

National perspective on local clean energy transition

Presentation by Lacey Shaver, Director, US City Clean Energy



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Clean Energy States Alliance annual meeting



Lacey Shaver **Director, U.S. City Clean Energy Transition**

Lacey leads a portfolio of work helping local governments make progress towards clean energy and transportation goals with a focus on equitable uptake and outcomes. Over the past 15 years, she's worked with hundreds of cities and counties and local partners like school districts, regional planning organizations, universities, and community groups.

Prior to WRI, Lacey developed standards for benchmarking communitywide sustainability performance, including the USGBC LEED for Cities and Communities program and the STAR Community Rating System. She has worked on local climate action at The Nature Conservancy and Greenpeace USA.

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A photograph of a rooftop solar panel array. The panels are dark blue and arranged in rows, sloping downwards. In the background, a city skyline is visible under a hazy, orange-tinted sky, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The buildings are silhouetted against the light sky.

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Where are local governments today?

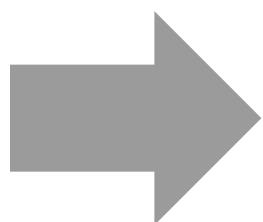


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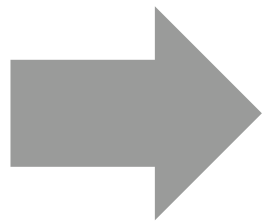
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Where are local governments today?

2010s:
Planning and strategy



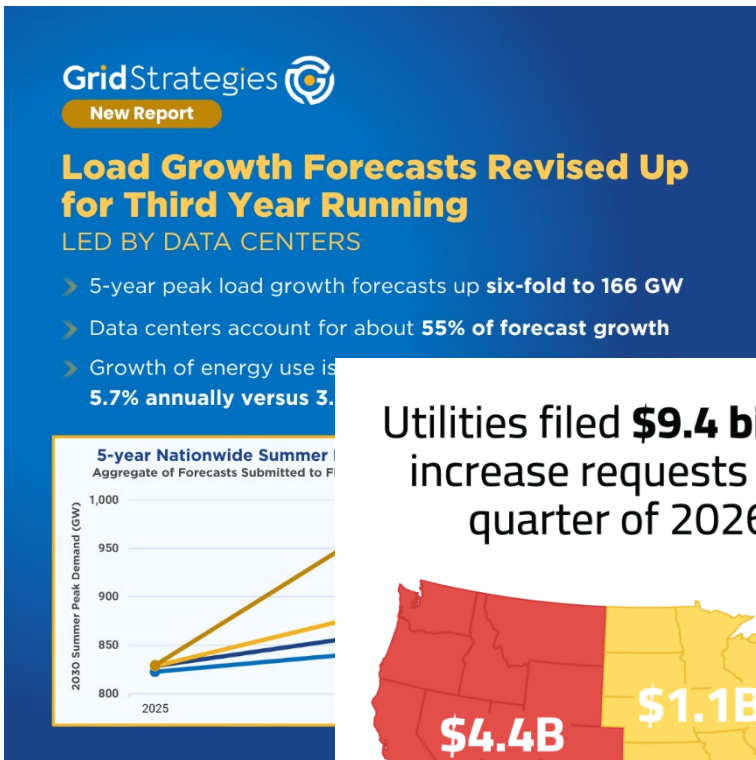
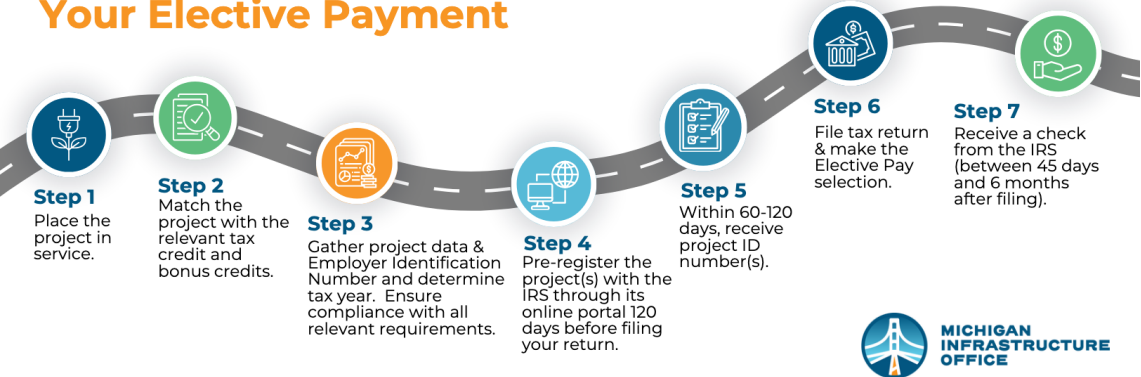
2020s:
**Deploy, deploy,
deploy!**



