



Shady Solar States

May 5th, 201

What do you call a super sunny state with regressive and oppressive solar policy, actively working to prevent the healthy development of this clean and affordable source of power? Ironic? Shameful? For those who love a good pun, perhaps “SHADY” is the best term. Center for Biological Diversity recently released a report outlining 10 sunny states that are working so hard to keep distributed (rooftop) solar from expanding, and the analysis explains how this unfortunate work is happening. Appropriately enough, the title of the report is: Throwing Shade. Disappointingly, although not that surprising, the Southeast region is pretty well represented in this dishonorable list:

The list was compiled through a ranking system that looked at the state’s overall solar policy, their total rooftop solar potential (based on a rating assigned by the National Renewable Energy Laboratory, NREL), and total rooftop solar that is actually installed in the state.

Table 1. 10 States Blocking Distributed Solar – Overall Policy Grade, Rooftop Solar Photovoltaic Technical Potential Rank, and Installed Capacity Rank

State	Overall Policy Grade	Rooftop PV Technical Potential: Rank of Contiguous U.S.	Estimated Distributed PV Installed Capacity: Rank of all states
Alabama	F	19	45
Florida	F	3	14
Georgia	F	10	21
Indiana	F	13	35
Michigan	F	8	26
Oklahoma	F	18	44
Tennessee	F	14	25
Texas	F	2	12
Virginia	F	11	29
Wisconsin	F	16	30

10 Sunny States That Are Acting Pretty Shady

Image from "Throwing Shade" report by Center for Biological Diversity

1. Alabama
2. Florida
3. Georgia
4. Indiana
5. Michigan
6. Oklahoma
7. Tennessee
8. Texas
9. Virginia
10. Wisconsin

Louisiana and South Carolina both received dishonorable mentions as well. See more at: <http://blog.cleanenergy.org/2016/05/05/shady-solar-states/#sthash.e5rjcw90.dpuf>

The policy grade was based on factors including overall energy policy. A bad solar grade is linked to things like: No RPS (Renewable Portfolio Standard), an RPS with an

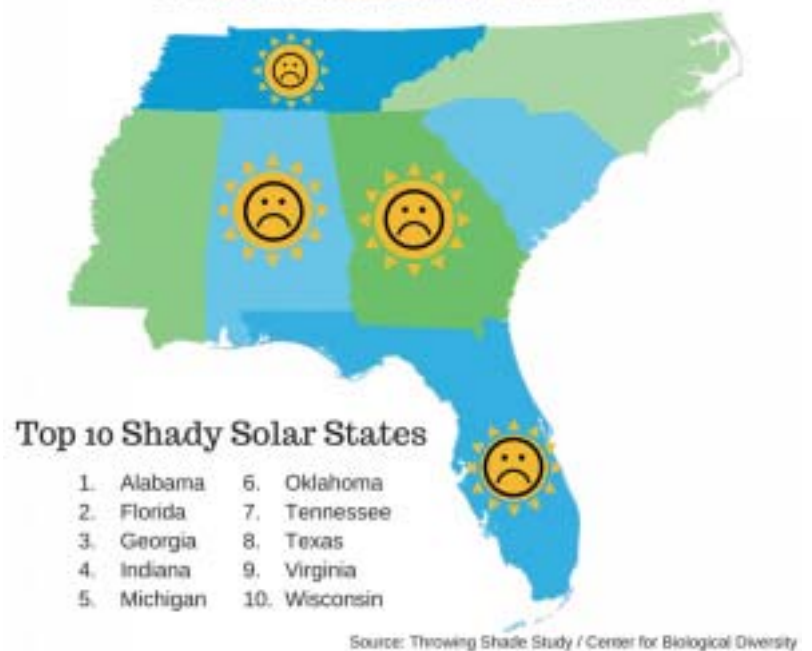
ultra-low, outdated solar target, lack of a strong, statewide net metering policy, lack of strong interconnection laws, and lack of established community solar programs. It also factors in specific barriers that have been proven to hold back distributed solar, for example the prohibition of third party sales, and burdensome taxes on solar and solar leasing.

The result of these states' poor policies and barriers to distributed solar, is that despite having some of the highest rankings in the whole country for hours of prime sunlight, all 10 states only constitute 6 percent of the nation's total installed rooftop solar capacity according to NREL and Energy Information Administration. The vast majority of rooftop solar, and solar in general (including community and utility scale) is in states with good policy and a more common-sense approach to the development of distributed solar.

In conclusion, whether you prefer to call the anti-solar work in these sunny states “ironic”, “shameful”, or “shady”, the most encouraging thing this about this report remains the word “potential”. The solar potential in all of these states is very real, and the success of distributed solar in other states helps provide a roadmap for how we can turn a solar fail into a solar win.

For example, there is an important effort happening in Florida right now to remove one of the barriers to distributed solar – burdensome taxes. Through years of policy and grass-

Southeast States Throwing Shade on Solar Power



roots efforts, there is finally a measure on the Florida Primary Ballot in August that would remove this tax, lowering the cost of the solar and helping to open the door to further development of distributed solar. (For our readers who are Florida voters, this measure is Amendment 4, and you can read more about it [HERE](#)). This measure is just one example of the work that needs to be done to show these sunny states the light, but we remain hopeful. Here's to shrinking the Shady Solar list!

- See more at: <http://blog.cleanenergy.org/2016/05/05/shady-solar-states/#sthash.e5rjcw90.dpuf>