U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

Sandia National Laboratories

CleanEnergy States Alliance

Bridging the Gap: How Emerging State Policies are Making Energy Storage More Affordable and Accessible

January 7, 2025

A Presentation of the Energy Storage Technology Advancement Partnership (ESTAP)

Webinar Logistics

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Submit questions and comments via the Questions panel 

Speaker bios available in the “Materials” section 

Automated captions are available 

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Celebrating 20 Years of State Leadership

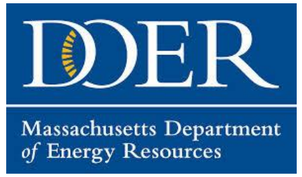
Clean Energy States Alliance

The Clean Energy States Alliance (CESA) is a national, nonprofit coalition of public agencies and organizations working together to advance clean energy.

CESA members—mostly state agencies—include many of the most innovative, successful, and influential public funders of clean energy initiatives in the country.

CleanEnergy States Alliance

www.cesa.org



Energy Storage Technology Advancement Partnership (ESTAP)

Conducted under contract with Sandia National Laboratories, with funding from US DOE Office of Electricity.

- Facilitate public/private partnerships to support joint federal/state energy storage demonstration project deployment
- Support state energy storage efforts with technical, policy and program assistance
- Disseminate information to stakeholders through webinars, reports, case studies and conference presentations

www.cesa.org/ESTAP

Thank You!

Dr. Imre Gyuk

Director, Energy Storage Research,
U.S. Department of Energy

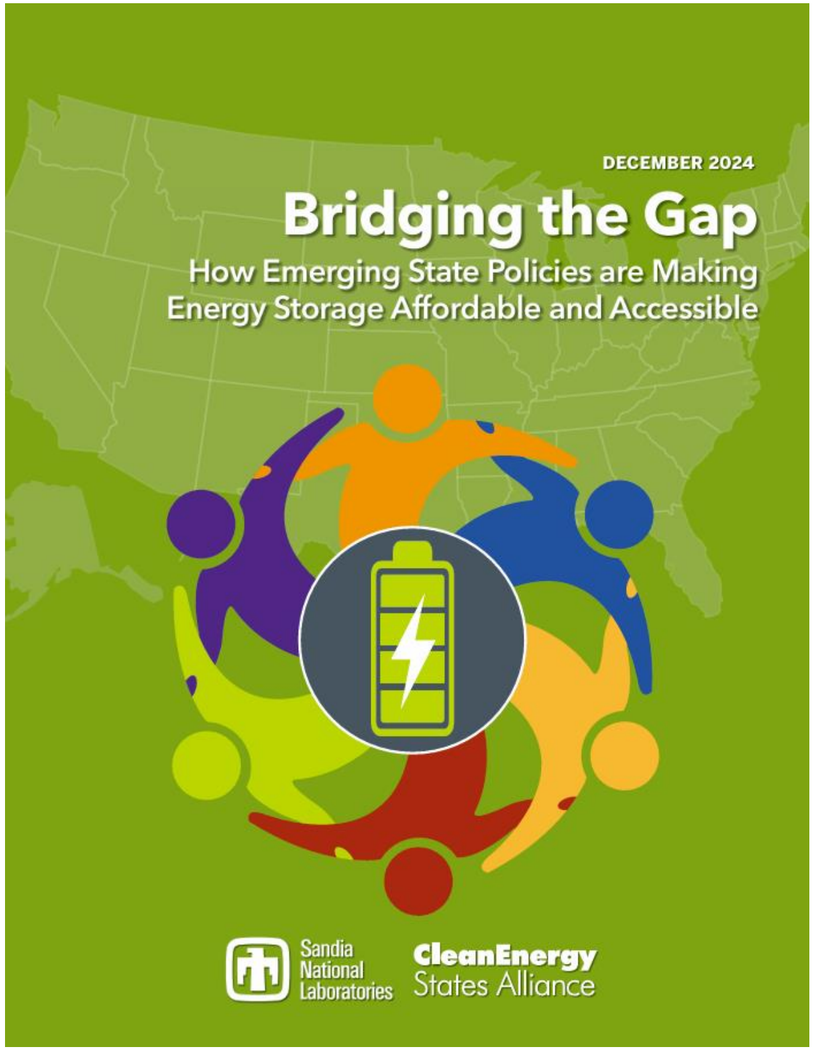
Waylon Clark

Energy Storage Program Demonstration Team Lead,
Sandia National Laboratories

Bridging the Gap: How Emerging State Policies are Making Energy Storage Affordable and Accessible

December 2024

Will McNamara / *Sandia National Laboratories*
Todd Olinsky-Paul / *Clean Energy States Alliance*



www.cesa.org/resource-library/resource/bridging-the-gap-state-policies-making-energy-storage-accessible

Webinar Speakers

Todd Olinsky-Paul
Clean Energy States Alliance

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Sandia National Laboratories

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www.cesa.org/ESTAP

Upcoming Webinars

Solar and Battery Storage to Support Community Preparedness and Disaster Response (1/15)

State of the U.S. Energy Storage Industry: 2024 in Review and a Look Ahead to 2025 (2/5)

Read more and register at www.cesa.org/webinars

“Bridging the Gap”: State Policies Making Energy Storage Affordable and Accessible

Webinar Presentation

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Sandia National Laboratories

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Clean Energy States ALliance

January 7, 2025

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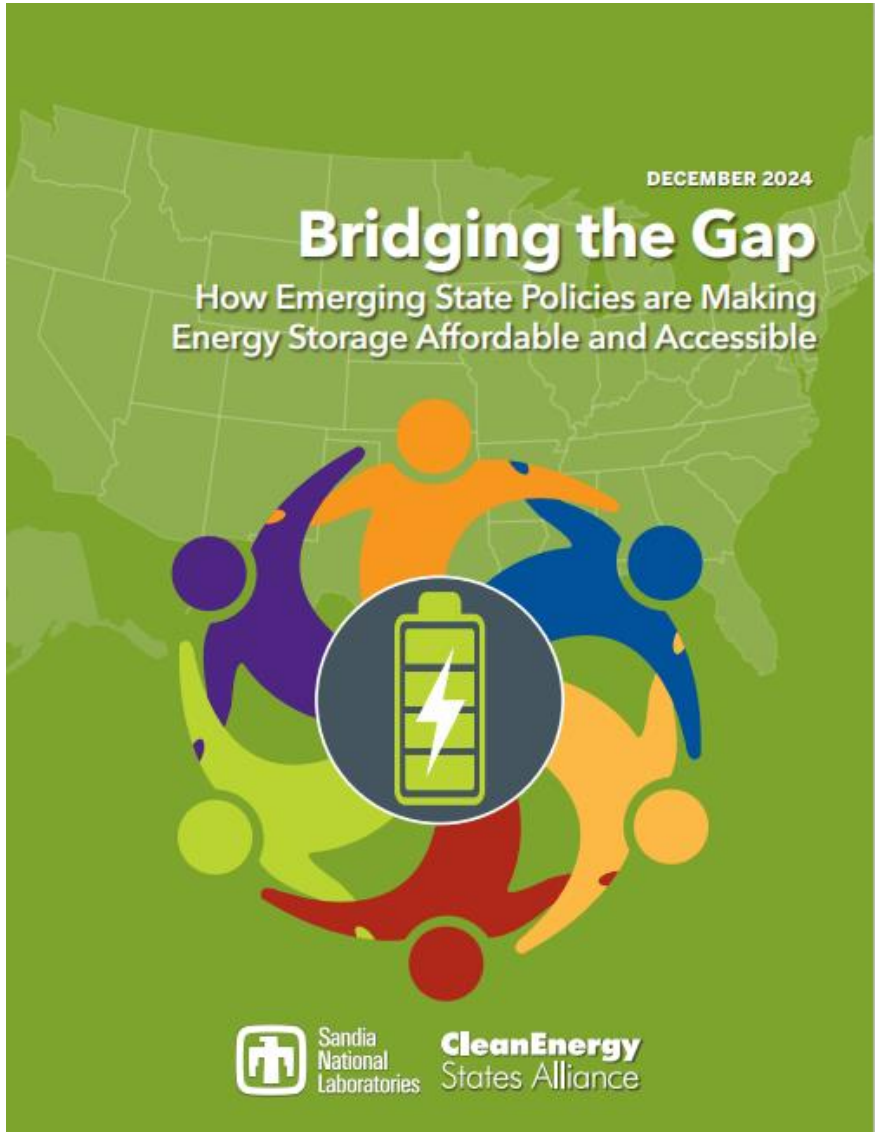
What we will be covering today

1. Summary of key points of our report: “Bridging the Gap”
2. Overview of the Sandia/CESA state policy program
3. Setting the context for our discussion: Why is this important?
4. Policy mechanisms and best practices: How are states creating change?
5. Recommendations for policymakers



Sandia & CESA: In partnership, serving States.