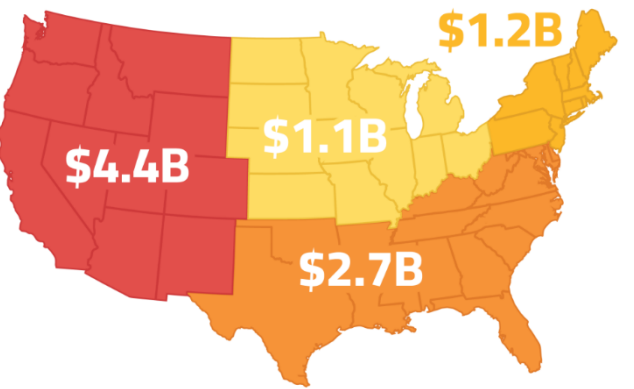
Today:
**Revisit strategy AND
deploy faster**



Process for Receiving Your Elective Payment



Utilities filed **\$9.4 billion** in rate increase requests in the first quarter of 2026 alone.



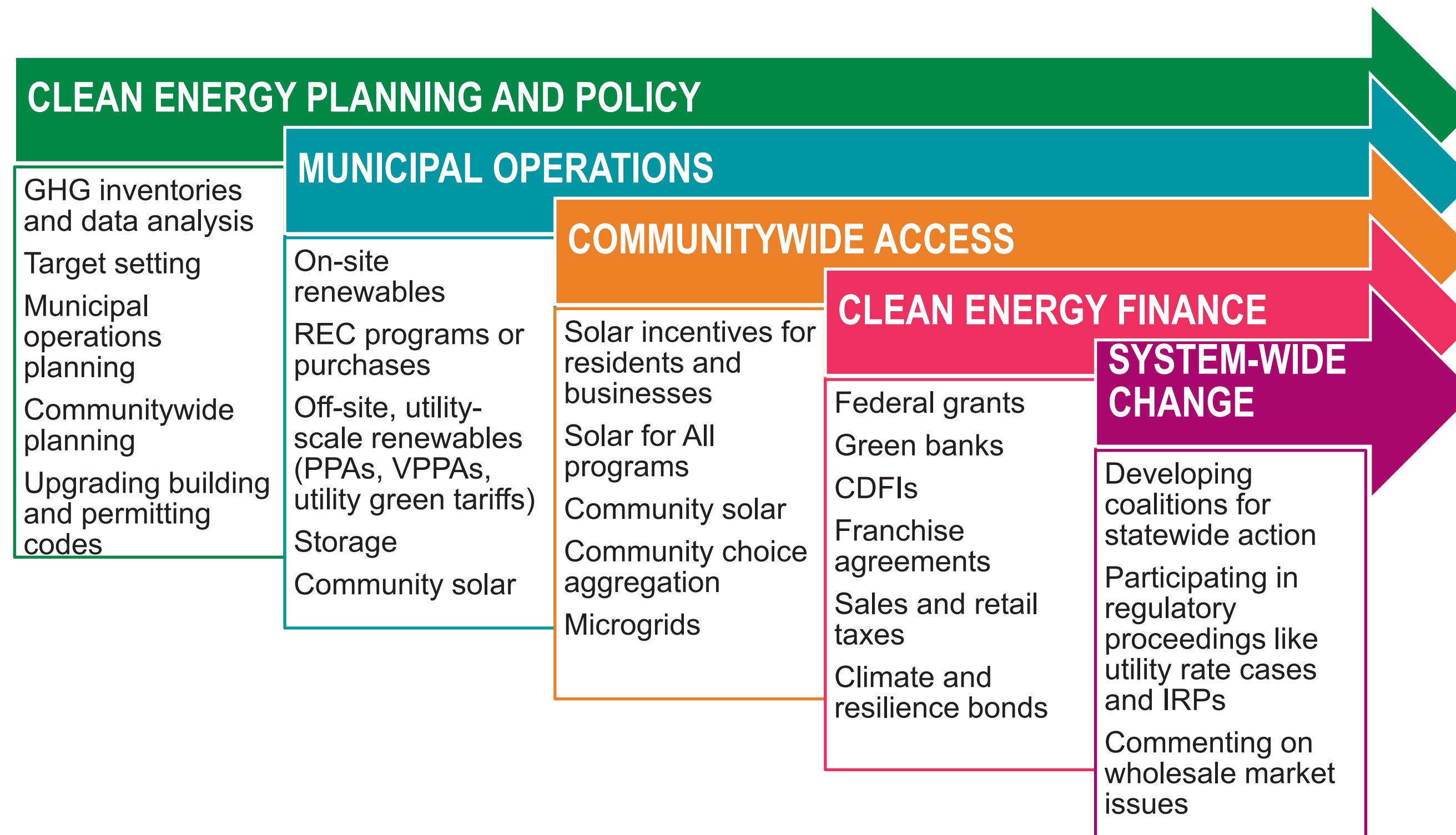
Source: PowerLines: Utility Bills Are Rising Q1 2026



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Local governments play many roles in their community's clean energy transition



Local governments face challenges when working toward clean energy goals... states can help

Understanding current and future energy load

Navigating complex regulatory and market landscape

Aligning available procurement options with org goals and priorities

Working with the local utility – municipal or IOU

Building internal capacity, including legal and finance

Funding on-site and community installations

Executing complex financial transactions

Figuring out how to do all this in an equitable way...



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How are local governments making progress?



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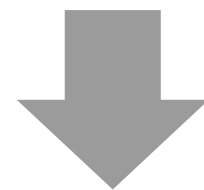
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Moving projects forward... with or without federal dollars



From landfill to green energy? Cincinnati weighs solar transformation

Cincinnati City leaders will consider moving forward with a solar farm after losing a multimillion-dollar federal grant.



Cincinnati is turning a blighted former landfill into a solar energy hub

A public-private partnership with a hybrid financing structure will reduce emissions, generate cost savings for residents and support environmental justice goals, the city's sustainability chief says.



Expanding the definition of clean energy to battery storage and geothermal



Thermal Energy Networks Are Helping Cities Take Back Control of Their Energy Futures

Op-ed: Despite federal setbacks on clean energy, local ownership of TENs is allowing cities and towns to meet their climate goals while advancing energy democracy.



Updating zoning and permitting



NEWS

Albemarle Supervisors update regulations on solar panels

Innovating to scale communitywide clean energy

Washington, DC



DC's Solar for All Program

This program aims to provide 100,000 LMI families with the benefits of locally generated clean energy. Washington, DC, is partnering with organizations within the District to offer no-cost solar installations to single-family, income-eligible households and to develop community solar programs with guaranteed utility bill savings for renters and residents in multifamily homes.

