

COVID-19 & THE U.S. SOLAR INDUSTRY

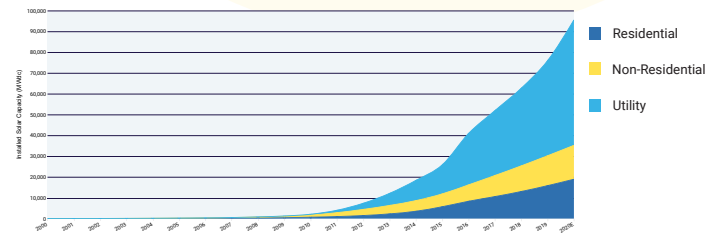
The Global COVID-19 Pandemic is Threatening American Workers, Small Businesses, and U.S. Clean Energy Goals

The 250,000 jobs in the solar industry is not just a number. Rather, it represents a quarter million American families who depend on a healthy solar industry to put food on the table and pay their bills.

Quick Facts About the U.S. Solar Industry

- In 2019, solar was the number one source of new electric generating capacity installed in the United States, representing 40% of all new capacity installed.
- Over the last 10 years, solar deployment has grown an average of 48% every year.
- Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the U.S. solar industry was on track to add nearly 50,000 more workers to our ranks and invest \$25 billion into the U.S. economy this year.

Cumulative U.S. Solar Installations, 2000 - 2020



Impacts from COVID-19 Could be Devastating

While we are still grappling with the full impact of this pandemic on our industry, it is clear that the outlook for the solar industry has been rapidly and radically changed. Due to supply chain delays, tightening of tax equity markets, homeowners' financial concerns and shelter-in-place orders, among other factors, the industry is experiencing major impacts:



- The U.S. solar industry could **lose up to half of its 250,000-strong workforce** in the coming weeks.
- Preliminary estimates from multiple third-party analysts indicate that COVID-19 will have a significant negative impact on overall solar market activity in 2020:
 - » SEIA's internal modeling forecasts that in June 2020 **solar jobs will be down by 38%** compared to pre-COVID forecasts, and that the U.S. will install just 3 gigawatts (GW) of capacity in Q2, **35% less than pre-COVID forecasts**.
 - » Wood Mackenzie Power & Renewables forecasts that **the market will be down 18% in 2020**, from the initial forecast of 19.6 GW to a revised forecast of 16.0 GW.
 - » Bloomberg New Energy Finance (BNEF) has **lowered their forecast for 2020 by 28%** based on COVID-19 impacts.
 - » The Energy Information Administration (EIA) now forecasts that 19.4 gigawatts of new wind capacity and 12.6 gigawatts of utility-scale solar capacity will be built in 2020, figures that are **5 percent and 10 percent lower than its previous forecasts**, respectively.
- The number of solar permits issued the week beginning March 30th was **32% lower than the first week of February**, indicating that shelter-in-place restrictions and decreased business and consumer confidence has had a clear impact on solar activity.
- Our industry survey shows **79% of companies saying business is somewhat or very reduced**, 82% are seeing delayed or cancelled projects, and a majority are laying off workers, slashing hours or cutting contract workers.
- Financing for solar through tax equity markets – a core element of the investment tax credit – is drying up. Across the country, there are **billions of dollars worth of projects ready for construction that may lose financing**.
- A significant decrease in the number of gigawatts of solar energy deployed would be devastating and **set the U.S. back years in our efforts to combat climate change**, a setback we cannot afford.

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Swift Action is Needed by Congress to Save Solar Jobs

Allow solar companies to fully utilize the Investment Tax Credit (ITC) during this economic crisis.

A program to provide a choice between the existing ITC, or direct cash payments in lieu of the ITC, for all Section 48 and 25D qualified solar energy projects for the length of the ITC period. This should also include a delay of the ITC phasedown to accommodate delays caused by the COVID-19 crisis.

Adjust ITC safe harbor deadlines to account for COVID-19 delays.

Modification of the 5% safe harbor language outlined in IRS Notice 2018-59 to accommodate all equipment ordered and paid for by the end of 2019 and 2020 and delivered in the following respective years to supersede current 3.5-month delivery deadlines, as well as removal of the placed-in-service deadline.

Empower local jurisdictions to conduct solar permitting remotely.

Permitting reforms, including support for the Department of Energy's Solar Automated Permit Processing (SolarAPP) program, that empower Authorities Having Jurisdiction (AHJs) to conduct permitting electronically and inspect solar installations remotely.

Double down on economy-wide solutions that help solar businesses stay afloat.

Extend and expand the programs established in the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Stimulus (CARES) Act, and develop new programs that incentivize new infrastructure development.

Congress Must Also Help Stimulate the Solar Economy



Push back deadlines for the ITC to help the industry stay on track.

Delay annual deadlines for the Section 48 and Section 25D solar ITC and postpone the corresponding placed-in-service deadlines.

Support U.S. solar manufacturing to create jobs and stimulate the economy.

Programs that incentivize the creation and expansion of manufacturing facilities on U.S. soil for the solar+ supply chain, including manufacturing tax credits or additional incentives for domestic content in U.S. solar projects.

As one of the fastest-growing industries in America, the solar industry is poised to lead the U.S. out of the massive economic recession caused by COVID-19. With the right policies in place, solar can be a crucial part of the solution to rebuild America's economy and put people back to work.