation%20Survey%20.pdf
18 Illinois State Association of Counties, "Wind and Solar Facility Law," 2025. https://www.isacoil.org/wind-and-solar-facility-law/.

The most frequently introduced restrictive policy approaches included:

1. **Requiring More Local Approvals:** 50 bills (17%) required local referendums and community approval processes, representing the most common restrictive mechanism
2. **Increased Local Control Over Zoning:** 42 bills (14%) altered local zoning authority, often to restore restrictive powers or enable project bans
3. **Expanded Setback Requirements:** 41 bills (14%) established increasingly restrictive distance requirements from property lines and specific land uses
4. **Financial Security Mandates:** 32 bills (11%) required upfront decommissioning costs and enhanced bonding requirements
5. **Public Hearing/Notice Requirements**: 30 bills (10%) imposed additional procedural barriers through extended notification and hearing processes
6. **Agricultural Impact Restrictions:** 14 bills (5%) specifically targeted renewable development on agricultural lands
7. **State Land Restrictions:** 12 bills (4%) sought to limit renewable development on public lands

Republican lawmakers introduced many more—and more restrictive—bills than their Democrat colleagues, but bipartisan bills were more likely to advance.

Republican lawmakers introduced nearly twice as many siting bills as their Democrat colleagues, and these bills were overwhelmingly restrictive: Republicans introduced nine restrictive bills for every one permissive proposal. Democrats introduced permissive bills on a 2-to-1 basis over restrictive bills. A small minority of all siting proposals were sponsored on a bipartisan basis (15 of the 305).

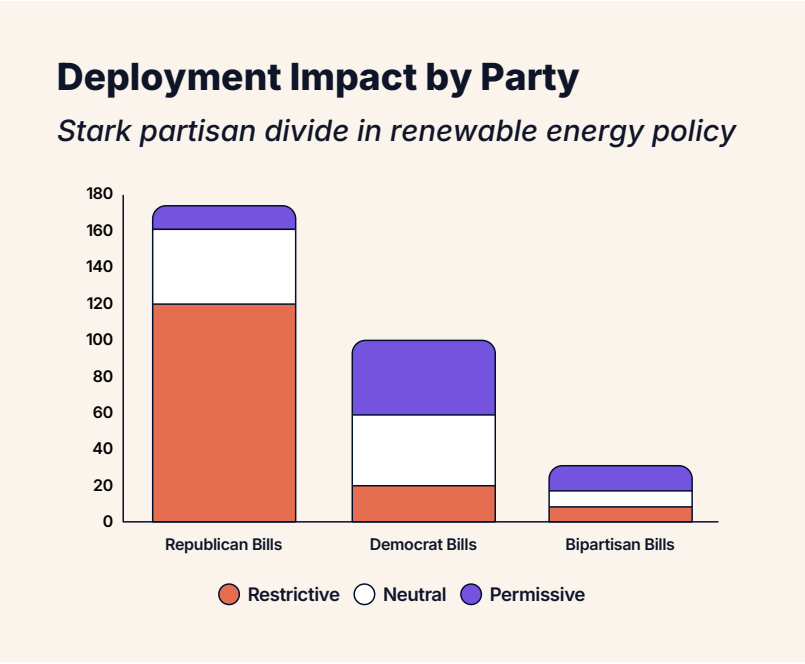

Figure 4: The likely impact of introduced bills, by political party.

Nealy half of the 15 bills that passed with bipartisan sponsorship were likely to facilitate more rapid deployment, outnumbering restrictive bills. These bipartisan bills had a 40% success rate of being passed and signed into law, twice that of Democrat-sponsored bills and four times that of Republican-sponsored bills. This finding indicates that a bipartisan approach may be helpful for passing permissive legislation even in trifecta states, perhaps because siting policy is often framed as both a rural land use issue and a climate issue, thus requiring support from diverse interest groups.

Renewable energy broke even, with a balance of wins and losses, and only trifecta states passed siting policy reforms.

About half of the siting bills enacted or still pending as of this report's publication (22 of 39) are primarily procedural or make minor adjustments and would have little to no impact on clean energy deployment. The remainder skews slightly towards permissive legislation (10) with only a handful of restrictive bills passing their respective legislatures (7). Only states with trifecta governments passed siting legislation.

States that passed restrictive siting policies are all trifecta Republican states, meaning Republicans control the House, Senate, and Governor's office, and included: Arkansas, Louisiana, Maryland, Montana, Wyoming, Oklahoma, and Texas. States that passed permissive siting policies are a combination of Republican- and Democrat-controlled states, and included: Colorado, Connecticut, Indiana, Maine, New Hampshire, Ohio, Oregon, South Carolina, and Washington.

This trend may reflect the challenges of passing any legislation in a state with a split legislature, or a governor of a different party. Renewable energy siting is also an especially polarizing issue, with a recent Pew Research Center survey indicating Republican support for wind and solar resources plummeting since the first Trump administration took office, making it much more difficult to find compromise in non-trifecta states.[19]

Technology-agnostic legislation was more likely to advance in states with at least one Republican chamber, but environmental advocates take issue with tech-inclusive reforms.

Siting and permitting reforms that benefit all energy technologies, including renewable and non-renewable energy technologies (also known as "all-of-the-above" or "tech-inclusive" policies), were more likely to pass in states with at least one Republican chamber. Ohio's HB 15[20] and SB 2[21] are a good example of energy reforms passed in 2025 that accelerate permitting for all technologies including strict permitting timelines and improved brownfield siting incentives. However, local environmental advocates are likely to oppose such tech-inclusive reforms—as they did for HB 502[22] introduced in Pennsylvania and HB 1628[23] introduced in Indiana—because they accelerate permitting for natural gas plants, even if passage of the legislation benefits renewable energy technologies most.[24]

For a policy solution set like siting reform, which often relies upon support from rural legislators and environmental groups alike to be successful, navigating which technologies to include or exclude from legislation is a particularly thorny issue.

19 Pew Research Center, "Americans' Views on Energy at the Start of Trump's Second Term," June 5, 2025. https://www.pewresearch.org/science/2025/06/05/americans-views-on-energy-at-the-start-of-trumps-second-term/
20 H.B. 15, 136th Gen. Assemb., Reg. Sess. (Ohio 2025), eff. Aug. 14, 2025. https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/136/hb15
21 S.B. 2, 136th Gen. Assemb., Reg. Sess. (Ohio 2025). https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/136/sb2
22 H.B. 502, 2025–2026 General Assembly, 2025 Reg. Sess. (Pa. 2025). https://www.palegis.us/legislation/bills/2025/hb502
23 H.B. 1628, Property Development Matters, 2025 Gen. Assemb., Reg. Sess. (Ind. 2025), introduced January 21, 2025. https://iga.in.gov/legislative/2025/bills/house/1628/details
24 Food & Water Watch, "Position Statement for HB502," 2025. https://www.foodandwaterwatch.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/Position-Statement-for-HB502.docx-3.pdf,

Non-traditional coalitions effectively blocked or limited the impacts of restrictive siting legislation in conservative states.

