

Legislative Watch

Breaking updates on opportunities to support clean energy



Virginia imports more electricity per capita than any other state, and [data centers](#) use lots of electricity. Bringing more electricity generation online in Virginia is essential to supporting economic growth and reducing the Commonwealth's reliance on more expensive imported electricity.

Chambers for Innovation and Clean Energy (CICE) is following several bills at the General Assembly that will accelerate building needed electricity generation and storage capacity in Virginia from two of the most affordable, fastest-to-market, and cleanest sources available: solar generation and energy storage.

Two of the most important bills, [HB 711](#) and [SB 347](#), do two simple things. First, they make solar farms a permitted form of development subject to special use permits in the agricultural, industrial, commercial, and mixed-use zoning categories. Second, they set consistent guidelines for setbacks, height of the solar panels, fencing, vegetative screening, visual impact, and decommissioning plans.

Over the past few sessions, the General Assembly has considered other unsuccessful bills attempting to balance local input on solar siting and the need to power economic growth and reduce dependence on expensive imported electricity. CICE engaged in those discussions and evaluated best practices across multiple states, to produce [siting principles](#) to inform and guide chambers.

We believe HB 711 and SB 347 strike an appropriate balance between the need for local input and the Commonwealth's overall energy needs. Solar generation can be deployed faster and more affordably than any other form of generation, allowing the Commonwealth to make rapid progress in increasing affordable, homegrown electricity.

When paired with [energy storage](#), solar and wind can provide affordable, reliable energy during times of peak demand, as has been proven in [Texas](#). To that end, we're also following [HB 895](#) and [SB 448](#), both of which require Dominion and Appalachian Power to increase energy storage capacity in their portfolios.

Please share this information with your members, elected officials, and others interested in Virginia's economic growth and energy affordability.

We'll continue to monitor these and other bills related to clean energy in the coming weeks and will keep you informed as the session progresses. CICE is here to educate and support you on these economic and energy issues. If you want to learn more about these or other energy-related bills in Virginia, please reach out to CICE Director of Policy [Rob Bradham](#). For other topics, please visit www.chambersforinnovation.com.