Portland, OR

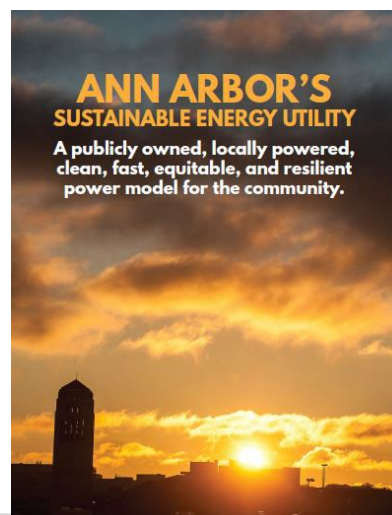
Portland Clean Energy Community Benefits Fund (PCEF)



Portland Clean Energy Community Benefits Fund

Created by a 2018 ballot measure that established a new dedicated funding source and associated grant program for climate action that advances racial and social justice. All grants must benefit certain priority populations, and funding recommendations are provided by a grant committee made up of residents who represent the priority populations.

Ann Arbor, MI



Ann Arbor Sustainable Energy Utility

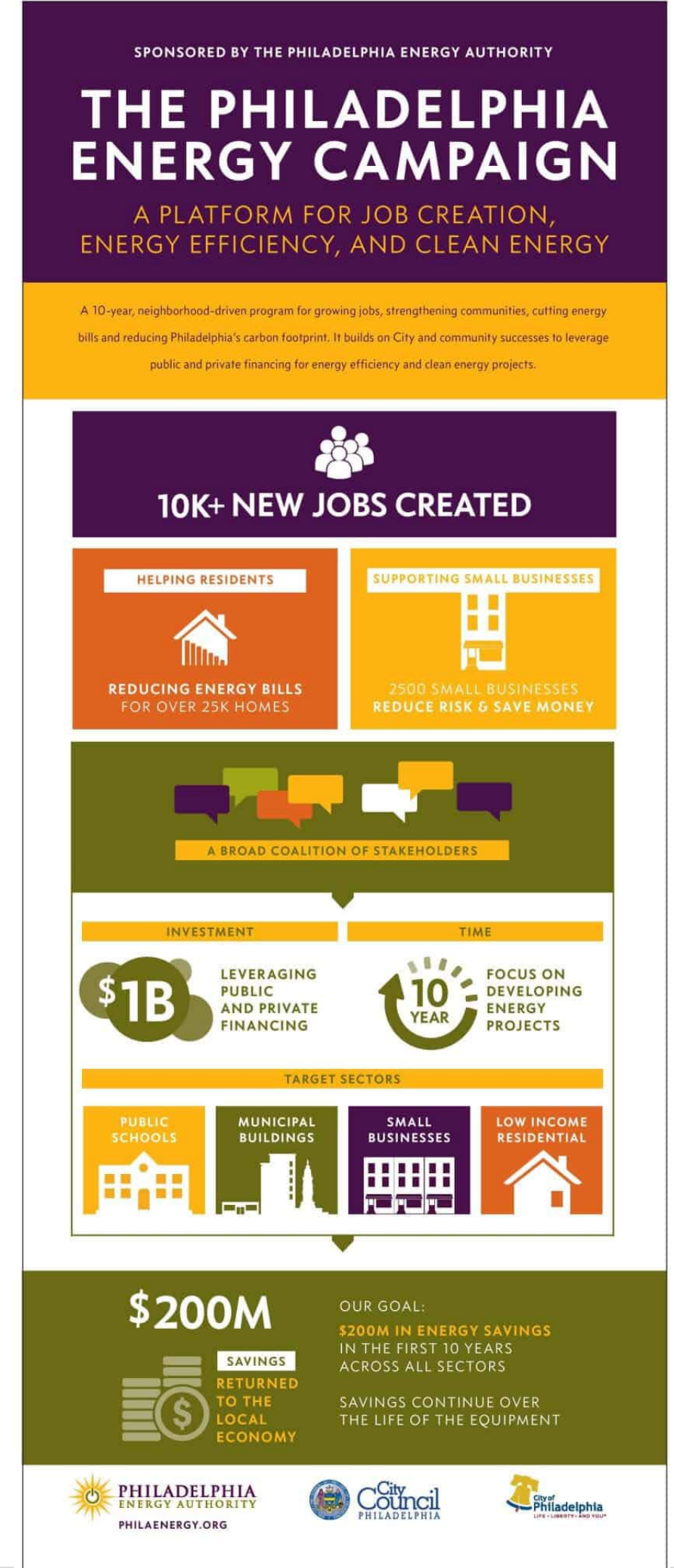
The SEU is a community-owned energy utility that provides electricity from local solar and battery storage systems installed on homes and businesses throughout the city. The SEU provides 100% clean, reliable, locally built, and affordable electricity; built by the community, for the community. It will provide service parallel to the investor-owned utility and hopes to support various types of solar installations, battery storage, energy efficiency, and microgrids.