The four neighboring states of Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, and Texas all introduced significantly restrictive renewable energy siting reforms in 2025. While Arkansas' bill (SB 437)[25] passed with relative ease, advocates operating in the other states were more effective in blocking restrictive legislation, or minimizing its impact, by forming non-traditional coalitions with business and technology groups.[26] These coalitions emphasized the benefits of cheap energy produced by renewables for meeting demand from new data centers and maintaining low costs for existing industries.

The legislation passed in Louisiana (HB 459)[27] was significantly less restrictive than the bill that was initially introduced (HB 615),[28] which would have set that state's emerging solar industry back a decade or two. One of the surprising outcomes from the legislative session in Louisiana was an unlikely coalition of renewable energy industry, business groups, and oil and gas interests who banded together to oppose HB 615.[29] Louisiana's Oil and Gas Association was particularly motivated to defend against restrictive siting policies as they experience rising energy and operating costs in the Gulf and rely increasingly upon affordable electricity from solar and wind.

In Texas, new advocates for solar and wind from diverse backgrounds joined with typical defenders of renewables to block major industry-killing reforms in that state.[30] Opposition to legislation like SB 819, a particularly restrictive bill, included local chambers of commerce, ranchers, veterans, and landowners.[31] These groups joined conservation and environmental groups, and the energy industry, to defend against restrictive legislation and scored a victory. Unlikely allies were able to block any major punitive legislation from passing, despite Texas seeing the highest volume of restrictive siting bills introduced by any state.

In Oklahoma, a slew of restrictive bills – the second highest number of siting reform bills of any state – were introduced during the 2025 legislative session. The energy industry played a large role in opposing restrictive bills in the state, but received support from tech companies looking to pair data centers with low-cost renewables in Oklahoma, and from policymakers whose constituents benefit economically from wind energy.[32] Governor Stitt was also an ally of the energy industry, as he echoed affordability arguments from business groups when he vetoed two bills targeting renewables, SB 915[33] and SB 713,[34] that passed the legislature. Governor Stitt argued that SB 915 would arbitrarily limit education revenue by limiting renewable development on state land and that SB 713 created "an unnecessary and expensive burden that will get passed along to customers."[35] These vetoes demonstrate that pragmatic governors, with the support of diverse constituencies, may serve as a bulwark against overly restrictive legislation.

25 S.B. 437, Arkansas Wind Energy Development Act, 95th General Assembly, 2025 Reg. Sess. (Ark. 2025). https://arkleg.state.ar.us/Bills/Detail?id=SB437
26 Jason Plautz, "Megabill renewables debate mirrors state battles," E&E News (Energywire), July 1, 2025. https://www.eenews.net/articles/megabill-renewables-debate-mirrors-state-battles-2.
27 H.B. 459, 2025 Reg. Sess. (La. 2025). https://www.legis.la.gov/legis/ViewDocument.aspx?d=1422176
28 H.B. 615, 2025 Reg. Sess. (La. 2025). https://legis.la.gov/legis/BillInfo.aspx?i=248695
29 Shannon Heckt, "Regulations for Louisiana solar farms fizzle, leaving locals in the dark," New Orleans CityBusiness, May 14, 2025. https://neworleanscitybusiness.com/blog/2025/05/14/louisiana-solar-regulation-bill-fails/
30 Doug Lewin, "Rural Texans Speak Against Senate Bill 819," The Texas Energy and Power Newsletter, April 10, 2025. https://www.douglewin.com/p/rural-texans-speak-against-senate
31 S.B. 819, 89th Legislature, 2025 Reg. Sess. (Tex. 2025). https://capitol.texas.gov/tlodocs/89R/billtext/pdf/SB00819I.pdf
32 Anna Pope, "Wind energy brings money to landowners and rural communities, but pushback remains," NPR, June 10, 2025. https://www.kosu.org/local-news/2025-06-10/wind-energy-brings-money-to-landowners-and-rural-communities-but-pushback-remains
33 S.B. 915, 60th Legislature, 2025 Reg. Sess. (Okla. 2025). https://www.oklegislature.gov/BillInfo.aspx?Bill=sb915&Session=2500
34 S.B. 713, 60th Legislature, 2025 Reg. Sess. (Okla. 2025). https://www.oklegislature.gov/BillInfo.aspx?Bill=sb713&Session=2500
35 Graycen Wheeler, "Oklahoma landowners are torn on wind energy. How do policymakers move forward?" NPR, June 11, 2025. https://www.kosu.org/energy-environment/2025-06-11/oklahoma-landowners-are-torn-on-wind-energy-how-do-policymakers-move-forward

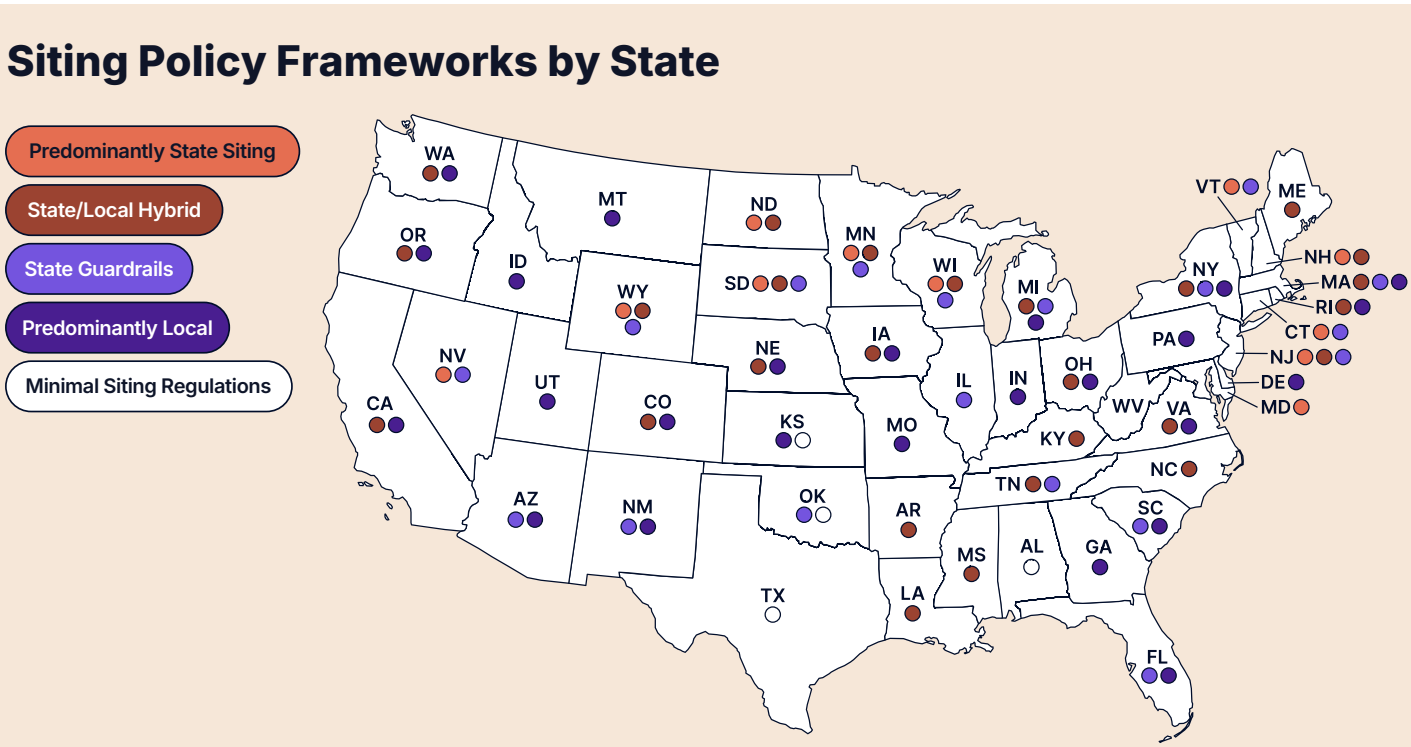

Figure 5: State siting policies prior to the 2025 legislative session.