- ✓ Sandia and CESA have a long-standing partnership through which we provide support services to state offices.
- ✓ Our work is focused on energy storage policy frameworks and support for technology demonstration projects.
- ✓ This report that we published recently reviews emerging programs and policies states are adopting to make energy storage affordable and accessible to all.
- ✓ Our goal is to categorize and describe these emerging practices, report outcomes where possible, and provide a useful resource for state energy storage regulators and policymakers.
- ✓ https://energy.sandia.gov/programs/energy-storage/policy-and-outreach/regulatory-webinars/

Why is this topic so important?

- ✓ National statistics indicate that about 50 million households, or **44 percent of the U.S. population**, fall into the category of "underserved populations," also referred to as disadvantaged or low-income communities.

- ✓ These communities:

  - ✓ Historically have been most negatively impacted by severe weather associated with climate change and the associated electric grid outages;

  - ✓ Have disproportionately suffered human health and environmental impacts from air pollution associated with fossil-fueled power plants, which are frequently sited in disadvantaged communities; and

  - ✓ Typically carry a greater energy cost burden than more affluent communities.

Consider this:
in the case of Southern California Edison (SCE), one of the nation's largest electric utilities, 45% of residential households in its service territory are located in underserved or low-income communities.

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An EDISON INTERNATIONAL® Company

Solutions may be found through energy storage.

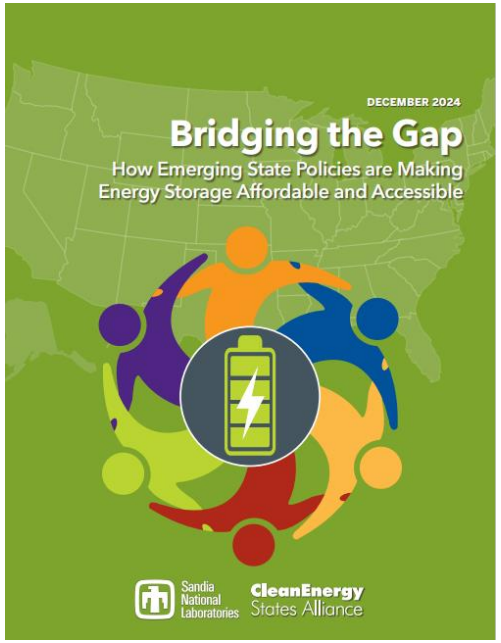
- ✓ Energy storage is becoming an increasingly integral tool to deliver numerous benefits to communities and to the electric grid.
  - ✓ Enable the deployment and integration of renewable energy;
  - ✓ Reduce local human health and climate impacts from fossil fueled generators;
  - ✓ Ease energy cost burdens, and
  - ✓ Increase community energy independence and resilience
- ✓ **A critical question is how make energy storage broadly affordable and accessible so that its benefits can be provided to all customer groups.**
- ✓ This question is particularly important for state agencies tasked with meeting clean energy goals.

Why… and why now?

Do states have a compelling interest in making energy storage affordable and accessible to all?

Isn’t simply advancing energy storage for those who can afford it challenging enough?

1. Commitment to affordable and accessible energy policy overall
2. Belief in energy resilience/reliability as a right
3. Energy storage as the most cost-effective and fastest solution
4. Storage in support of larger state energy policy goals
5. Requirements attached to federal funding opportunities



1. Commitments to affordable and accessible energy policy

Many states have made a commitment to affordability and accessibility in their clean energy and decarbonization policies.

These are overarching commitments that include, but are not limited to, energy storage.

- **Michigan:** The Healthy Climate Plan states that the "transition to a carbon neutral economy has the potential to help alleviate existing environmental injustices, address historical harms, and create new opportunities for Michiganders."
- **Massachusetts:** The Affordable Access to Clean and Efficient Energy Initiative "aims to help low- and moderate-income Massachusetts residents access cost-saving, clean and efficient energy technologies."
- **Wisconsin:** The Clean Energy Plan states, "a long-standing reliance on fossil fuels, poor environmental policy decisions, and broader historical injustices have had a detrimental effect on various communities in the state."

2. Energy storage, resilience/reliability as a right

Some states have taken the position that customers have a right to energy reliability and resilience in the face of increasing – and increasingly severe – power outages.

Others may view energy storage itself as a consumer right.

- **California:** Responding to utility preemptive power shutoffs due to fire risk, the California Public Utilities Commission adjusted its Self-Generation Incentive Program to include two new, higher incentive categories: “Equity” and “Equity Resiliency.” According to the program’s website, “Both categories aim to ensure lower-income, medically vulnerable, and at-risk for fire communities are at the front of the line to receive competitive incentives for battery storage.”
- **Colorado:** Senate Bill 9 (2018) states, “Colorado’s consumers of electricity have a right to install, interconnect, and use energy storage systems on their property without the burden of unnecessary restrictions or regulations and without unfair or discriminatory rates or fees.”

3. Energy storage as the most cost-effective and fastest solution

In some situations, energy storage may be the fastest and/or lowest cost solution for communities suffering from recurring power outages.

- **Vermont:** Utility Green Mountain Power has proposed a “Zero Outages Initiative” that would provide free behind-the-meter batteries to residential customers in remote rural locations where batteries offer a more cost-effective solution to power outages than traditional measures, such as undergrounding electric lines.
- **Puerto Rico:** following Hurricane Maria in 2017, which caused months-long grid outages in Puerto Rico, microgrids and distributed energy storage were deployed to quickly restore power to critical infrastructure, such as health clinics. More recently, U.S. DOE announced $440 million for residential batteries and rooftop solar PV in Puerto Rico. The investment is targeted toward low-income households and those with electricity dependent home health devices.

4. Storage in support of larger state energy policy goals

Without widespread storage adoption, including in low-income and underserved communities, it may not be possible to realize ambitious state energy goals such as electrification of the building sector, an important component of many state decarbonization plans.

- **Washington:** The 2021 State Energy Strategy: Transitioning to an Equitable Clean Energy Future states that “a just and equitable state energy strategy is a necessary condition for success.”
- **California:** The Air Resources Board states, “A successful building decarbonization transition must be an equitable one. This requires policy design that is responsive to the concerns, needs, and conditions of frontline communities.”
- **US DOE:** The 2023 Office of Policy report “On the Path to 100% Clean Electricity” states, “Achieving 100% clean electricity will require action and coordination from all levels of society.”

5. Requirements attached to federal funding opportunities

Some federal clean energy grants require that state proposals include community benefits planning in order to qualify.

For example, a Community Benefits Plan is required for all applications for Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) and Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) grants and loans.

