Environmental Protection Network

ISSUE BRIEF

Restore Solar for All:
EPA Could Help a Million Families Cut Their Electric Bills by 25%

Following recent court orders requiring the restart of the Solar for All program, former EPA officials analyzed potential impacts of a restart given changes in energy markets and federal policy since the grants were terminated in August 2025.



Duplex housing with rooftop solar panels at Peterson Air Force Base, Colorado. U.S. Air Force photo by Carole Chiles Fuller.

November 2026

Key Findings

American families are paying more for electricity than ever, and the Trump administration is sitting on a $7 billion program authorized by Congress specifically to address energy affordability.

Most of these funds remain available for expenditure until September 30, 2031. Two federal courts have now ruled that EPA broke the law when it terminated the Solar for All program. If, instead of appealing those rulings, EPA were to restore the program and move expeditiously to maximize energy cost savings, the Trump Administration could still help a million households cut their electricity bills by 25 percent. If EPA stalls through additional appeals, then about 410,000 of those families may permanently lose this opportunity, even if a higher court affirms the rulings that termination of the Solar for All program was illegal.

1. **A prompt restart could reach 1,000,000 households.**
   Participating families could save an average of about 25% on their electricity bills, provided systems are placed in service by December 31, 2027, when solar tax credits are set to expire.
2. **The program could save families $458 million a year – almost $500 per household.**
   The average participating household could save about $456 in its first year, with potential savings increasing over time given projected increases in retail electricity rates.
3. **An EPA appeal could permanently deny approximately 410,000 households almost $500 per year in bill savings.**
   The federal solar tax credit for solar systems is set to expire at the end of 2027. If the Solar for All program is restarted after that date, it could reach far fewer families.
4. **State, local, and nonprofit grantees can move fast and people nationwide can reap the benefits.**
   EPA needs to both restart the program and provide grantees with flexibility to rapidly update their work plans and budgets to maximize cost-effective systems deployed by December 2027. Recommendations follow.

EPN calls on EPA to forgo appeals, comply with the courts' orders, and restart Solar for All immediately.

01 THE AFFORDABILITY CRISIS

Rising Electricity Bills Are Forcing Families to Make Painful Choices; EPA Needs to Act.

Families are struggling. A recent Consumer Reports survey showed 1 in 5 American families are skimping on groceries to pay their power bills, and roughly 21.5 million U.S. households are behind on their energy bills. Recent reporting has captured what this looks like in the communities Solar for All was designed to support:



Alaska

The New York Times reported from Manley Hot Springs, where farmer John Dart paid more than $1 per kilowatt-hour and over $1,000 a month for electricity. After 18 years of farming, he left his fields fallow this summer. A neighbor, Sabie Jervsjo, cut her household's use by more than half to keep her bill near $250–300, calling conservation "the only way to afford to live."

SOLAR FOR ALL FUNDING

The State of Alaska received a $62,450,000 Solar for All grant and the Tanana Chiefs Conference received an additional $62,450,000 Solar for All grant, but the Trump administration is refusing to get that money to desperate Alaskans like Dart and Jervsjo.



Alabama

WBRC reported that Alabamians are paying the third-highest electricity bills in the entire country.

SOLAR FOR ALL FUNDING

Groundswell received a $156 million Solar for All grant to serve the Southeast, including more than 3,500 families in Alabama based on their proposal. But allowing the program to disappear will freeze Alabama's sky-high rates instead of providing relief to Alabama families.



Maine

WAGM reported on Amanda Chambers of Caribou, a mother of three children with special needs. Her electric bill jumped from about $150–200 a month to $750–850 after Versant's rate increased. She needed more than $3,700 before the state's winter shutoff protections ended on April 15, even though the power runs her children's adaptive equipment.

SOLAR FOR ALL FUNDING

The State of Maine received a $62,120,000 Solar for All grant, but these appropriated funds aren't making it to Chambers and others in Maine.



Michigan

Outlier Media and Planet Detroit reported on Joi Deshotel, who is raising two sons, ages 8 and 10, in Detroit. Her DTE balance reached about $1,700 in May, and she is frequently at risk of a shutoff. She tried multiple times to get emergency assistance. DTE disconnected residential electric service more than 213,000 times in 2025.

SOLAR FOR ALL FUNDING

The State of Michigan received a $156,120,000 Solar for All grant, but these funds are at risk of being blocked by the Trump Department of Justice.



Mississippi

The Mississippi Independent reported that 44.5% of households make major financial sacrifices to pay their energy bills, and a third couldn't pay all or part of a utility bill in the past year. Both are the highest rates in the country. Energy assistance reaches only about 17% of eligible households.

SOLAR FOR ALL FUNDING

Hope Enterprise Corporation received a $62,450,000 Solar for All grant to serve the state of Mississippi. Rep. Bennie Thompson has joined calls for EPA to restore the program, but Mississippi's other five members of Congress have not joined that public effort.



Ohio

Canary Media and the Ohio Capital Journal reported that nearly 345,000 households, about 1 in 13 customers, had their power shut off for nonpayment between June 2025 and May 2026. Average Ohio electric bills have risen more than 53% since 2021, compared with 32% nationally.

SOLAR FOR ALL FUNDING

The State of Ohio received a $156,120,000 Solar for All grant and needs those funds to reduce costs for low-income families.



South Dakota

South Dakota Searchlight reported that the average Black Hills Energy customer in western South Dakota could see monthly bills rise about 45%, from $98.96 to $143.70, if regulators approve the utility's pending requests. About $20 a month of that would pay for a new $320 million gas plant in Rapid City. Rapid City resident John McKee told regulators the increase would "directly and materially affect my household's financial obligations."