State-Specific Insights

Indiana, Ohio, and Oregon passed siting legislation with modest benefits for clean energy deployment.

Indiana: Fossil Fuel Power Plants Win Big, but Minor Victories Scored for Wind and Solar

Indiana represents a major lost opportunity for renewable siting advocates but an incremental victory nonetheless. In the face of rapidly rising power demand and increasing electricity costs, local governments have banned or placed a temporary freeze on utility-scale clean energy projects in 72 of the state's 92 counties.[36] A bill which would have overhauled the state's siting process, HB 1628,[37] failed to advance due to opposition from counties.[38] HB 1628 would have shifted authority for permitting energy projects larger than 50 megawatts (MW) from local governments to the state, among other provisions.

The most consequential bill that passed the Republican legislature (SB 425)[39] accelerates permitting for energy projects in designated "energy production zones," excluding wind and solar from those zones, but the bill includes broader reforms to local permitting processes that will benefit clean energy projects. Authored by two Republican senators, SB 425 as introduced would have expedited permitting for all energy sources built at the site of existing or former fossil fuel power plants and former mines, allowing

36 Noelle Maxwell, "County resistance plagues Indiana renewable push," Indiana Capital Chronicle. May 5, 2025, https://indianacapitalchronicle.com/2025/05/05/county-resistance-plagues-indiana-renewable-progress/

37 H.B. 1628, Property Development Matters, 2025 Gen. Assemb., Reg. Sess. (Ind. 2025). https://iga.in.gov/legislative/2025/bills/house/1628/details

38 Casey Smith, "Opposition brings likely end to Indiana utility siting bill, but the issue isn't going away," Indiana Capitol Chronicle, February 17, 2025. https://indianacapitalchronicle.com/2025/02/17/opposition-brings-likely-end-to-indiana-utility-siting-bill-but-the-issue-isnt-going-away/

39 S.B. 425, 124th General Assembly, 2025 Regular Session (Ind. 2025). https://legiscan.com/IN/bill/SB0425/2025

such projects to bypass local approval so long as they received state permits. Unfortunately, the bill's first committee amended the language to explicitly exclude wind and solar facilities, leaving fossil fuel and nuclear power plants as the sole beneficiaries. House Republicans attempted to re-insert wind and solar provisions but failed to maintain the language through conference between the House and Senate.

The bill scored a few clear, if minor, victories for wind and solar:

- **Moratorium Limitations:** Restricts explicit prohibitions of electricity project development to a maximum of one year.
- **Timeline Standardization:** Establishes consistent timelines for local permitting decisions.
- **Process Improvements:** Streamlines review procedures for energy infrastructure.
- **Protects Vested Interests:** Ensures permit requirements cannot be changed by the local government after the developer has filed a complete application.

While Indiana Republicans voted nearly unanimously to streamline siting for fossil fuel and nuclear power plants, it's regrettable that the same benefits were not afforded to wind and solar projects—despite the state's rising power demand and electricity costs.[40] While clean energy missed the boat this year, advocates for sensible siting reforms may now work to incorporate wind and solar into the same streamlined siting framework afforded to fossil fuel and nuclear power that received overwhelming support from Republican lawmakers in the state.

Ohio: Limited Improvements

Ohio passed HB 15[41] and SB 2[42] as an omnibus energy package, which includes some permitting improvements and policy attributes that may make siting wind and solar marginally easier in the coming years.[43] The following policy elements were included in the bill package:

- **Solar Energy Subsidies Changes:** Both bills repeal the limited solar subsidies created by HB 6 (2019).[44] SB 2 replaces the program with the School Energy Performance Contracting Loan Fund. The fund will give loans to schools to pay for energy conservation and measure installment contracts, including the installation of solar panels. HB 15 requires unspent funds to be refunded to ratepayers.
- **Priority Investment Areas (PIAs):** Both bills create PIAs in brownfields or former coal mine areas, as designated by local governments. The PIA title brings lower tax rates and expedited review for energy projects by the Ohio Power Siting Board (OPSB) in a 45-day siting process. HB 15 makes PIA projects eligible to receive a Brownfield Remediation Program grant of up to $10 million.
- **SB 2 Accelerates Small-Scale Clean Energy Development:** SB 2 applies local zoning to all types of generation under 50 MW, as Ohio previously did not allow local zoning for solar projects under 50 MW. Projects greater than 50 MW are regulated by the OPSB.
- **HB 15 Encourages Community Energy Projects:** HB 15 creates a Community Energy Pilot Program, authorizing and encouraging community-owned energy systems for any energy form. Ohio's General Assembly previously supported the development of a solar community energy pilot project.

40 Indiana Capital Chronicle, "Electricity and energy costs continue to grow in Indiana," MirrorIndy, December 2, 2024. https://mirrorindy.org/electricity-and-energy-costs-continue-to-grow-in-indiana/
41 H.B. 15, 136th Gen. Assemb., Reg. Sess. (Ohio 2025), eff. Aug. 14, 2025. https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/136/hb15
42 S.B. 2, 136th Gen. Assemb., Reg. Sess. (Ohio 2025). https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/136/sb2
43 Bricker Graydon, "Ohio Legislature Passes Landmark Energy Legislation," April 30, 2025. https://www.brickergraydon.com/insights/publications/ohio-legislature-passes-landmark-energy-legislation
44 H.B. 6, 133rd Reg. Sess. (Ohio 2025). https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/133/hb6

- **Keeping Costs Down:** Key changes to energy rates in both bills aim to lower the cost of electricity for both individuals and energy businesses. HB 15 and SB 2 both repeal the electric security plans (ESP) program, which has let utilities not pay full rate cases, and amend the tangible personal property (TPP) tax on electric, energy, and pipeline companies to increase investment in Ohio energy projects.