Community Benefits Plans are based on four core policy priorities:

1) Investing in America's workforce

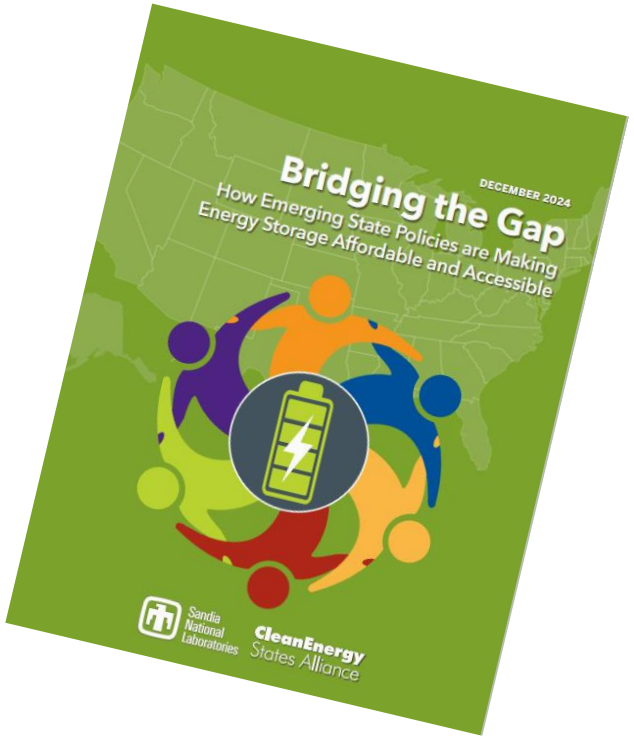
2) Engaging communities and labor

3) Advancing diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility

4) Implementing Justice40

- Requires that 40% of the benefits of federal investments in clean energy programs must flow to disadvantaged communities.
- Applies to over 145 U.S. Department of Energy programs
- Accounts for 20% of the technical merit score when grant proposals are reviewed
- Becomes part of the contractual obligation for funding recipients

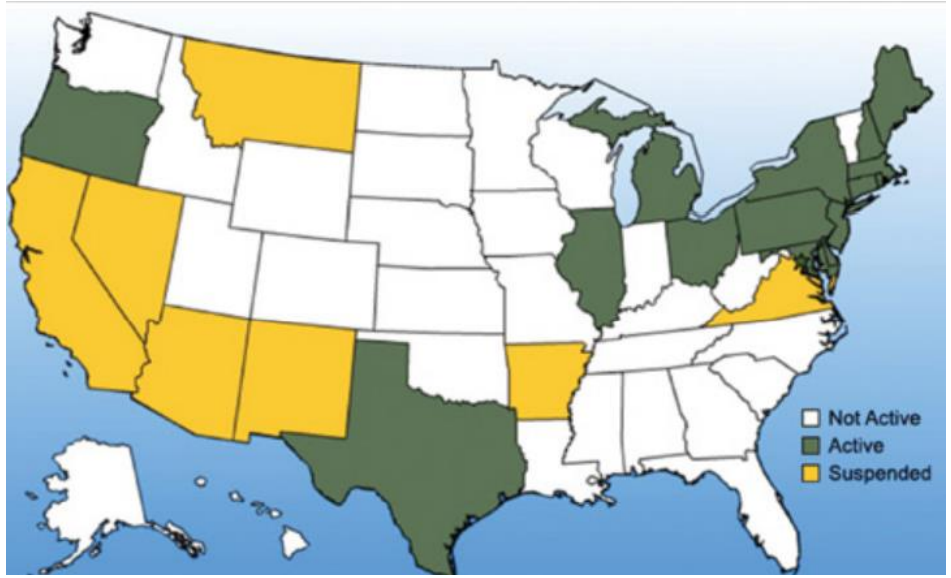
How To Do It?


DECEMBER 2024
Bridging the Gap
How Emerging State Policies are Making Energy Storage Affordable and Accessible
Sandia National Laboratories
CleanEnergy States Alliance

We need to merge Equity & Storage in Policymaking.

- ✓ Research by PNNL found that almost half of U.S. states (22 states + D.C.) have taken some form of action on energy equity.
- ✓ Research for this report reveals that far fewer have taken such actions on energy storage (<15, with variations on scope and approach).
- ✓ We recognize the significant differences in how energy markets are structured, along with different driving factors that influence policymaking in states:
  - ✓ Whether decarbonization has been adopted as a state goal;
  - ✓ Whether the state is vertically integrated or restructured.
  - ✓ The level of current renewables penetration, which drives the need for energy storage.
  - ✓ Inclusion in an RTO/ISO.

Status of Electric Restructuring by State



Best Practices are Emerging.

- ✓ Against this varied background, states have developed programs, policies, and regulations addressing access to clean energy resources.
- ✓ Some of these initiatives specifically address energy storage, while others apply broadly to clean energy policies but do not call out specific technologies.

Executive Orders & Initiatives

Connecticut (2019)	Massachusetts (2016)	New Mexico (2019)	North Carolina (2022)
Executive Order No. 3 required that the Governor's Council on Climate Change develop plans and guidelines for engaging diverse stakeholders in the process of integrating equity and environmental justice in decision-making processes.	Affordable Access to Clean and Efficient Energy Initiative, which among other programs resulted in the Solar Massachusetts Renewable Target (SMART) program, which features an incentive adder for energy storage paired with solar + an incentive adder for low-income participants.	Executive Order 2019-003 created the Interagency Climate Change Task Force, which adopted Climate Equity Guiding Principles including, among other things, prioritizing utility services and reducing energy burdens for overly burdened and low-income communities	Executive Order No. 246, North Carolina's Transformation to a Clean, Equitable Economy established pollution reduction and net-zero emissions goals while prioritizing communities overburdened by pollution.

Best Practices are Emerging.

Legislation

Colorado (2024)	Illinois (2021)	Washington (2019)
Senate Bill 24-207, “Access to Distributed Generation,” expanded access to community solar gardens by guaranteeing 51 percent of solar gardens built after 2026 are reserved for income-qualified customers. The law further required that the community solar capacity investor-owned electric utilities make available to customers must be paired with energy storage.	The Climate and Equitable Jobs Act of 202157 directed the Illinois Power Agency and Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity to expand “priority access to the clean energy economy for disadvantaged communities. Among other things, the Act established an accountability system that includes minimum accessibility standards, a new category for “equity eligible contractors,” and monitoring, reporting, and training requirements.	The Clean Energy Transformation Act,58 signed into law in 2019, commits Washington to an electricity supply free of greenhouse gas emissions by 2045. Among other provisions, the law requires an equitable distribution of the benefits from the transition to clean energy for all utility customers and adds and expands energy assistance programs for low-income customers.

Best Practices are Emerging.

Regulations, tariffs, and rates

Colorado (2022)	Minnesota (2023)	New York (2023)
CPUC issued revised tariff for net energy metering (NEM). The order restructures NEM pricing to incentivize solar plus storage systems and other home electrification measures while making rates more affordable for all. The tariff provides low-income customers, residents living in disadvantaged communities, and residents living in California Indian Country more than double the usual number of bill credits.	As part of proceeding that led to a rate increase approved for Xcel Energy by the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (PUC), the Just Solar Coalition, a group of nonprofits and cooperatives, emerged as a new voice lobbying for low-income households and ratepayers of color. According to local news coverage of the proceedings, the Minnesota PUC granted Xcel Energy a much smaller electricity rate increase than it sought after hearing testimony from the Coalition's advocates. The PUC also included in its order two provisions that could reduce bills for some ratepayers.	The New York State PSC established a 35 percent carve-out for disadvantaged communities to the State's procurement of its 6 gigawatts (GW) energy storage target, to be attained by 2030. The carve-out applied both to bulk and distributed energy storage procurement.

Best Practices are Emerging.

Incentive programs

California (2017)	Connecticut (2022)
The Self-Generation Incentive Program (SGIP) offers energy storage rebates for homes, apartments, and critical facilities, with carve-outs and adders for projects in disadvantaged and low-income communities, vulnerable households in fire-prone areas, critical service providers serving those districts, and customers located in those districts that participate in the state's low-income solar generation programs.	The Energy Storage Solutions program combines an up-front rebate with performance incentives for residential and commercial battery customers. It includes a residential equity adder (also applicable to multi-family low-cost housing), low-cost financing from the Connecticut Green Bank, a direct payment option to de-risk loans, and a Justice40 commitment.

Best Practices are Emerging.

Utility Planning Requirements

Michigan (2020)	Oregon (2020)
The Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy provides an environmental advisory opinion to the Michigan Public Service Commission, including climate and environmental justice impacts. The Michigan PSC then incorporates these opinions into its Integrated Resource Planning.	The Oregon PUC's distribution system planning (DSP) guidelines include a goal to align DSP initiatives with state and local equity goals and incorporate these considerations into distribution system investments.

Best Practices are Emerging.

