

SOLAR

A Natural Step for the Natural State



Merlin

Solar is the fastest growing source of energy in the United States. As prices fall and the industry booms, states embracing solar are seeing substantial economic benefits. Arkansas has made progress in its solar capacity, but our outdated laws keep us from taking full advantage of our outstanding solar potential. By supporting common sense clean energy policies Arkansas will be able to live up to the “Natural State” name, while growing our economy and creating good jobs that cannot be outsourced.

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

- In 2017 the solar industry **generated \$17 billion** and **employed over 250,000 Americans**.¹
- Solar installation is projected to be the **fastest growing job sector** in the next 8 years.²
- **In Arkansas, solar equipment prices have dropped over 40% in the past 5 years**,³ while the costs of installation nationwide have dropped 70% since 2010.⁴
- **Arkansas ranks 11th in the nation in our solar potential**⁵, however **we are 31st nationally in the amount of solar installed**.⁶ This is a considerable and heartening increase from 46th in 2017, but we have far more potential to expand solar production and the benefits it creates.

BUSINESSES ARE TAKING NOTE

Major US businesses have recognized that solar is a cost-effective way to power their operations, and access to clean energy is now a factor in choosing locations for future expansions.

The top 10 corporate solar users include: Target, Walmart, Apple, Kohl's, Costco, Macy's, and Amazon.

These **top corporate solar users added over 40% more solar installations** in 2017 than the previous 2 years.

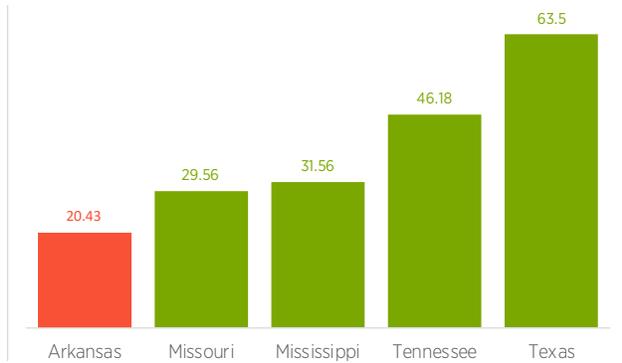
However, **there is only 1 major corporate solar installation in Arkansas** - L'Oreal in North Little Rock.⁷

Stronger clean energy policy will draw solar-supporting companies to our state, **bringing jobs and boosting our economy.**



How Does Arkansas Stack Up Regionally?

Source: 2016 Corporate Clean Energy Procurement Index: State Leadership & Rankings



IMPORTANCE OF SMART SOLAR POLICY

Smart state solar policy means keeping up with technological advancements.

Arkansas's solar policy currently ranks 43rd in the country and it has been 18 years since its last significant update.⁶

For Arkansas to realize our full solar potential we have to modernize our solar policy.

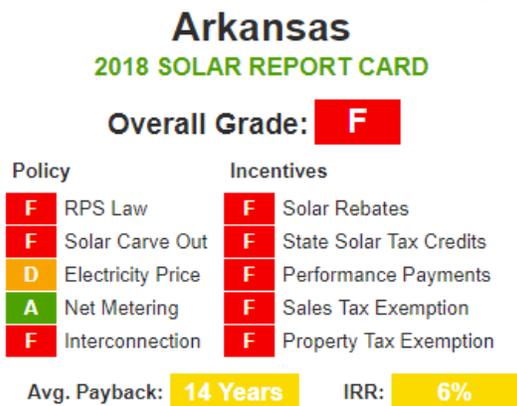
COMMON SENSE POLICIES TO MAKE ARKANSAS MORE COMPETITIVE

1. ALLOW THIRD-PARTY PURCHASING OPTIONS

Third-party purchasing allows a resident or business to host a solar energy system owned by the solar company. This allows more people to transition to solar by removing upfront barriers like installation and maintenance costs.⁸ Arkansas is one of 5 states that prohibit the major third-party purchasing models: solar leases, power purchase agreements, and solar services contracts. **States that have not allowed third-party ownership have fallen significantly behind in distributed solar development.**⁹ This is particularly harmful for nonprofits, government buildings, schools, and churches who often can't access federal solar incentives.

2. INCREASE THE SOLAR FACILITY SIZE LIMIT

Arkansas limits the size of net metered installations at 25 kilowatts for residential customers and 300 kilowatts for commercial customers. States like New Mexico and Massachusetts allow systems over 400x this size, and Ohio and New Jersey have no size limits at all. Raising our system size limit to 1 megawatt is a reasonable step to encourage more and larger projects in Arkansas.



“... if you're going to recruit investment in the United States and you want to compete, you better have sources of clean energy...that reliability, that diversity, that clean energy supply will be a great talking point in recruiting industry to our state.”

- Gov. Asa Hutchinson
(May 29, 2018, Arkansas Business)

More solar energy in Arkansas will mean more jobs, cleaner air and water, increased private investment, a larger tax base, higher property values, and will create a more welcoming business environment to attract companies to our state.

We must take advantage of the solar potential in our state by fostering policies that support solar energy.

Photo credits: Merlin, Dorian Anderson/Audubon Photography Awards; Pronghorn Ranch, Evan Barrientos/National Audubon Society.

ar.audubon.org/solaraccess

1. <https://www.thesolarfoundation.org/national>
 2. <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/fastest-growing.htm>
 3. <https://www.seia.org/state-solar-policy/arkansas-solar>
 4. <https://www.seia.org/solar-industry-research-data>
 5. <http://www.neo.ne.gov/statshtml/201.htm>

6. <https://www.solarpowerrocks.com/state-solar-power-rankings/>
 7. <https://www.seia.org/solar-means-business-report>
 8. <https://ilsr.org/states-agree-third-party-ownership-enables-distributed-solar-but-whats-next/>
 9. <https://ilsr.org/states-agree-third-party-ownership-enables-distributed-solar-but-whats-next/>