Oregon: Minor, Positive Changes

Oregon currently has a state siting authority—the Energy Facility Siting Council (EFSC)—with the ability to site large projects. However, siting through EFSC is sclerotic at best and not helped by the significant challenge developers face interconnecting their projects to Bonneville Power Administration's grid.[45] With the passage and signing of three bills, Oregon made minor progress on renewable energy permitting reforms:

- **More Local Permitting and Decommissioning Requirements:** HB 3874 Increases from 50 to 100 MW the size of wind projects that are required to use EFSC. This is viewed as a benefit in Oregon, where local governments are more efficient at siting wind projects. The county or the developer may also elect to opt into the EFSC siting process. The bill also maintains reasonable decommissioning requirements for wind projects between 50 – 100 MW, including a restoration plan and financial assurances.[46]
- **Permitting Process Improvements:** HB 3681 allows EFSC to grant an automatic extension of three years to the construction deadline, for projects that are in substantial compliance with their site certificates, eliminating the need for time-consuming amendments. The bill allows minor site boundary changes to be accomplished without requiring an amendment to the certificate. The bill requires EFSC to shorten the timeline of contested cases to a maximum of one year. Appeals of contested cases will now go directly to the Supreme Court and a party must have standing to appeal final site certificates issued by EFSC. Finally, the bill removes the requirement that developers attain all land use approvals before filing a petition for a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity (CPCN)—a burdensome sequencing requirement—and narrows CPCN review.[47]
- **Light-Mitigating Technology:** HB 2375 requires wind developers to apply to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) for approval to use light-mitigating technologies, and, if approved, to install those technologies within 24 months, unless the FAA takes more than one year to issue a determination.[48]

Both HB 3874 and HB 3681 passed the Democrat-controlled legislature on party-line votes, even though HB 3874 nominally provides counties with more authority over siting large projects. On the other hand, HB 2375 passed in a bipartisan fashion, with Democrats and Republicans supporting the bill in near-unanimity.

45 Tony Schick and Monica Samayoa, "How the Pacific Northwest's dream of green energy fell apart," NPR. May 12, 2025, https://www.kuow.org/stories/how-the-pacific-northwest-s-dream-of-green-energy-fell-apart

46 H.B. 3874, Relating to the jurisdiction of the Energy Facility Siting Council over wind energy facilities, 2025 Reg. Sess. (Or. 2025). https://olis.oregonlegislature.gov/liz/2025R1/Measures/Overview/HB3874

47 H.B. 3681, Relating to energy facilities, 2025 Reg. Sess. (Or. 2025). https://apps.oregonlegislature.gov/liz/2025R1/Measures/Overview/HB3681

48 H.B. 2375, Relating to wind energy facilities, 2025 Reg. Sess. (Or. 2025). https://olis.oregonlegislature.gov/liz/2025R1/Measures/Overview/HB2375

Legislators in Texas, Oklahoma, Arizona, Arkansas, and Louisiana were busy trying to restrict clean energy deployment and scored a few minor victories.

Texas: "A Mess in Texas" - Restrictive Turn from the Energy Leader

Our legislative tracking data reveals Texas has taken a decidedly restrictive approach to siting policy, with 24 of 32 bills showing negative deployment impacts. Despite leading the nation in renewable energy capacity, thanks in large part to few regulations and a market-driven approach, Texas pursued contradictory policies in 2025.[49] The only bills that passed the Texas legislature were modest changes related to fire mitigation at battery energy storage facilities (HB 3824),[50] parks and wildlife commission approval requirements for wind development in coastal areas (HB 3556),[51] and decommissioning and recycling requirements for wind turbines (HB 3228).[52] Rulemaking at the Parks and Wildlife Commission to implement HB 3556 will indicate how restrictive that policy will be in the long run.

Despite the fact that only three siting-related bills were adopted, several bills passed out of the Texas Senate that would have decimated the renewable energy industry, including SB 819, which would have established extreme setback requirements, excessive public noticing requirements, and a state siting authority specific to renewables;[53] and SB 388, which would have established a reverse portfolio standard, setting a goal that 50% of MW generated in the Electric Reliability Council of Texas (ERCOT) would be sourced from dispatchable generation (in other words, wind and solar would be restricted to no more of half the state's electricity capacity).[54] Anti-renewable legislation in Texas was primarily advanced by a group called Stewards for Texas, which is linked to billionaire Daniel Friedkin.[55,56] Friedkin blocked a transmission line proposed to run through his ranch, has proposed previous legislation aimed at the renewable industry, and is a major Republican donor in the state.

Of the 32 siting bills introduced in Texas, only three were beneficial for the renewable industry, indicating strong headwinds for pro-renewable policies in the future. The 2025 session represents a significant policy reversal for the nation's renewable energy leader, but with an off year in 2026 (the Texas legislature only convenes every other year), the energy industry has a chance to regroup for 2027.

Oklahoma: Dodging the Bullet of Systematic Restrictions

Oklahoma shows a concerning pattern, with 16 of 20 bills introduced in 2025 carrying negative deployment impacts, a greater number than any state not named Texas. Anti-renewable sentiment in Oklahoma has been simmering for some time, fueled by concerns for the oil and gas industry and claims of a "green scam," but it may be reaching a boiling point as anti-renewable activists push for increasingly punitive laws.

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49 Dan Gearino, "Texas Leads U.S. Renewable Energy Generation by a Country Mile," Inside Climate News, March 6, 2025. https://insideclimatenews.org/news/06032025/inside-clean-energy-texas-leads-renewable-generation/

50 H.B. 3824, 89th Legislature, 2025 Reg. Sess. (Tex. 2025). https://capitol.texas.gov/BillLookup/History.aspx?LegSess=89R&Bill=HB3824

51 H.B. 3556, 89th Legislature, 2025 Reg. Sess. (Tex. 2025). https://capitol.texas.gov/BillLookup/History.aspx?LegSess=89R&Bill=HB3556

52 H.B. 3228, 89th Legislature, 2025 Reg. Sess. (Tex. 2025). https://capitol.texas.gov/BillLookup/History.aspx?LegSess=89R&Bill=HB3228

53 S.B. 819, 89th Legislature, 2025 Reg. Sess. (Tex. 2025). https://capitol.texas.gov/tlodocs/89R/billtext/pdf/SB00819I.pdf

54 S.B. 388, 89th Legislature, 2025 Reg. Sess. (Tex. 2025). https://capitol.texas.gov/BillLookup/History.aspx?LegSess=89R&Bill=SB388

55 Krysti Shallenberger, "Who is Stewards of Texas, the group pushing anti-renewable energy bill SB 819?," Energy Policy Institute. April 7, 2025, https://energyandpolicy.org/who-is-stewards-of-texas-the-group-pushing-anti-renewable-energy-bill-sb-819/

56 Chris Tomlinson, "Billionaire goes after wind, solar projects," Press Reader. April 20, 2024, https://www.pressreader.com/usa/houston-chronicle-sunday/20250420/282102052521964?srsltid=AfmBOoqD5Y1XAdWOMccT3Dqv2IXtwDLcUYAPBaWof-Epi336YcYcdaZB1