Energy Efficiency and Electrification

Energy Efficiency (2019)	Electrification (2023)
Massachusetts incorporated battery storage into ConnectedSolutions, an active demand management program administered by utilities as part of the Commonwealth's three-year energy efficiency program. ConnectedSolutions provides performance-based incentives to battery customers, and home battery purchases are eligible for the zero-interest Mass Save HEAT loan. The ConnectedSolutions battery program has been extended to Rhode Island, Connecticut, and New Hampshire, which are served in part by the same investor-owned utilities that serve Massachusetts, and its design has been emulated in other states.	The Massachusetts Cape & Vineyard Electrification Offering (CVEO) offers combined solar, battery storage, and heat pump systems to low- and moderate-income residential customers served by the Cape Light Compact. Low-income customers will receive two batteries for free, while median-income customers will receive a $15,000 incentive for battery systems (and access to HEAT loans to help cover remaining costs). Income eligible customers must have had a home energy efficiency audit within the previous two years, and have implemented all recommended upgrades, including replacing fossil fuel appliances (i.e. they must have fully decarbonized homes).

Recommendations.

1. **Capacity carve-out** in an incentive or procurement program (a percentage of incentive budget or procurement capacity is set aside for projects benefiting underserved communities).
    - Without a carve-out, there is a risk that incentives, grants or procurement targets will be fully subscribed by more advantaged customers

2. **Incentive adder** for income-eligible participants, those residing in historically underserved communities, and commercial entities serving those communities.
    - States should consider adopting both a separate, reserved capacity block and an additional incentive adder for overburdened communities.

3. **Front-loaded incentive payments** for income-eligible participants.
    - Up-front or front-loaded incentives are important to help offset the initial capital investment needed to develop energy storage in low-income and historically overburdened communities.

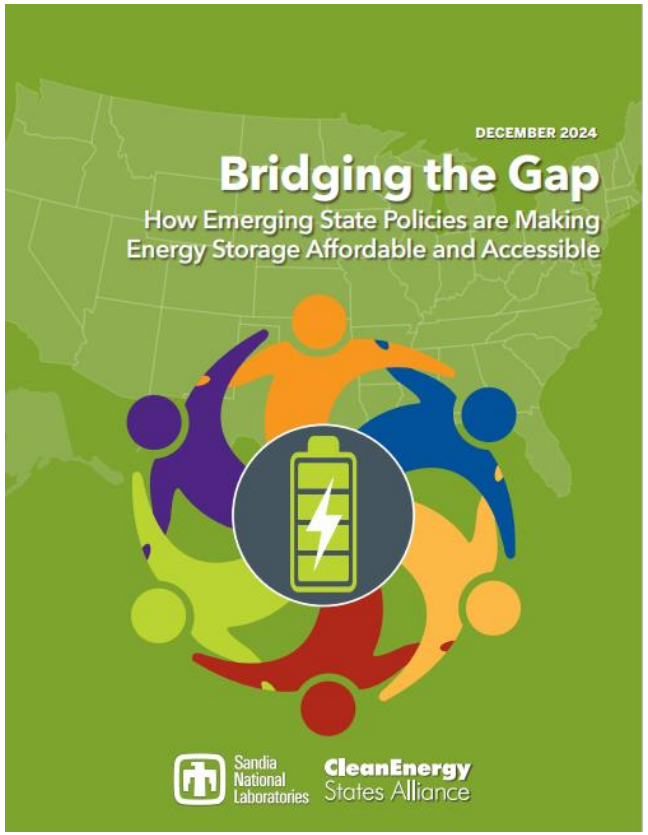
4. **Accessible financing** for income-eligible participants
    - Some energy storage incentive programs offer low- or no-cost financing, which can help customers with low incomes or low credit scores obtain a loan.

Recommendations (continued)

5. **Pre-development technical assistance** to determine technical and economic feasibility and project optimization, and to support funding applications
    - This is particularly important when grantees/applicants cannot afford engineering support
6. **Community benefits requirement**, for example, a requirement that commercial projects qualifying for affordability and accessibility incentive adders show how the project will benefit the underserved community
    - Without a CBR, it may be unclear how the project is serving the community
7. **Support for a variety of ownership models**, for example incentive eligibility for both customer-owned and leased systems
    - A variety of ownership models allows a diverse and flexible set of solutions

Additionally, three overarching precepts apply when developing energy storage programs:

1. Whenever possible, consideration of affordability and accessibility provisions should take place when programs are designed, rather than as a later add-on
2. The process of developing these provisions should incorporate input from a wide variety of stakeholders, including representatives of underserved communities and advocacy organizations
3. Once programming is in place, its effectiveness should be evaluated regularly, and provisions should be adjusted if they are found to be ineffective



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Funding provided by US DOE Energy Storage Program of the DOE Office of Electricity.

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MASSACHUSETTS
DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY RESOURCES

Battery Storage

Considerations for Achieving Clean Energy Progress

Formatted for the Clean Energy States Alliance (CESA) webinar, *Bridging the Gap: How Emerging State Policies are Making Energy Storage Affordable and Accessible*

Presented by
Elischia Fludd, Environmental Justice Senior Lead

Table of Contents

DOER and Energy Affordability

Expanding the Clean Energy Progress

Zooming Out to Apply Within

Crafting Equitable Pathways to Success

Agency Contact Information

MASSACHUSETTS
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ENERGY RESOURCES

DOER and Energy Affordability

As the State Energy Office, DOER is the primary energy policy agency for the Commonwealth. DOER focuses on transitioning our energy supply to lower emissions, reducing and shaping energy demand, and improving our energy system infrastructure.

- Who We Serve
- Our Mission
- Our Values
- Our Goals

We Are An Agency
within the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA).

We Advance Clean Energy
goals as part of a comprehensive Administration-wide response to the threat of climate change.

MASSACHUSETTS
DEPARTMENT OF
ENERGY RESOURCES

Expanding the Clean Energy Progress

An Adaptive Framework to Improve Accessibility and Affordability in Massachusetts

- Increase Energy Efficiency
- Strategic Siting and Permits
- Leverage Partnerships
- Support Green Jobs

MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY RESOURCES

ZOOM OUT

Global Trends

What is Relevant?

Nation Trends

Supporting Infrastructure

Clean Energy

Targets

Region Trends

Collaboration Possibilities

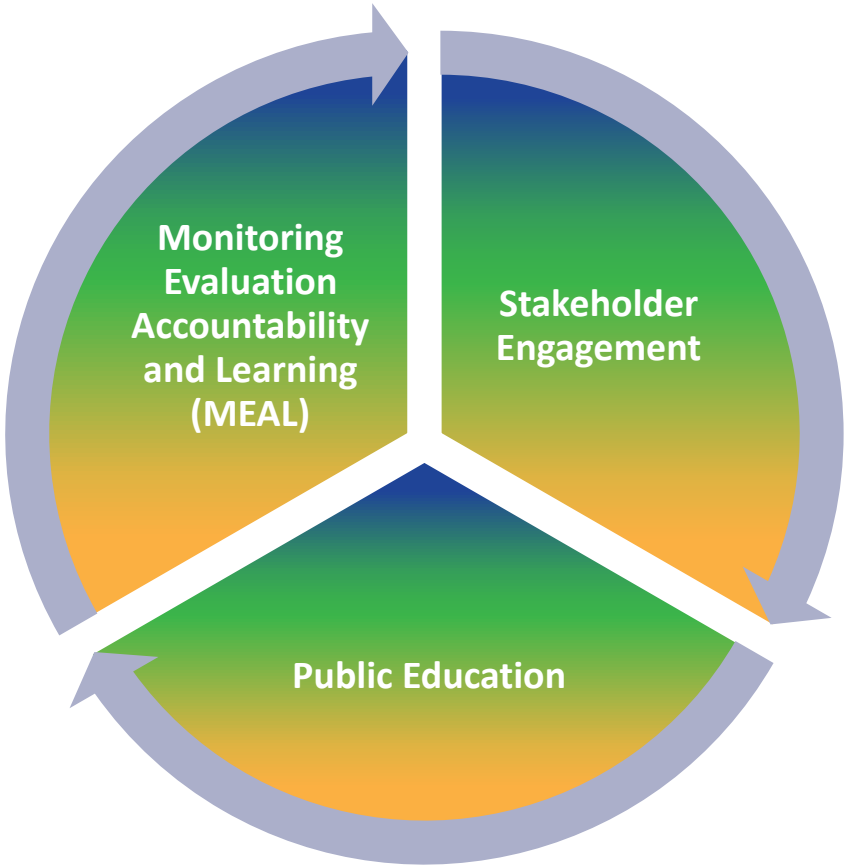
Targeted Impact

State Plans

APPLY WITHIN

MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY RESOURCES

Crafting Equitable Pathways to Success



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DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY RESOURCES

Thank You!

