

Principles of Equitable Policy Design for Energy Storage

The Union of Concerned Scientists convened a group of diverse stakeholders, including environmental justice and grassroots organizations, policy experts, industry, labor, consumer advocates, faith groups, and renewable energy advocates, in December 2018 in Chicago, Illinois, focused on the equitable deployment of energy storage. Energy storage is poised to expand dramatically, transforming the way we produce and use electricity. It is critical that this expansion and the transition to a clean energy economy address the needs of vulnerable residents of disadvantaged neighborhoods and frontline communities without inadvertently causing harm.

The participants developed a set of consensus principles for storage deployment that elevate the critical importance of community-led clean energy solutions. Together these principles can help state policymakers focus on solutions that ensure that the growth of energy storage improves all communities, including environmental justice communities, communities of color, low-income residents, tribal communities, and historically disadvantaged communities. Importantly, these principles are not meant to constrain organizations taking stronger positions on particular policies, regulatory proceedings, or project proposals.

Principles

Reducing emissions. Incentivize energy storage in a variety of applications to help replace fossil fuel-fired power plants and pipelines or to substitute generation from those plants, thus improving the health of frontline communities by cutting emissions that harm local air quality and contribute to climate change.

These principles elevate the importance of community-led clean energy solutions, and help state policymakers ensure that energy storage improves all communities.

Improving resilience. Ensure that energy storage helps make residents and communities more resilient to both human-caused and natural disasters—which will become more frequent and severe due to climate change—by deploying local, onsite power to keep essential services operating during extended power outages and by restoring power after a disaster.

Promoting local economic development. Ensure access to federal, state, and local job training and career-oriented apprenticeship programs, including those certified by the Department of Labor, for energy storage installation and commissioning. Include complementary policies that drive local economic development in historically underinvested communities, train residents for long-term career opportunities, and provide economic benefits to disadvantaged communities without increasing costs of living.

Accelerating greater levels of renewable energy deployment. Accelerate the development and deployment of energy storage that accommodates higher levels of renewable energy on the grid to reduce heat-trapping emissions and other harmful pollutants, with a special focus on local reductions in environmentally overburdened communities.

Protecting consumers. Ensure that energy storage lowers electricity bills for ratepayers and is used maximally to ensure savings from all services it provides, and incentivize ownership models that lead to direct community benefits.

Ensuring participation. Engage in a robust and transparent stakeholder process that empowers community self-determination, facilitates collaboration, and responds to community perspectives so that industry can ensure that energy storage projects are successful and adequately elevate the views of most affected parties.

See reverse for information on participants and supporters.



Megan Rising/UCS

Panelists discuss energy storage policies at the state level during the convening.

Convening Participants

The following organizations participated in the convening and support the principles outlined here.

Blacks in Green
Center for Earth, Energy and Democracy
Clean Energy Group
Clean Grid Alliance
Clean Power Lake County
Electrical Training Alliance
Environmental Law and Policy Center
Faith in Place
IBEW Local 134
Illinois Citizens Utility Board
Indiana State Conference of the NAACP
Interfaith Power & Light (DC, MD, NoVA)
Just Transition Fund
Little Village Environmental Justice Organization
Maryland Environmental Health Network
Minnesota Solar Energy Industry Association
NAACP Chicago Southside Branch
New York City Environmental Justice Alliance
PSE Healthy Energy
Renewable Energy Partners
Stem
Sunrun
The Greenlining Institute
The POINT Community Development Corporation
University of Minnesota Energy Transition Lab
Vote Solar

The Union of Concerned Scientists and the participating organizations would like to thank the Great Plains Institute for facilitating the convening.



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A wide range of stakeholders from across the country met in December 2018 to develop a set of principles to ensure equitable deployment of energy storage technologies.

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FIND THE FULLY REFERENCED VERSION ONLINE: www.ucsusa.org/storage-equity

The Union of Concerned Scientists puts rigorous, independent science to work to solve our planet's most pressing problems. Joining with people across the country, we combine technical analysis and effective advocacy to create innovative, practical solutions for a healthy, safe, and sustainable future.

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