



Overview

Clean energy siting and permitting is crucial to meet clean energy and climate goals. Expansion of clean energy is [complex and faces permitting obstacles](#) at the state and local levels inhibiting or delaying projects. Communities may oppose projects due to visual or location concerns; statewide complicated environmental reviews may burden or block projects. Permitting obstacles also exist for transmission infrastructure. To learn more about transmission specifically, see NCEL's [Transmission Briefing Book](#).

Although a streamlined permitting process is imperative, public interest concerns including environmental justice, tribal sovereignty, and environmental impacts should not be overlooked. Meaningful community engagement can help address local opposition to projects.

Policy Options Please note (**) indicates bipartisan support for the legislation.

Incentives for Streamlining Clean Energy Siting & Permitting:

- **Colorado S.B.212 (enacted 2024):** Provides resources to local governments to assess, site, and permit utility-scale renewable energy projects while setting best management practices to avoid, minimize, and mitigate wildlife and land impacts.
- ****Indiana S.B. 411 (enacted 2022):** Establishes voluntary default standards for siting wind power projects and commercial solar projects. If a community adopts the default standards or standards less restrictive than the default standards, communities are designated as a solar or wind ready community to make clear which communities are ready for renewables.

Creating Standards & Authority for Streamlining Clean Energy Siting and Permitting:

- **Minnesota S.F. 4942 (enacted 2024):** Streamlines the energy permitting process by creating two separate review processes: a standard review for smaller wind and solar projects and power lines and a more intensive review for larger projects.
- ****Washington H.B.1216/S.B.5380 (enacted 2023):** Streamlines permitting by establishing the Interagency Clean Energy Siting Coordinating Council, expediting environmental reviews by amending the State Environmental Policy Act, and establishing a new program for the designation of Clean Energy Projects of Statewide Significance.

KEY FACTS

- The [leading causes of cancellation](#) for solar and wind projects are local ordinances or zoning, grid interconnection, and community opposition.
- More than [300 counties](#) have banned or instituted moratoria on wind or solar projects.
- The [majority of states \(37\)](#) give local governments authority to set clean energy siting standards (tip heights, setbacks, etc.).



Other Resources

- **NCEL:** [Transmission Briefing Book](#)
- **Berkeley Lab:** [Siting Clean Energy: An Inventory of State Policies and Permitting Authorities](#)
- **Department of Energy:** [Siting of Large-Scale Renewable Energy Projects](#)
- **The Hamilton Project:** [Eight facts about permitting and the clean energy transition](#)
- **Evergreen Action:** [Warp Speed Clean Energy: Expediting Permitting and Equitable Grid Deployment Without Congress](#)

