



The United States of Clean Energy, Summer 2021

Renewable energy highlights from state legislatures, spring - summer 2021

While deliberations on how to build a cleaner, healthier future continue amongst federal leaders, states across the country are already getting it done. From California to Maine and in between, states are taking actions both big and small to power a transition to clean and renewable energy sources. They are meeting the urgent needs of their communities for an energy system that doesn't pollute our air and water, [sicken hundreds of thousands of Americans each year](#), or further warm our already overheating world.

Actions taken in the states are impactful, both at home and beyond. As Environment America Research & Policy Center's latest [Renewables on the Rise](#) report shows, state policies -- from clean energy standards to ambitious solar programs -- played a crucial role in increasing the nation's share of renewable electricity more than 20-fold over the last 20 years. State leadership also helps blaze the trail for nationwide action.

With the support of citizen activists and advocacy organizations including Environment America and our national network, state legislatures from coast to coast have expanded their long track records of leadership on energy this year. **Here are some clean energy highlights from spring and summer 2021 legislative sessions:**

Setting ambitious renewable energy targets

- **Oregon goes 100 percent:** Oregon Governor Kate Brown [signed a bill into law](#) committing to 100 percent clean power for Oregon customers by 2040. Oregon is now the [eighth state](#) with a legislative commitment to 100 percent clean or renewable electricity, and joins New York as the national pace-setter, tying for the fastest timeline in the country to reach this goal.
- **Massachusetts ups its renewable goals:** Massachusetts Governor Charlie Baker [signed](#)

[a climate bill into law](#) that commits the state to sourcing 40 percent of its electricity from renewables by 2030. The act will also advance offshore wind energy and improve energy efficiency in the Bay State.

Growing wind and solar

- **California invests in rooftop solar & offshore wind:** California adopted a 2021-2022 budget that includes [20 million dollars](#) of investments to help cities implement automatic solar permitting plus an additional [15 million dollars](#) of funding for developing offshore wind power. Both rooftop

solar and offshore wind will be critical tools for reaching the Golden State's target of 100 percent clean power by 2045.

- **Maine, Massachusetts and New Jersey advance offshore wind:** Maine's state legislature [kickstarted the development](#) of the Gulf of Maine Floating Offshore Wind Research Array. The research array will help move toward tapping its immense offshore wind potential. Nearby, New Jersey [passed a bill](#) that will help ensure offshore wind and related transmission projects are able to move forward in a timely manner. The New Jersey Board of Public Utilities also voted to greenlight [2,658 Megawatts \(MW\) of new offshore wind capacity](#) off the Jersey Shore. And, as part of its climate bill, Massachusetts bumped up its commitment to offshore wind power by an additional 2,400 MW.

Building a reliable renewable grid with energy storage

- **Connecticut, Maine adopt storage targets:** Connecticut adopted a new [energy storage deployment goal](#) of one Gigawatt by 2030, and [Maine followed suit](#) with goals of 300 Megawatts installed by the end of 2025 and 400 by the end of 2030. [Nine states](#) have now adopted energy storage targets, which will help them realize their full renewable potential while delivering reliable power around the clock.

Taking advantage of the cleanest energy: Efficiency & conservation

- **Maine, New Jersey enable efficiency financing:** Newly enabled Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy (C-PACE) programs in [New Jersey](#) and [Maine](#) will make it easier for businesses to access energy efficiency and other clean energy repairs and upgrades through loans. PACE has already been implemented in [26 additional states](#).
- **Five states pass appliance efficiency standards:** [Massachusetts](#), [Oregon](#), [Nevada](#), [Rhode Island](#) and [Maine](#) passed strengthened appliance efficiency standards. These requirements will reduce energy waste as well as greenhouse gas emissions while saving customers money on their utility bills.

Defending against attacks on clean energy

- **California saves rooftop solar:** Environment California and other solar supporters [defeated a bill](#) that would have stalled the growth of rooftop solar in the Golden State by walking back incentives for homeowners with solar.
- **Texas defends renewables:** Advocates at Environment Texas and renewable proponents secured fixes to a [blackout response bill](#) that would have saddled renewables with unfair new costs. The move will avoid new obstacles to the continued growth of wind, solar and battery storage in the state.

A look ahead

Environment America's [Clean, Green & Renewable Energy program](#) works to advance every step of the virtuous cycle of clean energy progress, from setting ambitious targets to implementing the programs and policies that enable communities to achieve their goals. Throughout 2021 and in the coming years, we'll continue to urge cities and states to lead the way to 100 percent renewable energy; make strong commitments to solar, wind and storage; and act to harness the renewable resources at our fingertips.

Cover photo: "Illinois Wind Farm," by Tom Shockey via [Flickr](#), CC BY 2.0.