Creating green jobs and saving money



Philadelphia clean energy campaign turned millions invested into billions saved. Here's how.

By blending public and private financing, green banking and a coalition of labor, housing and community partners, the city generated 11,000 jobs and \$1.4 billion in energy savings, a report found.



**Engaging with
utilities, regulators,
legislators and
wholesale market
operators in key state
and regional energy
system decisions.**

Utility Planning
Processes

Utility Procurement
Requirements

Utility Performance
Incentive
Mechanisms (PIMs)

Utility Cost
Recovery and Rate
Mechanisms

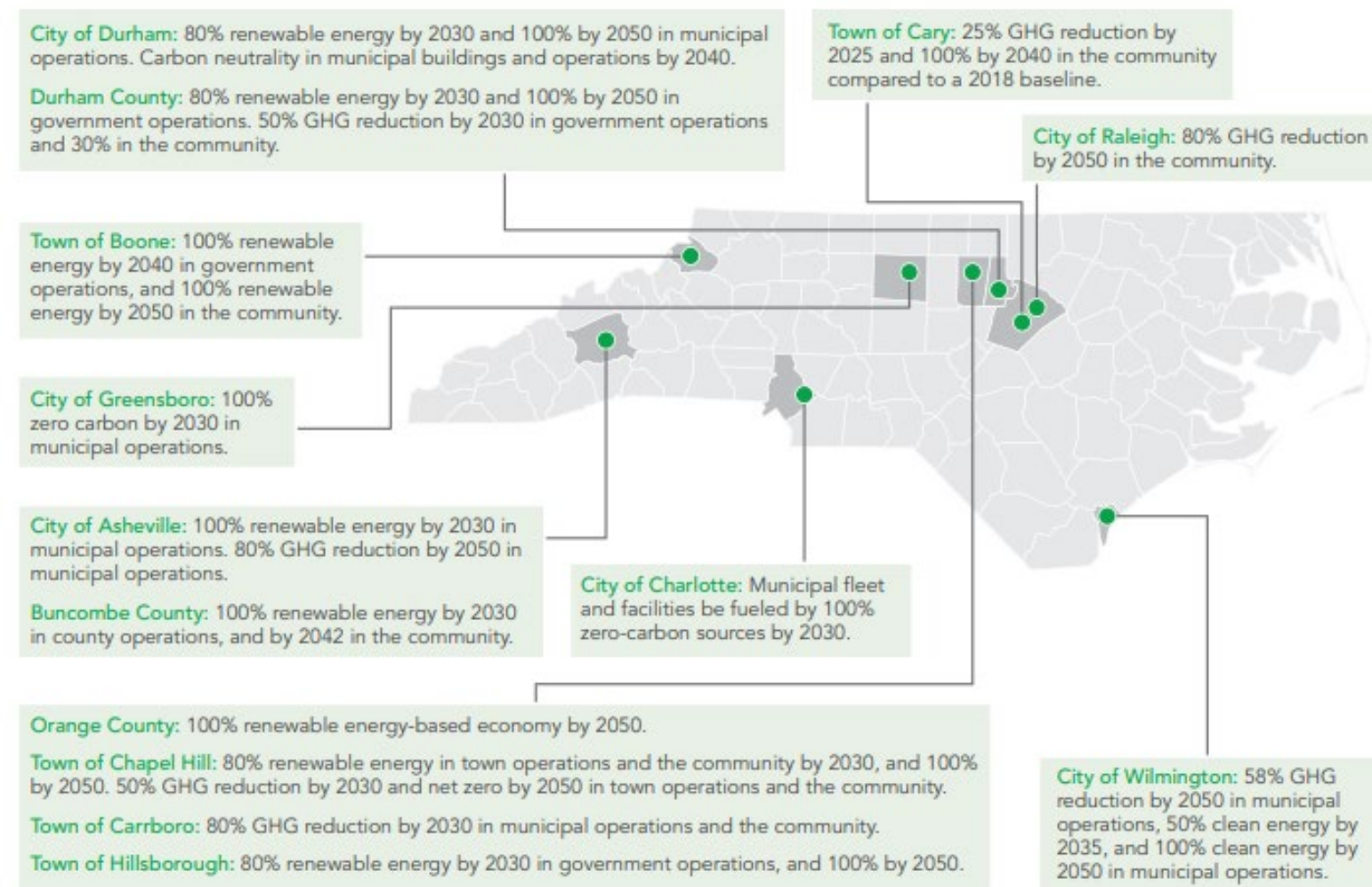
Clean Energy
Access for Large
Buyers

Clean Energy
Access for
Communities

Structure &
Function of Existing
Power Markets

Transmission
Planning

Collaborating on broader energy systems change



~15 local governments in North Carolina have been convening to participate in the regulatory review process for their electric utility's IRP and raised issues such as energy efficiency, transportation electrification, and process equity

The PJM Cities & Communities Coalition (PJMCCC) is a coalition of local governments representing over 14% of customers in PJM Interconnections that advances efforts focused on removing and preventing barriers to decarbonization solutions in their regional wholesale electricity market.

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Where can states collaborate more with local governments?



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Reliability

How do policymakers manage growing energy demand while ensuring consistent and reliable electric service?



Affordability

How can policymakers ensure that new load growth does not lead to higher energy bills for ratepayers?



