

It's Time to Turn Solar for All into Affordable Energy for All

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Rainey
Center





The Big Beautiful Bill opened the door for EPA Administrator Zeldin to re-align \$7 billion in existing contracts with Trump Administration priorities while cutting electricity bills for a million American families.

On July Fourth, President Trump signed his “One Big Beautiful Bill Act” into law, solidifying his Administration’s energy priorities as part of this sweeping legislation. Among its provisions, the legislation repealed the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund and rescinded all unobligated funds associated with the program.



Distinct from the \$20 billion in “gold bars off the Titanic” grants that Administrator Zeldin terminated and is fighting to claw back in the courts, Section 60103(a)(1) of the IRA also created the lesser known Zero Emissions Technologies program, a conventional grant program implemented as the “Solar for All” initiative by the Biden Administration. Its \$7 billion in funding was competitively awarded to 60 recipients that were selected and announced in April 2024. The 60 awards cover all 50 states, US territories, and Native American tribes through a combination of 37 awards to state and local governments, six (6) awards to tribes or tribal nonprofits, and 17 awards to local and regional nonprofit organizations. Award contracts were completed in August 2024, and program funds never left EPA’s direct control.

The repeal of the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund creates a strategic opportunity for EPA to reshape these 60 state- and regionally-led programs to align with Trump Administration priorities through updated administrative guidance — realizing President Trump’s campaign promise to cut electricity bills in half for a million American families, expanding the list of enabling technologies to let states choose, and deploying 4 Gigawatts of new power generation from diverse sources, contributing towards American energy dominance to lead the world in AI.

To put this program to work keeping President Trump’s campaign promise to cut electricity bills for American families and to bring it into alignment with Trump Administration priorities, EPA should immediately issue updated guidance to create a straightforward pathway that awardees can implement within their existing contracts.

IMPACT

Cut electricity bills for 1 million American families.

Keeps President Trump’s September 2024 campaign promise to cut electricity bills in half.



WHAT EPA SHOULD DO

Immediately Rename the Program: From Solar for All to Energy for All

American energy dominance will not be achieved through solar alone. Immediately renaming the program “Energy for All” aligns its intent behind Trump Administration priorities and eliminates the fallacy that solar, and solar alone, is the only solution.



WHAT EPA SHOULD DO

Update Guidance and Workplans: Expand Technologies, Improve Efficiency, and Let States Lead

While all 60 awards were contracted in 2024, EPA retains broad administrative authority to shape how the resulting state and regional programs are implemented through guidance that awardees can implement by updating their workplans.

To fully realize this opportunity, EPA should rapidly issue updated program guidance following the renaming of the initiative, directing awardees to implement the updated guidance through amended workplans.

While program-specific funding to support EPA staff time to oversee the program was rescinded as a part of the One Big Beautiful Bill Act, EPA's Office of the Administrator and Office of the Chief Financial Officer could reasonably justify the dedication of resources to align this program with Administration priorities.



WHAT EPA SHOULD DO

Include Geothermal, Small-Scale Hydro, Stand-Alone Storage, Microgrids, Demand Response, and Emerging Technologies

Solar is one technology among many that can be deployed at the distribution level to reduce costs and strengthen the local grid. The Inflation Reduction Act's original statutory language recognized this by directed grants to "zero-emission technologies, including distributed technologies on residential rooftops." While the Biden Administration's headline focus included solar alone, the program's design left room for associated technologies including

energy storage and enabling repairs including energy efficiency. EPA should issue updated guidance to expand the roster of enabling technologies and repairs to include geothermal, small-scale hydro, stand-alone storage, microgrids, and demand response. Moreover, in recognition of American innovation and engineering leadership and the fact that this program has nearly four more years to go, updated guidance should leave room for grantees to incorporate emerging technologies.

IMPACT

**4 GW of Technology
Neutral Power: Includes
geothermal, small
hydropower, and other
technologies beyond just solar.**

Supports American energy dominance and aligns with updated energy tax credits in the One Big Beautiful Bill.



WHAT EPA SHOULD DO

Let the States Lead

Because each of the 60 awards is focused on a single state or territory, Native American tribal territory, or region, the process of updating workplans is an important opportunity to implement EPA's cooperative federalism pillar by enabling state and regional leaders to choose which enabling technologies are the best fit for their market.

IMPACT

Supports State Leadership.

Implements EPA's Five Pillars on American Energy Dominance and Cooperative Federalism.



WHAT EPA SHOULD DO

Recognize Opportunity Zones

Opportunity Zones are America's number one economic development tool for driving investment to underserved communities to unlock new opportunities, yet they were entirely excluded from the Biden Administration's guidance. Moreover, Opportunity Zones recognize state leadership in alignment with Administrator Zeldin's Five Pillars, specifically regarding cooperative federalism. EPA should immediately address this gap by issuing guidance clarifying that Opportunity Zones are included in the program's definition of "Low Income and Disadvantaged Communities," and further encourage grantees to site projects in Opportunity Zones to support state-driven economic development priorities and to optimize financial leverage.



WHAT EPA SHOULD DO

Cut Out the Middleman

EPA should further instruct awardees to fully leverage this opportunity to update program workplans to eliminate duplication, simplify supply lines and contractual structures, and improve the overall efficiency and ROI of the program.



WHAT EPA SHOULD DO

Own the Impact, Improve ROI, and Leverage AI

EPA should also leverage AI and private sector expertise to streamline program oversight — focusing on the metrics that matter including bill savings for American families, financial reporting, and overall ROI. EPA should further consider using AI tools to transform the updated workplans into a public-facing scorecard to track the long-term impact of these decisive actions.



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