Advocates in Oklahoma avoided a number of bills that would have hamstrung the renewable industry.[57] A law passed in 2015 requires wind turbine decommissioning and 1,500-foot setbacks for wind turbines from schools, hospitals, and public-use airports.[58] One bill proposed this year was SB 2, which would have added additional setback distances from residential dwellings and property lines.[59] SB 2 passed the Senate but was amended by the House Energy and Natural Resources Oversight Committee to include the far more restrictive requirements of HB 2751.[60] HB 2751 and the amended SB 2 would have established setbacks for wind turbines of 0.25 nautical miles (1,500 feet) from residential dwellings and non-participating properties as well as a referendum option for counties wishing to waive or adjust those distances. Both bills failed in the opposite chamber, with the Senate Pro Tem Lonnie Paxton announcing the proposed setback distances were unreasonable and that "politics, misinformation and petty personal agendas have co-opted the debate on this bill." The Senator committed to take up the bill in a future legislative session.[61]

In the end, only three siting-related bills passed the Oklahoma legislature, with two of the three receiving vetoes from Governor Stitt, who is unabashedly pro-renewables. SB 915, vetoed by Governor Stitt and not enacted into law, would have established standards for solar deployment on state lands. SB 713 proposed requiring light-mitigating technology for wind turbines; while Governor Stitt also vetoed the bill, the legislature overrode the veto and passed the bill. HB 1373, also signed into law, codified decommissioning requirements, including financial assurances.[62]

Louisiana: Emerging Restrictive Framework

Louisiana introduced four restrictive bills in the 2025 session. Only one bill passed (HB 459), and while it will likely move the state backwards on solar energy deployment, it provides parishes with solar ordinances an opportunity to opt-out of new standards, and the bill is an improvement from what was originally proposed. The bill includes the following provisions:

- **Permit Requirements for Renewables:** The Louisiana legislature's bill requires permits for all battery, onshore wind, and solar projects greater than 75 acres from the Department of Energy and Natural Resources (DENR).
- **Decommissioning Requirements:** Wind projects require financial security and a decommissioning plan under HB 459, and DENR is expected to develop permitting regulations.
- **Moderately Restrictive Setbacks:** The bill sets restrictive standards for solar facilities including: 300-foot setbacks from residential property lines with 35-50-foot vegetative barriers,100-foot setbacks from water bodies, and 50-foot setbacks with 35-foot vegetative barriers from roads. The bill also requires stamped landscape plans by either a landscape architect or landscape horticulturalist to acquire a permit.
- **Extremely Restrictive Noise Limits:** Most problematically, HB 459 sets noise level limits of 10 dB above ambient noise at the property line, which is louder than a whisper or rustling leaves. This may block many projects or require relocating inverter infrastructure to the middle of a parcel.[63]

57 Jeal Holzman, "The Growing Push to Ban Renewable Energy in Oklahoma," Heatmap Plus, January 8, 2025. https://heatmap.news/plus/the-fight/spotlight/renewable-energy-ban-oklahoma
58 Okla. Stat. tit. 17, § 160.20 (2025)
59 S.B. 2, 2025 Reg. Sess. (Okla. 2025). https://www.oklegislature.gov/BillInfo.aspx?Bill=sb2&Session=2500
60 H.B. 2751, 2025 Reg. Sess. (Okla. 2025). https://www.oklegislature.gov/BillInfo.aspx?Bill=%20hb2751&Session=2500
61 Oklahoma Senate Press, "Pro Tem Paxton Comments on Senate Bill 2 Receiving no Further Action," May 20, 2025. https://oksenate.gov/press-releases/pro-tem-paxton-comments-senate-bill-2-receiving-no-further-action
62 H.B. 1373, 60th Legislature, 2025 Reg. Sess. (Okla. 2025). https://www.oklegislature.gov/BillInfo.aspx?Bill=HB1373
63 H.B. 459, 2025 Reg. Sess. (La. 2025). https://www.legis.la.gov/legis/ViewDocument.aspx?d=1422176

It could have been much worse. Rep. Brett Geymann, R-Lake Charles, proposed HB 615 to regulate utility-scale solar projects, which failed in the Senate.[64] The bill would have been more restrictive than HB 459, with a 1-mile setback requirement from residential property lines with a 100-foot vegetative barrier, in addition to a 60-day public comment period. State Rep. Matthew Willard, D-New Orleans, noted that the bill would have made Louisiana one of the most restrictive states for building solar projects.[65]

Arizona: Sustained Opposition

Arizona narrowly avoiding passing the nation's most restrictive legislation for wind development and remains a hotbed for policy proposals to limit renewable deployment. Of the four siting bills in Arizona, SB 1150 progressed the furthest. SB 1150, which narrowly passed in the Arizona House, would have allowed individuals to petition against county conditional use permits via a referendum process for wind projects. The bill also would have established extreme setbacks and extensive buffer zones.[66] SB 1150 would have required a 6-mile setback for wind farms from areas zoned for residential use; this was scaled down from the 12-mile setback requirement proposed in HB 2223, an earlier version of the bill.[67] Under both bills, proposed wind farms must obtain approval from all municipalities within 25 miles. Finally, SB 1150 proposed imposing state barriers on federal land development by requiring the approval of all nearby County Boards of Supervisors.

HB 2223, the original wind siting bill, was introduced in response to community opposition towards a single wind farm, Lava Run, and illustrates how issues facing individual projects can balloon into near-bans affecting an entire state.[68] If SB 1150 or HB 2223 passed, either would have been the most restrictive wind development law in the US. In their analysis, the Arizona Republic and USA TODAY found HB 2223 would have prohibited development on 90% of Arizona's land.[69] Rep. Patty Contreras, D-Phoenix, said the bill "goes too far to restrict this clean energy alternative."[70] Meanwhile, environmental groups in Arizona were vocal in opposing HB 2223, SB 1150, and other restrictive bills for clean energy. If either restrictive bill passed the legislature, it's possible Governor Hobbs would have exercised her veto authority.[71]

Arkansas: Enacted Restrictions

Arkansas passed the "Arkansas Wind Energy Development Act" (SB 437) imposing comprehensive restrictions on wind development with serious implications for the nascent industry.[72] Arkansas' first wind energy project, Delta Wind, came online in 2024 and another 1.9 GW of wind energy are under development. Of the six siting bills proposed, SB 437 was the only one that passed.

