



Virginia General Assembly Passes the Virginia Clean Economy Act (VCEA) and Several Other Important Renewable Energy Bills

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On March 12th, the Virginia General Assembly adjourned *sine die* after an extremely busy long session. During the blockbuster session, the legislature considered over 3,000 pieces of legislation, of which 1,350 passed, 1,366 were defeated or carried over to the 2021 Session, and 284 were consolidated into other bills.

The 2020 legislative session was a historic year for clean energy legislation with the passage of several important bills, including the Virginia Clean Economy Act (VCEA). The overall goal of the VCEA is to reduce Virginia's carbon emissions to zero by 2045. The VCEA includes several important provisions that are expected to spur and accelerate the growth of solar and onshore wind projects in Virginia, and offshore wind projects off the coast of Virginia.

The VCEA establishes a mandatory renewable energy portfolio standard (RPS) program; declares that 16,100 MWs of new solar and wind facilities are in the public interest; establishes mandates by which (a) Virginia Electric and Power Company (Dominion) is to build, acquire, or contract for 16,100 MWs of new solar or onshore wind projects, up to 5,200 MWs of offshore wind projects, and 2,700 MWs of energy storage capacity, and (b) Appalachian Power Company is to build, acquire, or contract for 600 MWs of solar and onshore wind projects and 400 MWs of energy storage capacity, among many other provisions.

In addition to the VCEA, the Virginia General Assembly passed several other important renewable energy bills this session. They include (among many others):

- "Solar Freedom" bill promoting the establishment of distributed solar generation in Virginia, including expansion of the net metering cap and third-party power purchase agreement cap;

- Various tax bills creating a revenue share from certain solar projects and step-down of the existing 80% tax exemption for certain utility-scale solar projects; and
- Several land use bills, including a requirement for a siting agreement for solar projects in opportunity zones.

While these bills have passed the General Assembly, Governor Northam may still offer amendments to be considered during the General Assembly's Reconvene Session, which is currently scheduled for April 22, 2020. For a general summary of the VCEA and other renewable energy bills, please **[click here](#)**

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