AN INTRODUCTION TO

community lighthouse

ESTAP WEBINAR

January 7, 2025

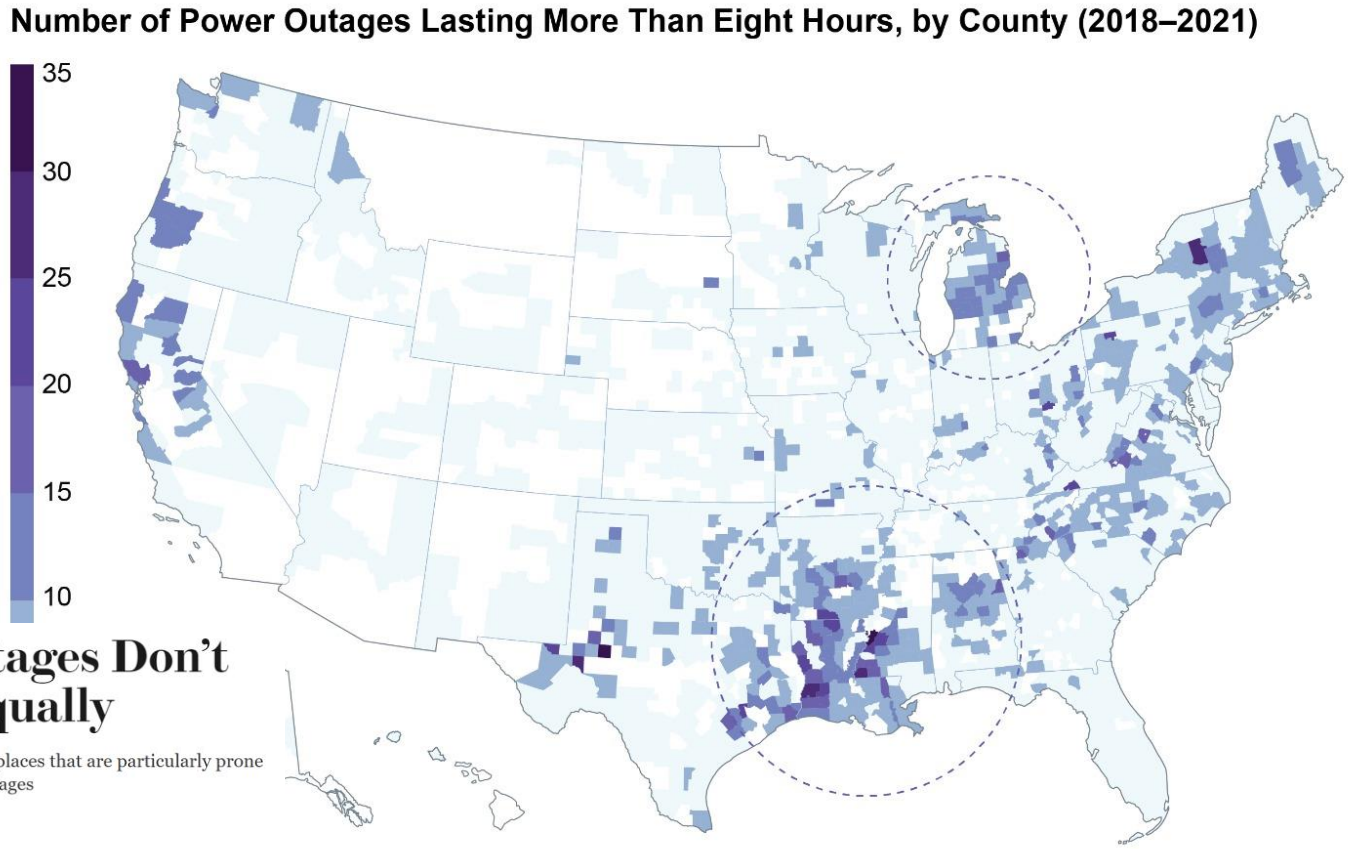
NEIGHBORHOOD RESILIENCE CENTERS

WITH SOLAR + STORAGE

TOGETHER LOUISIANA TOGETHER NEW ORLEANS

Power outages have become the leading cause of disaster-related death in Louisiana & the Gulf Coast.

LA, TX, MS: ground zero for outage risk



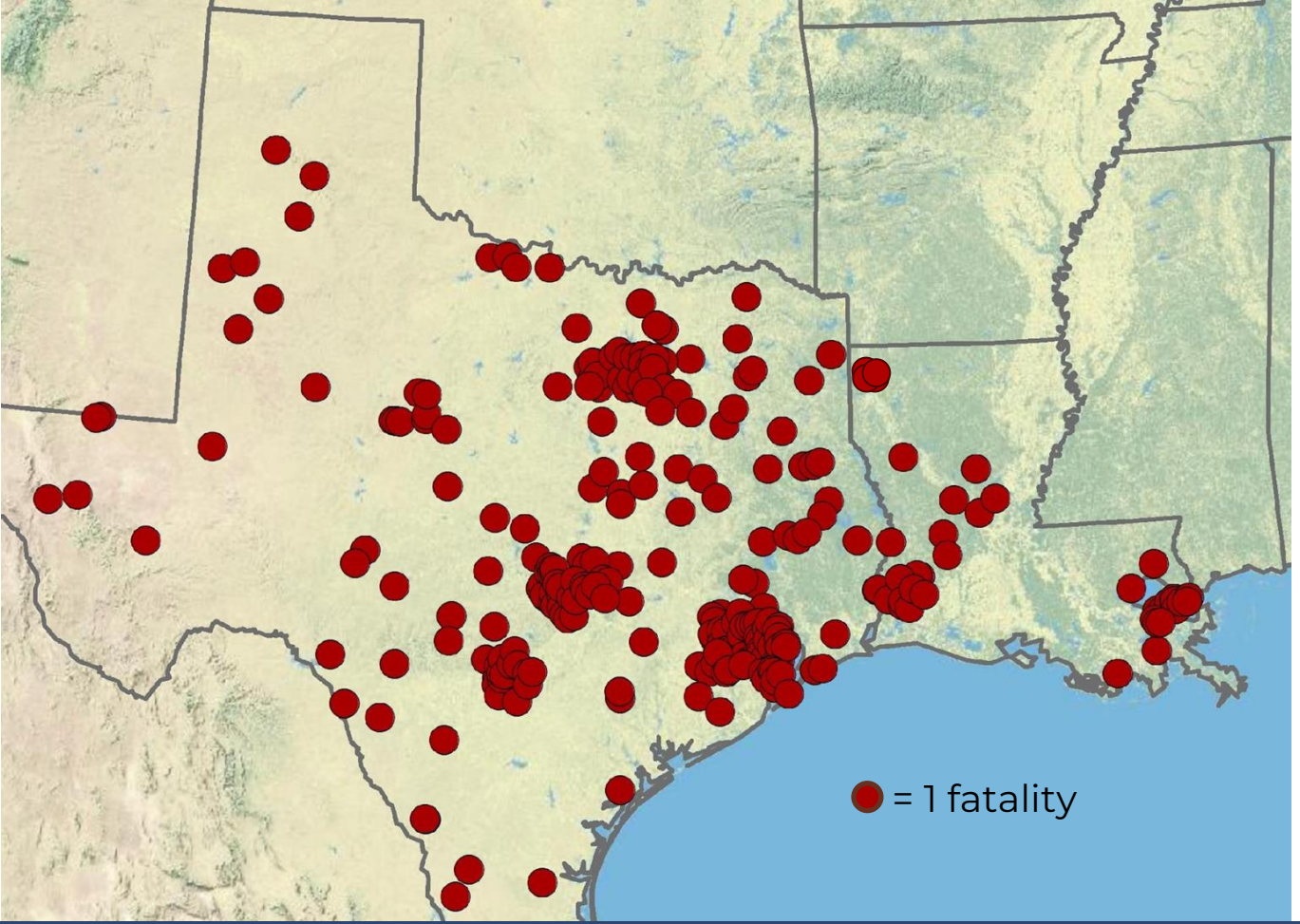
Source:

SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN®

Increasing Power Outages Don't Hit Everyone Equally

Some of the most vulnerable communities in the U.S. live in places that are particularly prone to frequent, prolonged power outages

By June Kim on July 26, 2023



Power outages caused …

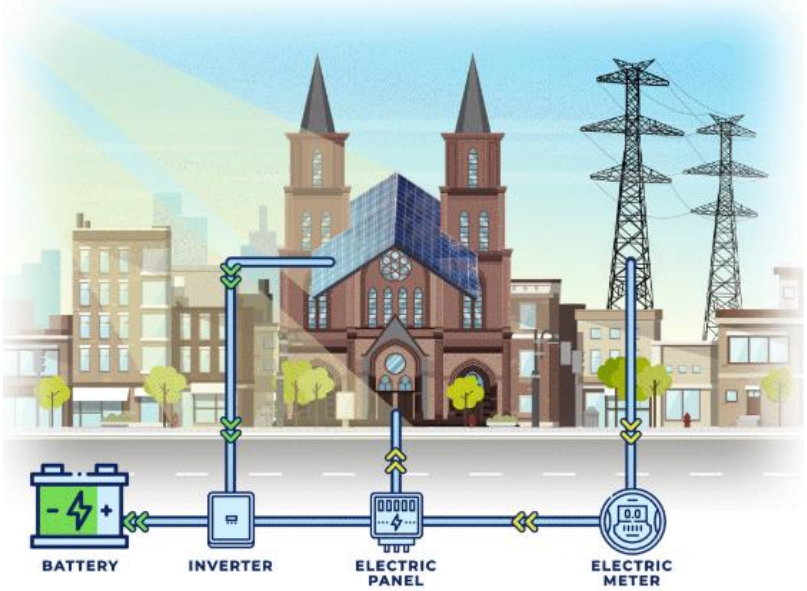
19 of the 31 deaths in Hurricane Laura (August 2020)

About 700 deaths in Texas in Winter Storm Uri (February 2021)

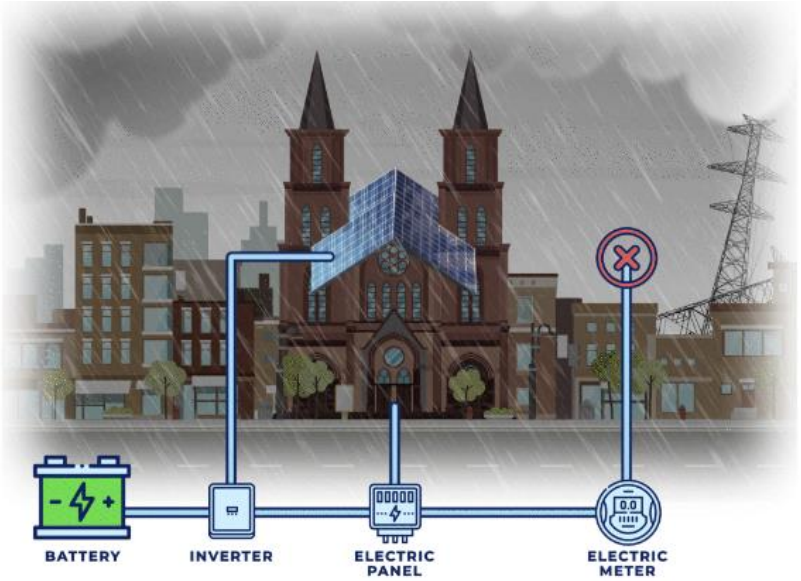
30 of the 36 deaths in Hurricane Ida (August 2021)

At least 2 deaths in North LA outage (June 2023)

HOW IT WORKS



In normal times, the **solar array** helps defray electricity costs.



If the grid goes down, **battery storage** helps restore power quickly at community lighthouses.

WHAT LIGHTHOUSE'S DO

Food & water

Cooling & heating centers

Charging stations / internet

Portable battery exchange

\+ regular blue-sky outreach

OUR VISION / RESILIENCE METRIC

No resident lives further than 15 minutes from a solar + storage resilience hub

GRASSROOTS LEADERSHIP. HIGH-UP SUPPORT.

Technical assistance from Energy Storage for Social Equity program (DOE & PNNL)

Raised $12 million for pilot phase

Local Government - **29%** ($3.5 M)
Congressional allocation (via DOE) - **32%** ($3.8 M)
Philanthropic - **13%** ($1.6 M)
National labs (Sandia) - **7%** ($0.8 M)
Financing - **18%** ($2.2 M)

IRA is a game-changer for non-profits

Avg Elective Pay Rebate: 44%

Ribbon cutting at first Community Lighthouse with TNO leaders & New Orleans City leadership *(March 2023)*

Ribbon cutting at seventh Community Lighthouse with Together LA leaders & US Energy Secretary Jennifer Granholm *(November 2023)*

community lighthouse

Bethlehem Lutheran Church
New Orleans

TOGETHER
NEW ORLEANS

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Broadmoor Community Church
New Orleans

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CrescentCare Health Center
New Orleans

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Community Church Unitarian Universalist

New Orleans (West End)

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Trinity Community Center
New Orleans (Hollygrove)

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Household of Faith Church

New Orleans (West Lake Forest)

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community lighthouse

First Grace UMC
New Orleans

TOGETHER
NEW ORLEANS

community lighthouse

Cornerstone UMC
New Orleans

TOGETHER LOUISIANA

community lighthouse

Corpus Christi-Epiphany Catholic Church
New Orleans

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NEW ORLEANS

community lighthouse

City of Love Church
New Orleans

TOGETHER
NEW ORLEANS

community lighthouse

Christian Unity Baptist Church
New Orleans

TOGETHER
NEW ORLEANS

community lighthouse

New Wine Christian Fellowship
LaPlace

TOGETHER LOUISIANA

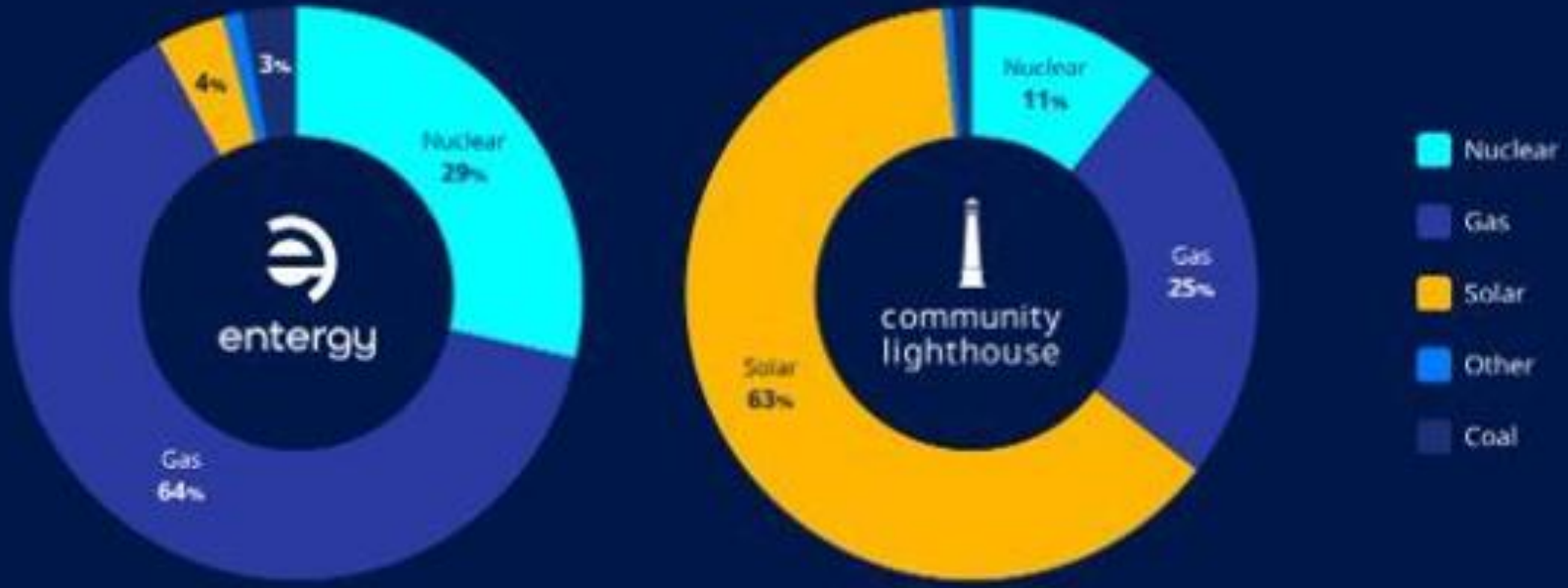
CURRENT NEW ORLEANS SITES

System Specs

- **15** Community Lighthouses
- **2,094** PV solar panels
- **1,002** kilowatts DC solar
- **1,656** kilowatt-hours battery storage