64 H.B. 615, 2025 Reg. Sess. (La. 2025). https://legis.la.gov/legis/BillInfo.aspx?i=248695
65 Shannon Heckt, "Regulations for Louisiana solar farms fizzle, leaving locals in the dark," New Orleans CityBusiness, May 14, 2025. https://neworleanscitybusiness.com/blog/2025/05/14/louisiana-solar-regulation-bill-fails/
66 H.B. 82315, 56th Legislature, 1st Regular Sess. (Ariz. 2025). https://apps.azleg.gov/BillStatus/BillOverview/82315
67 H.B. 2223, 2025 Reg. Sess. (Ariz. 2025). https://legiscan.com/AZ/bill/HB2223/2025
68 Jenna Moreira, "Local AZ. rep introduces bill to rein in industrial wind farms in rural Arizona," White Mountain Independent, February 17, 2025. https://www.wmicentral.com/news/local-az-rep-introduces-bill-to-rein-in-industrial-wind-farms-in-rural-arizona/article_65105c60-ea24-11ef-8f34-cff34c05dd08.html
69 Joan Meiners and Ignacio Calderon, "Bill would block wind energy projects across 90% of Arizona, set strictest limits in U.S.," Azcentral, February 17, 2025, updated March 3, 2025. https://www.azcentral.com/story/news/local/arizona-environment/2025/02/27/arizona-lawmakers-could-block-wind-projects-on-most-of-arizona-land/78543235007/
70 Joan Meiners and Ignacio Calderon, "Bill would block wind energy projects across 90% of Arizona, set strictest limits in U.S.," Azcentral, February 17, 2025, updated March 3, 2025. https://www.azcentral.com/story/news/local/arizona-environment/2025/02/27/arizona-lawmakers-could-block-wind-projects-on-most-of-arizona-land/78543235007/
71 Joan Meiners, "Environmental groups outline legislative priorities, target bills to support and oppose," Azcentral, February 19, 2025. https://www.azcentral.com/story/news/local/arizona-environment/2025/02/18/arizona-environmental-bills-2025/78888678007/
72 S.B. 437, Arkansas Wind Energy Development Act, 95th General Assembly, 2025 Reg. Sess. (Ark. 2025). https://arkleg.state.ar.us/Bills/Detail?id=SB437

SB 437 imposes restrictive wind project setback requirements of 3.5 times the turbine height from private property and 1-mile buffers from locations of specified sensitive uses, including schools, hospitals, parks, city limits, and airports. The legislation also preempts local governments from adopting more permissive standards than the states. Finally, the bill erects significant financial barriers for wind projects. Decommissioning requirements in the bill include obliging developers to provide upfront financial security of 100% the estimated decommissioning costs during the permit application process. This requirement significantly increases the capital costs for projects which are often operating at the margins before they are operational. An earlier version of the bill would have applied these restrictions to projects located more than 300 feet above sea level, effectively splitting the state in half to allow projects currently under development in the state's eastern half to proceed.[73] However, that provision was later removed—the final bill does not include carve outs for proposed wind farms—jeopardizing these projects.[74]

The wind industry's future in the state is now up in the air. A spokesperson for wind developer Triple Oak Power said, "SB 437 appears to establish a significant new regulatory bureaucracy for wind in Arkansas." The executive director of Southern Renewable Energy Association also stated, "there are a number of concerning provisions that would either ban or significantly impede wind energy development," expressing concern for risks to "electric reliability and economic growth."[75]

Mixed results for renewables in Maryland and South Carolina energy legislation.

Maryland: Fixing What Isn't Broken

A somewhat regressive policy reform introduced in Maryland (HB 1036/SB 931)[76][77] passed the legislature on a party line vote and will take the state backwards on renewable deployment. Prior to the legislation, Maryland allowed for preemption of local ordinances for projects larger than 2 MW through the Maryland Public Service Commission which grants certificates of public convenience and necessity. While the process was expensive, litigious, and time-intensive (requiring approximately one year) it provided certainty for developers and allowed for some flexibility in the siting process. That flexibility is now out the window and siting in the state will be increasingly challenging.

HB 1036 codifies a rigid set of standards for renewables at the PSC for setbacks, fencing, vegetative screening, and site maintenance that will make siting more difficult than the previous process. In a nod to agricultural interests, the bill also adopts an acreage cap on solar development in "priority preservation areas" (i.e., prime farmland) to 5% of the land in the county's priority preservation areas. Additionally, the bill increases the bonding requirements for project decommissioning to 125% and adopts a novel landscape bonding requirement. A provision struck from the final version of the bill would have enabled localities to require payments in lieu of taxes of $5,000 per MW from a solar project.

Local governments are already identifying loopholes and work-arounds to further limit solar development under the new law.[78] For instance, Queen Anne's County adopted a solar soil development fee on certain

73 Phillip Powel, "'Breaking Wind' proposal would split Arkansas in two for wind energy regulations," Arkansas Times, April 11, 2025. https://arktimes.com/arkansas-blog/2025/04/11/breaking-wind-proposal-would-split-arkansas-in-two-for-wind-energy-regulations

74 Jaxon Tolbert, "New Arkansas wind law risks jobs, investment, and landowner rights," Smart Energy Wind Institute, April 18, 2025. https://www.sewind.org/news/new-arkansas-wind-law-risks-jobs-investment-and-landowner-rights

75 Phillip Powell, "Bill would allow local governments to create additional permitting requirements for wind projects in Arkansas," Arkansas Times, March 14, 2025. https://arktimes.com/arkansas-blog/2025/03/14/bill-would-allow-local-governments-to-create-additional-permitting-requirements-for-wind-projects-in-arkansas

76 H.B. 1036, 2025 Reg. Sess. (Md. 2025). https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/hb1036?ys=2025RS

77 S.B. 931, 2025 Reg. Sess. (Md. 2025). https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/SB0931?ys=2025RS

78 Lauren Miller, "UPDATE: Maryland Solar Bill Sparks Backlash from Local Leaders, Activists," WBOC, May 27, 2025, updated May 29, 2025. https://www.wboc.com/news/update-maryland-solar-bill-sparks-backlash-from-local-leaders-activists/article_8aba092a-b9a6-46fe-9dc2-a6b524e71e88.html

soil types, which was not contemplated in the legislation, and is limiting the amount of land area that can be covered in the 5% acreage cap by exempting previously approved conservation easements from the calculation.[79]

As the dust begins to settle in Maryland, it's increasingly clear the state has thrown a wrench in a process that didn't need fixing in the first place, likely making siting more challenging for renewables in the coming years.

South Carolina: Potential Gains, but the Jury is Still Out

South Carolina's omnibus energy bill, "The Energy Security Act" (HB 3309), may move the ball forward, or make siting more onerous, depending on how counties adopt and interpret new standards. Currently, all projects less than 75 MW are only subject to local requirements, which may be very minimal. HB 3309 streamlines permitting for "all-of-the-above" energy projects. It includes a strict 6-month permitting timeline, and deems projects automatically approved if the permitting process meets the 6-month mark.

In counties without zoning ordinances, the bill establishes reasonable standards for all solar projects larger than 13 acres (~2 MW). The requirements include 50-foot setbacks from adjoining property lines, very specific vegetative buffers, 6-foot fencing, and decommissioning.[80] Only 16 counties, of South Carolina's 46 counties, have solar zoning ordinances, meaning the requirements in HB 3309 will apply to most of the state's counties until they pass their own ordinances.[81] Finally, HB 3309 requires each electrical utility to file a proposed voluntary renewable energy program for review by the Public Service Commission.

The bill's emphasis on new natural gas plants and a shortened period for the Department of Environmental Service's review sparked concern among environmental groups. The bill passed along party lines in the South Carolina House (88-13) and Senate (35-11).[82]

Looking Ahead: 2026 Legislative Forecasts

Based on current political dynamics and policy momentum, Clean Tomorrow anticipates significant siting activity in 2026 in Colorado, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Louisiana, and Oklahoma.