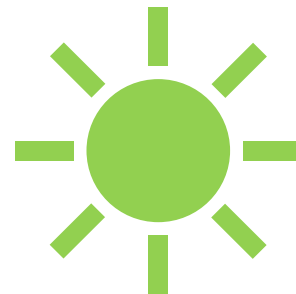
Clean Energy

How do policymakers ensure that new energy demand is being met by clean energy and is contributing to overall GHG emissions reduction?



Economic Growth

How do regions attract new energy demand investments that stimulate economic growth and provide good paying jobs?



Transparency

How can policymakers make sure regulators, stakeholders, and the public have the information and ability to comment on and make decisions about load growth?



Equity

How do policymakers ensure that load growth is not adversely impacting disadvantaged communities?

Local government voices are needed to ensure that energy systems decisions reflect community needs and priorities.

A faint world map is visible in the background of the top right section of the slide.

Update Plans and Strategy

- Educate and support local governments on changing conditions, including load growth, affordability concerns, and evolving federal and state policy
- Coordinate long-term planning on transmission, generation, grid investments and data centers
- Incorporate local priorities and on-the-ground experience into state plans and programs
- Partner on affordability and customer bill reduction strategies

Speed Deployment

- Expand energy efficiency and distributed energy resource (DER) programs
- Streamline siting and permitting processes
- Provide state financing, incentives, and green bank resources
- Build the workforce needed to support energy transition goals
- Pilot and scale innovative approaches like virtual power plants

**How can states
help local
governments
meet the
moment?**

Thank you!



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