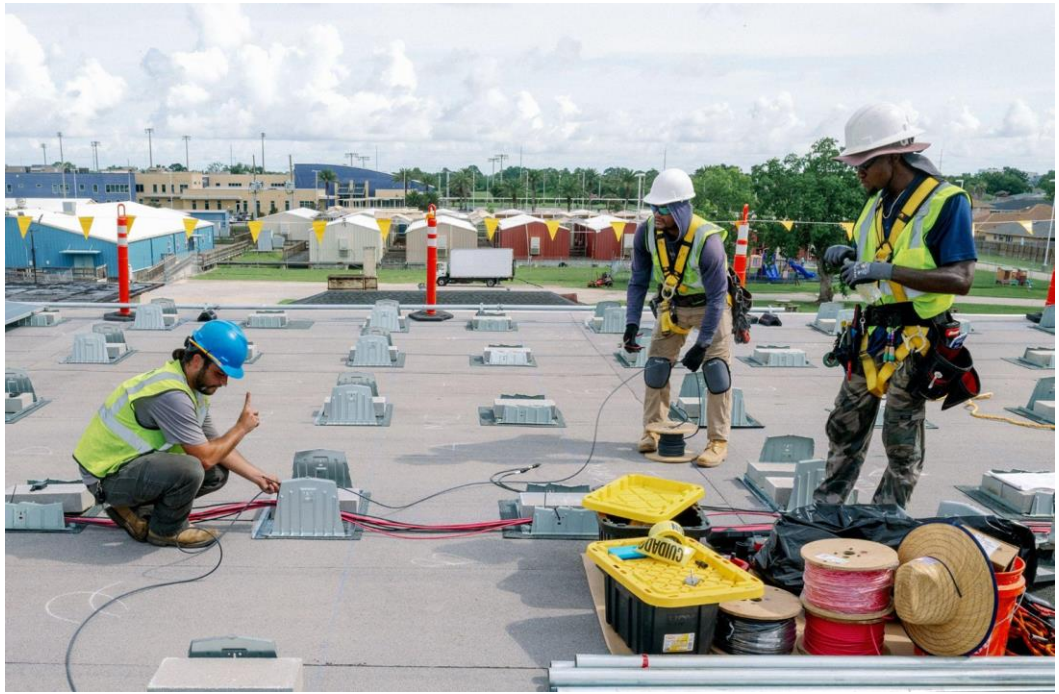
Powered by the Sun

Community Lighthouses slash reliance on gas and coal. **16 times more** of their energy comes from solar.



Source: Entergy New Orleans IRP 2022 vs Community Lighthouse average

Partnership with IBEW

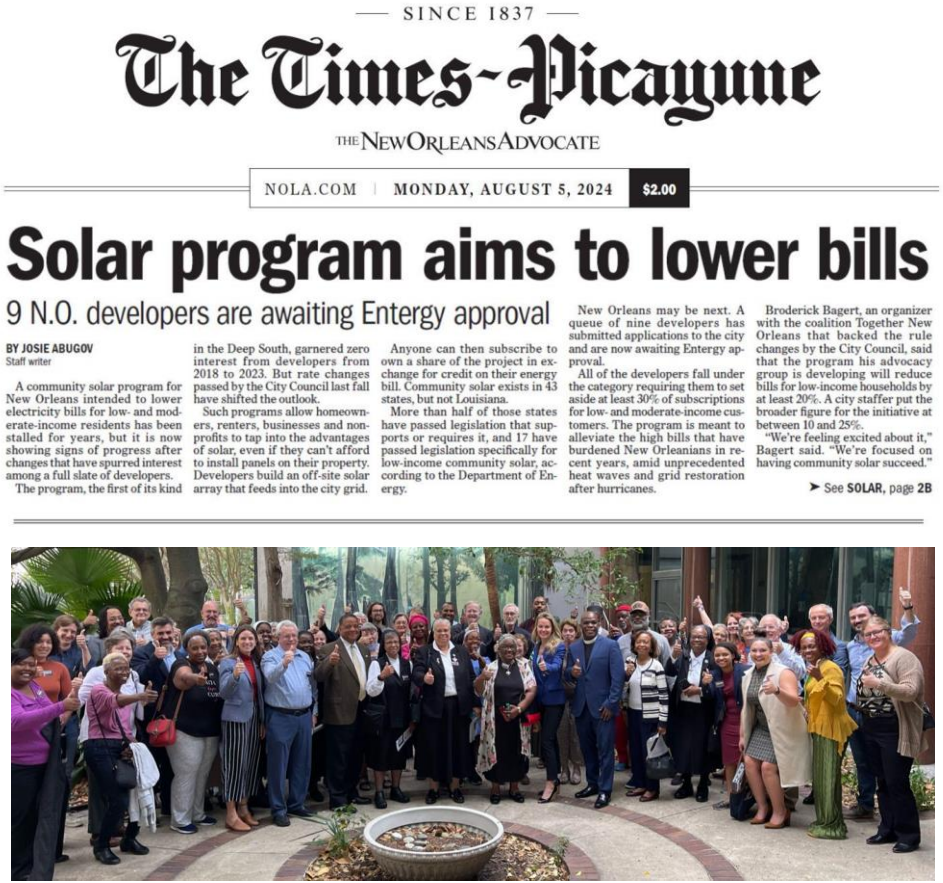


Prevailing wages, benefits, retirement

Apprenticeships on every job

Pre-apprenticeship on-the-job training

Won changes to Community Solar rules, creating first viable community solar program in the Deep South



— SINCE 1837 —

The Times-Picayune

THE NEW ORLEANS ADVOCATE

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Solar program aims to lower bills

9 N.O. developers are awaiting Entergy approval

BY JOSIE ABUGOV
Staff writer

A community solar program for New Orleans intended to lower electricity bills for low- and moderate-income residents has been stalled for years, but it is now showing signs of progress after changes that have spurred interest among a full slate of developers.

The program, the first of its kind in the Deep South, garnered zero interest from developers from 2018 to 2023. But rate changes passed by the City Council last fall have shifted the outlook.

Such programs allow homeowners, renters, businesses and nonprofits to tap into the advantages of solar, even if they can't afford to install panels on their property. Developers build an off-site solar array that feeds into the city grid.

Anyone can then subscribe to own a share of the project in exchange for credit on their energy bill. Community solar exists in 43 states, but not Louisiana.

More than half of those states have passed legislation that supports or requires it, and 17 have passed legislation specifically for low-income community solar, according to the Department of Energy.

New Orleans may be next. A queue of nine developers has submitted applications to the city and are now awaiting Entergy approval.

All of the developers fall under the category requiring them to set aside at least 30% of subscriptions for low- and moderate-income customers. The program is meant to alleviate the high bills that have burdened New Orleanians in recent years, amid unprecedented heat waves and grid restoration after hurricanes.

Broderick Bagert, an organizer with the coalition Together New Orleans that backed the rule changes by the City Council, said that the program his advocacy group is developing will reduce bills for low-income households by at least 20%. A city staffer put the broader figure for the initiative at between 10 and 25%.

"We're feeling excited about it," Bagert said. "We're focused on having community solar succeed."