Colorado: Building Momentum

The 2025 session was quiet for renewable energy siting legislation in Colorado as policymakers and advocates await the findings of a legislatively mandated study. SB 24-212, passed in 2024, directed the Colorado Energy Office to conduct a study of energy siting with early results indicating support for more technical assistance to local governments, acknowledging the need for more certainty in the project permitting process, and proposing policy solutions like designating counties as clean energy resource zones.[83] Democratic control, and Governor Polis' desire to shape energy policy before his term ends, suggest a likely advocacy push for renewable energy siting legislation in the 2026 session.

79 Andrea Grabenstein, "Queen Anne's County aims to seek solar soil development fees," Bay Times and Record Observer. July 2, 2025, https://www.myeasternshoremd.com/qa/news/queen-annes-county-aims-to-seek-solar-soil-development-fees/article_f9bd1409-4250-4dd1-bb1c-000db99c7f1e.html

80 H.B. 3309, The Energy Security Act, 2025–2026 Sess. (S.C. 2025). https://www.scstatehouse.gov/sess126_2025-2026/bills/3309.htm

81 S.C. Department of Environmental Services, "Solar Panel Ordinances," Bureau of Land & Waste Management, accessed July 10, 2025. https://des.sc.gov/programs/bureau-land-waste-management/solar-panels/solar-panel-ordinances

82 Sammy Fretwell, "SC House approves energy bill that limits environmental oversight of new power plants," The State, February 13, 2025. https://www.thestate.com/news/local/environment/article300215649.html#storylink=cpy

83 S.B. 24, 2024–2025 Sess. (Colo. 2024). https://leg.colorado.gov/sites/default/files/2024a_212_signed.pdf

Beyond 2026, Democratic leadership is likely to continue in the state, and support for the renewable industry along with it, as pro-renewable Senator Michael Bennet announced his campaign for governor in the solidly blue state earlier this year.[84] Other contenders, such as Attorney General Phil Weiser, are also supportive of clean energy.[85]

Siting reforms that build upon findings from the SB 24-212 study will likely be proposed by the administration in 2026 and include policy concepts such as: maintaining the local authority of counties' 1041 zoning powers, providing additional technical assistance resource to counties, and reforming an existing appeals pathway to the Colorado Public Utilities Commission.

However, in the face of potential reforms, there is industry consternation and increasing tensions among local governments. Many developers are happy with the status quo in Colorado, have little issue advancing projects, and don't want to stir the pot; others worry a pendulum swing towards more local governments adopting restrictive zoning ordinances may be on the horizon. For their part, local governments are wary of any proposals that would reduce their zoning authorities. Plus, the relationship between local governments and the Polis administration is frayed, following tough policy fights over housing zoning authorities.

Pennsylvania: Time for a RESET?

Governor Shapiro's administration's "Lightning Plan"—an "all-of-the-above" energy strategy to lower costs and reduce emissions, proposed through six distinct pieces of legislation—is creating momentum for renewable energy siting reforms in the 2025 session.[86] However, whether the proposals can advance through a divided legislature remain to be seen.

The Governor and state legislators have proposed HB 502, which would establish an optional state siting pathway for utility-scale energy projects through the newly-created Reliable Energy Siting and Electric Transition (RESET) Board. A certificate from the Board would supersede local limits on project siting, but certificates may not be granted for projects proposed in residentially zoned areas. The legislation also sets strict timelines for permit decisions and appeals.[87]

Another siting-related bill progressing through the Pennsylvania legislature is SB 349, which advanced out of the Republican-controlled Senate with near-unanimity. The bill establishes comprehensive decommissioning requirements for solar facilities greater than 2MW, including step-wise financial assurance requirements, 5-year updates on the estimated costs of decommissioning, restoration requirements, a standardized form developed by the Department of Environmental Protection, and a preemption clause limiting local governments from adopting additional decommissioning requirements.[88]

Wind and solar developers, labor groups, the business community, and other advocates are pushing for a policy solution during the 2025 legislative session, envisioning some combination of elements from HB 502 and SB 349. However, local climate groups oppose HB 502 on principle because it accelerates the

84 Caitlyn Kim, "Sen. Michael Bennet is officially running for governor," Colorado Public Radio, April 11, 2025. https://www.cpr.org/2025/04/11/michael-bennet-running-for-colorado-governor/

85 Colorado Attorney General Phil Weiser, "Attorney General Phil Weiser sues Trump administration for halting wind energy development," Colorado Attorney General Press Release, May 5, 2025. https://coag.gov/2025/phil-weiser-sues-trump-wind-energy-5-5-25/#:~:text=%E2%80%9CI%20won't%20sit%20by,for%20our%20state%20and%20nation.%E2%80%9D

86 Pennsylvania Governor's Press Office, "ICYMI: Gov Shapiro 'Lightning Plan' Introduced in General Assembly," PA.gov, April 24, 2025. https://www.pa.gov/governor/newsroom/2025-press-releases/icymi--gov-shapiro--lightning-plan--introduced-general-assembly-.html

87 H.B. 502, 2025–2026 General Assembly, 2025 Reg. Sess. (Pa. 2025). https://www.palegis.us/legislation/bills/2025/hb502

88 S.B. 349, 2025–2026 General Assembly, 2025 Reg. Sess. (Pa. 2025). https://www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/billinfo/bill_history.cfm?syear=2025&sind=0&body=S&type=B&bn=349

permitting process for "all-of-the-above" energy technologies.[89] But, it's unlikely the Republican Senate would back renewables-only legislation. Which approach will prevail, or if the proverbial can is kicked to 2026, remains to be seen.

Virginia: Post-Election Possibility

In Virginia, the blink-and-you'll-miss-it legislative session ended without passage of a siting bill, despite political momentum and the introduction of several potential siting reforms. 18 siting-related bills introduced during the legislative session demonstrate significant and sustained interest in the topic.

Two trends are coming to a head in Virginia as rising energy demand—fueled by a data center boom in the state—meets local level restrictions on renewable energy zoning, prompting concerns from business groups, the energy industry, and policymakers about the availability of affordable electricity.[90]

After much deliberation, the Commission on Electric Utility Regulation advanced a siting bill (HB 2126 / SB 1190)[91,92] which included a state siting board and a regional energy planning requirement. The Senate version was voted down on the floor, while the House version didn't make it out of committee. Another bill, HB 2438, which would have established statewide standards for local governments to incorporate into zoning ordinances, advanced furthest, narrowly passing the House but failing to pass out of the Senate Commerce and Labor Committee.[93] Republicans rejected both proposals outright for limiting county authorities, while some Democrats feared retribution from voters during the next election cycle would lose them their slim majorities.[94]

Even if a bill had advanced through the Virginia legislature, it's likely it would have done so along partisan lines, and it's unclear if Governor Youngkin would have signed it—he vetoed 157 bills following the 2025 legislative session.[95] More opportunities for siting reform will emerge in 2026 if Democrats win the governor's seat, which they are favored to take in the next election. However, the depth and breadth of reforms the future governor is willing to consider is up for debate.

Louisiana: Is Wind Next?