➤ See SOLAR, page 2B

EARTHBEAT
A PROJECT OF NATIONAL CATHOLIC REPORTER

Holy Family Sisters plan 22-acre community solar project in Louisiana

Broderick Bagert, a Together New Orleans organizer, listens to Sr. Alicia Costa, superior of the Sisters of the Holy Family, with the sisters' land designated for the solar field in the background. In the far background is St. Mary's Academy. (Kevin Fitzpatrick)

BY KEVIN FITZPATRICK

View Author Profile

New Orleans — June 12, 2024

East of the French Quarter or the Central Business District of New Orleans, drivers on the I-10 encounter a steep bridge crossing the Industrial Canal that connects Lake Pontchartrain to the Mississippi River. I-10 veers left at the bottom of the bridge, then a slight right leads to Chef Menteur ("Big Liar") Highway, a road best known for pill mills, staged accidents with semitrailers, human trafficking and sex work.

Started development on 22-acre / 5KW Community Solar farm with Sisters of the Holy Family

Won docket allocating $32M to expand microgrids & form VPP

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The Times-Picayune
THE NEW ORLEANS ADVOCATE
NOLA.COM | FRIDAY, OCTOBER 25, 2024 $2.00

New Orleans approves 'virtual power plant' plan

Resilience program to support electricity supply via batteries

BY JOSIE ABUGOV
Staff writer

The New Orleans City Council greenlit a plan on Thursday to create a "virtual power plant" to support the city's electricity supply — and the resilience program is generating buzz from architects, community activists and Tesla executives alike.

The council-approved plan, led by advocacy groups Together New Orleans and the Alliance for Affordable Energy, earmarks $32 million in Entergy settlement funds for batteries that would be installed in locations across town, then networked into a system to feed power to the grid.

The plan is part of a growing movement to transform how people get their energy, aiming to make communities less reliant on traditional fossil fuel-powered plants in favor of environmentally cleaner and more reliable options in the face of worsening storms and intensifying heat.

"The energy system we've relied on for the past century — it's not resilient," said Logan Burke, the executive director of the Alliance for Affordable Energy. "We know this because even very small storms are taking out our access to power and they lead to health impacts and economic loss."

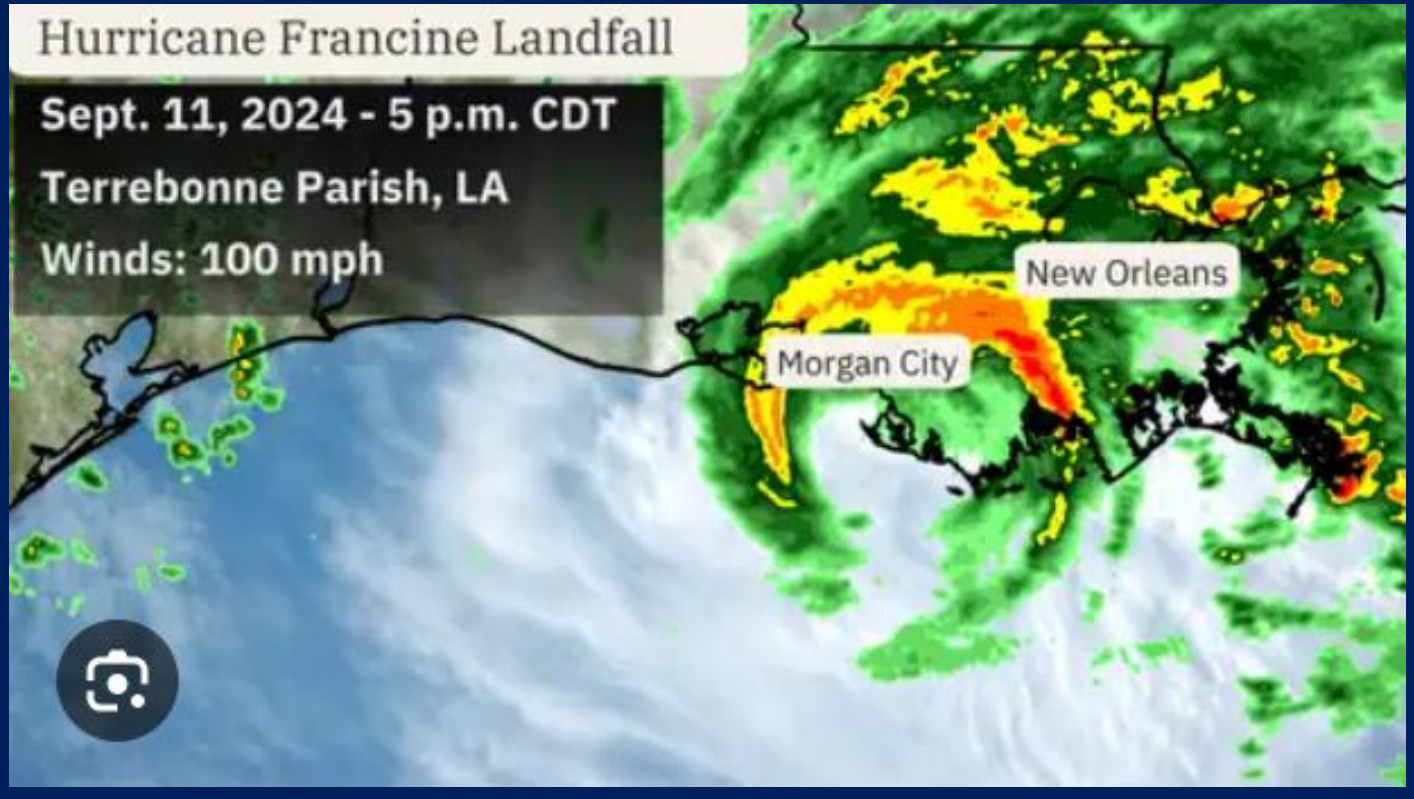
The council also voted on Thursday in favor of a proposal to spend $100 million hardening the city's poles, transmission and distribution lines. This will include more than 3,000 structures and upgrading 63 electric line miles, according to Entergy.

Burke said the "answer should be both" when it comes to hardening the city's traditional energy system and pushing innovative approaches like distributed energy.

The micro-grid and virtual power plant proposal would build on Together New Orleans'

➤ See PLAN, page 2B

FRANCINE RESPONSE




Charging station


SUB
SCRIBE


TNO / TLA
Operations Center
SUB
SCRIBE

NEW ORLEANS RESPONSE

community lighthouse

9 Lighthouses opened

Served **~ 2,300 people**

Provided **~ 1,800 meals**

Distributed **~ 4,000 bottles of water**

Texted **~ 154,000 people**

Conducted needs survey with **1,995 people**

Distributed **16 deployable batteries** *(1 & 2.5 kWh)*

Organized **~ 100 volunteers**

LESSONS

1) Trust is a factor in the speed of DER deployment
2) Success depends on the power to change bad rules


Welcome table

Pope Francis gives thumbs-up to movement

Together Louisiana leaders tout Community Lighthouse program

BY DREW BROACH
Staff writer

Two leaders of the Together Louisiana movement for social change met with Pope Francis at the Vatican on Thursday.

They used a Thursday meeting in front the nonprofit's Community Lighthouse program initiative under parish auspices here and other community centers.

"He gave us a big thumbs up," Sister Alicia Costa, superior of the Sisters of the Holy Family congregation in New Orleans, said after the meeting.

"Literally," laughed Together Louisiana organizer Frederick Rogers.

Costa and Rogers joined 12 other people from affiliated U.S. organizations in a private meeting with Francis, to share examples of how they are organizing families and communities to influence public decisions. It was their second such meeting with the pontiff, after one last year.

Representatives of the other organizations, also members of the Pope Southwest Industrial

▶ See POPE, page 2B

POPE

Continued from page 1B

Areas Foundation network, concentrated on inequities and housing. For Costa and Rogers, the focus was children in a region particularly vulnerable to rising seas, temperature extremes, more intense hurricanes and commercial power failures.

Together Louisiana includes over 200 civic organizations and religious congregations of various denominations and claims to be one of the largest grassroots organizations in the state. It has neighborhood community lighthouses in New Orleans at Broadmoor