Louisiana legislators introduced bills in 2025 to restrict solar development in the state, including HB 615 and HB 459, which were ultimately enacted. As discussed above, HB 459 establishes state-level permit requirements and statewide standards for solar projects, including setback distances, noise level requirements, and more. Legislators have signaled an interest in pursuing similar follow-on legislation in 2026 to further regulate the state's latent wind industry.

One outcome of the 2025 legislative session in Louisiana discussed above was the formation of a new, surprising coalition of business interests in defense of renewable development. This coalition includes the oil and gas industry, which requires access to affordable energy, which solar and wind can provide, in order to operate their facilities in the Gulf. Will this coalition grow stronger in 2026 to defend against restrictive wind policies?

89 Steve Hanley, "State vs. Local Control Over Energy Siting Sparks Debate In Pennsylvania," Clean Technica, June 2025. https://cleantechnica.com/2025/06/17/state-vs-local-control-over-energy-siting-sparks-debate-in-pennsylvania/

90 VA Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC), "Data Centers in Virginia," 2024. https://jlarc.virginia.gov/landing-2024-data-centers-in-virginia.asp

91 H.B. 2126, 2025 Sess. (Va. 2025). https://lis.virginia.gov/bill-details/20251/HB2126

92 S.B. 1190, 2025 Sess. (Va. 2025). https://lis.virginia.gov/bill-details/20251/SB1190

93 H.B. 2438, 2025 Sess. (Va. 2025). https://insideclimatenews.org/news/26032025/virginia-utility-scale-solar-reform-bill-denied/

94 Charles Paullin, "Localities, Rural Lawmakers Win in Halting Solar Siting Reform in Virginia," Inside Climate News, March 26, 2025. https://insideclimatenews.org/news/26032025/virginia-utility-scale-solar-reform-bill-denied/

95 Office of the Governor of VA, "Governor Glenn Youngkin Completes Action on Legislation from the 2025 General Assembly Session," March 24, 2025. https://www.governor.virginia.gov/newsroom/news-releases/2025/march/name-1043239-en.html

Along with likely defending against restrictive wind legislation, renewable advocates in Louisiana will be busy ensuring the new solar rules established by the Department of Energy and Natural Resources to implement the bill are clear and reasonable. Regulatory uncertainty caused by opaque rules and understaffing at the Department could further hobble the state's emerging renewable energy industry.

Indiana: Incremental Expansion

Renewable energy advocates in Indiana are likely to take another bite at the apple in 2026. As described above, the legislation (SB 425) that passed in 2025 made incremental improvements to permitting for all energy projects, but it removed renewables from brownfield siting programs and didn't include more consequential reforms.

Like Virginia, one of the biggest drivers of new energy demand in Indiana is a surge in data center growth, which Indiana is eager to attract alongside other industry.[96] However, Indiana's current approach towards renewable energy is restrictive, with more than two-thirds of the state's counties banning or significantly restricting wind and solar siting. Governor Braun, recognizing this phenomenon, created the Strategic Energy Growth Task Force following the 2025 session. The Task Force will develop a statewide energy growth plan, including an "all-of-the-above" energy approach to make Indiana an energy exporting state.[97]

Traction for renewable energy from the 2025 legislative session, coupled with the acknowledgement of the need for all energy sources to meet the state's industry growth, opens the door for renewable energy siting reforms to be back on the table in 2026. In Indiana, these reforms would most likely need to advance through an "all-of-the-above" energy bill in order to pass through the state's Republican trifecta.

Oklahoma: Continued Restrictions Expected

80% of the bills introduced during the 2025 legislative session in Oklahoma indicate negative impacts on renewable energy deployment, with no permissive bills contemplated. While no major restrictive legislation passed this year in Oklahoma, policymakers have vowed to continue the debate in 2026 with new bills. Wind energy siting in the state remains a topic of contention, and it's likely 2026 will see even more restrictive legislation introduced, but is it possible a permissive compromise could advance given Governor Stitt's support for renewables?

Oklahoma's Governor Stitt has been a tireless proponent of renewable energy since his election in 2019 as evidenced by the two vetoes mentioned above. However, he is unable to seek reelection, with a far less wind-friendly governor likely to take over the office in 2027.[98] In dark red Oklahoma, a Republican is almost assured victory and the front-runner is Attorney General Gentner Drummond, who has called wind farms the "green energy scam."[99] With a new governor on the horizon, wind industry and business advocates in the state face increasing headwinds and will look to defend against restrictive policy in 2026. However, advocates could consider introducing permissive legislation that, if passed, would blunt the impact of Governor Stitt's inevitable departure.

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97 Indiana Governor's Press Office, "Governor Braun Forms Strategic Energy Growth Task Force to Meet New Energy Demands Reliably and Affordably," IN.gov, June 25, 2025.

98 David Montgomery, "Wind and solar power opponents make headway in state legislatures," Oklahoma Voice, April 4, 2025. https://www.oklahomavoice.com/2025/04/04/wind-and-solar-power-opponents-make-headway-in-state-legislatures/

99 Tom Ferguson, "'Take action': Oklahoma attorney general calls out wind farms, 'Green Energy Scam,'" OKC Fox 25, March 10, 2025. https://okcfox.com/news/local/take-action-oklahoma-attorney-general-calls-out-wind-farms-green-energy-scam-gentner-drummond-governor-lawmakers-robbie-mccommas-landowner-turbines-farms-rural-county-commissioner-lincoln-marlon-miller-capitol-politics-kildare-collapse-travis-harris?utm_source=sfmc&utm_medium=email&sfmc_id=9991138&utm_guid=7db8d7bfd1e869d14147022cc26dadd1daddd3838d13c13dc59e9e8bf8b34b42&utm_campaign=

Conclusion

The 2025 legislative session has revealed a challenging landscape for renewable energy deployment, but worst-case proposals failed to pass their legislatures and there are opportunities on the horizon in 2026.

The Siting Solutions Project found that siting legislation was introduced in almost every state, with most bills (49%) likely to make clean energy deployment more difficult. Recent permissive siting reforms in several states, such as Illinois and Michigan, were under attack in 2025 as restrictive policy approaches gained momentum in states with large amounts of clean energy deployment. Many of these restrictive bills were introduced by Republican lawmakers, but new coalitions of business and renewable industry groups effectively blocked or limited the impacts of restrictive siting legislation. Of the 39 siting-related bills that did pass, renewable energy broke even, with a balance of wins and losses as only trifecta states passed siting reforms. Indiana, Ohio, and Oregon passed permissive siting legislation while Texas, Louisiana, and Arkansas did the opposite, passing laws to restrict new projects. Maryland and South Carolina passed energy legislation with indeterminate outcomes for wind, solar, and batteries.

The 2026 legislative session will be crucial for determining whether the restrictive momentum of 2025 represents a temporary backlash or if permissive policies will gain a greater foothold in future legislatures. At least six states—Colorado, Indiana, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, and Virginia—are likely to pursue siting legislation in 2026 and beyond.

For the renewable energy industry and climate advocates, the lesson is stark: state-level siting policy has become a critical and contentious arena for the clean energy transition. As the federal government abdicates its role in energy policy, the future of America's clean energy economy depends increasingly on the outcomes of these state-by-state political battles over where and how clean energy projects can be built.