SOLAR FOR ALL FUNDING

The Coalition for Green Capital received a $62,450,000 Solar for All grant for South Dakota. The Three Affiliated Tribes (MHA Nation) received $135,580,000 to serve tribal lands across the Northern Plains, including South Dakota. The Trump administration is keeping those funds from the families facing these increases.



Texas

Public Health Watch reported on Sherrie Daugherty of Hutto, who has lupus, can no longer work, and lives with her disabled son. Her July electric bill was $460, roughly a quarter of her monthly disability income, and her energy assistance was cut in half in 2025. "Everything is almost unreachable," she said. More than 3 million Texas households had their power shut off for nonpayment in 2024.

SOLAR FOR ALL FUNDING

Harris County received a $249,700,000 Solar for All grant to deploy projects across the state in partnership with peer municipalities, but those funds were terminated by the Trump EPA.



West Virginia

Mountain State Spotlight reported on Kim Conrad of Bridgeport, who lives on disability income after a lung cancer diagnosis last year. Her electric bills have run as high as $469 a month, competing with groceries and the medication she needs. "It takes food out of my mouth," she said. She has not been able to install solar and is still saving for a new roof and insulation. Residential electric rates in West Virginia have risen 53% over the past decade.

SOLAR FOR ALL FUNDING

The West Virginia Office of Energy received a $106,180,000 Solar for All grant, and three multistate grantees also planned to serve the state. The Trump administration is keeping that money from families like Conrad's.

02 THE LEGAL CONTEXT

Two Courts Have Ruled that EPA Needs to Implement Solar for All



Photo by Sasun Bughdaryan via Unsplash.

EPA canceled relief that Congress provided

In August 2025, EPA Administrator Lee Zeldin terminated Solar for All and withdrew about 90% of grant funds from grantees' accounts. He claimed the 2025 “One Big Beautiful Bill Act” (OBBBA) gave EPA that authority. Two federal courts have since rejected that claim.

On September 18, 2026, the U.S. District Court for the District of Rhode Island vacated the Solar for All program termination, finding that OBBBA did not authorize termination of the Solar for All program and that EPA could not take further actions to effectuate the termination. Four days later, the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia reached the same conclusion.

The clock is running

EPA says it is "reviewing the decision and considering options for appeal." The government generally has 60 days to file a notice of appeal, a window that closes on November 17 and 21 for the respective cases.

Only about 14 months remain before the tax credit deadline, and an appeal would cause further delays in program implementation and make it impossible to do so before tax credits expire.

03 WHAT A RESTART COULD DELIVER

A Prompt Restart Could Deliver More Impact Than the Original Plan

By statute, EPA must award Solar for All grants through a competitive process. Restored quickly based on the results of the competition EPA previously conducted, Solar for All could still reach one million households. If EPA restarts the program quickly and prioritizes rapid deployment to maximize energy affordability, participating households could save about 25% on their electricity bill every year for the life of the system.

~1 million

households could be served by a prompt restart, saving about 25% on their electricity bills

Original program vs. prompt restart

	Original program (2024 design)	Prompt restart (2027)
Average residential electricity price	16.0¢/kWh	18.2¢/kWh
Rooftop solar installed price	$3.28/W	$3.49/W
Community solar installed price	$1.90/W	$2.08/W
Rooftop systems owned by homeowners	60%	0% (all leased or third-party-owned)
Effective federal tax credit (share of solar cost)	26%	29%
Grant needed per household	$7,800	$7,000
Households served	**900,000**	**~1,005,000**
Average bill savings per household	~25%	~25%
First-year savings per household	$400	$456
Total first-year savings, nationally	**$360 million**	**$458 million**

Restart prices include the new Section 232 solar tariffs. The original-program column seeks to reproduce EPA's 2024 estimates.

Why a Prompt Restart Can Still Work



Photo by Raze Solar via Unsplash

The program still works, despite steps the Trump Administration has taken to undercut the solar industry:

- **Rising bills make each system worth more.**
  The same panels now offset more expensive power. That supports more private financing per project, so each grant dollar reaches further.
- **Leased and community solar keep the larger credit.**
  The original design relied partly on the homeowner credit, worth 30%, which the 2025 tax law eliminated. Leased and community solar systems can still claim the commercial credit, worth an estimated 40% with the low-income bonus, if they are placed in service by the end of 2027.
- **Savings grow if electricity prices continue to rise.**
  Solar for All guarantees participating families savings equal to a share of their electricity bills, so higher prices mean bigger dollar savings: $456 in the first year, up from EPA's original estimate of $400.

All of this depends on systems in service by December 31, 2027. That requires that EPA act expeditiously to implement a system that works within the new tax credit regime and does not waste time with additional appeals.

04 THE COST OF DELAY

A Trump Administration Appeal Could Permanently Shut Out About 410,000 Families

410,000

fewer households would benefit if an appeal pushes projects past the December 31, 2027 deadline.

If EPA appeals and the restart slips past December 31, 2027, about 410,000 fewer households will benefit from Solar for All if it is turned back on by a future court order.

The damage of further delay cannot be undone.

Once the deadline passes, the commercial solar credit is gone for every system not yet operating. Absent subsequent action from Congress to restore the tax credit, the grant needed per household rises by about 70%, from about $7,000 to about $11,800. The same $7 billion would then reach about 594,000 households, roughly 410,000 fewer than a prompt restart.

Families could lose about $187 million in first-year savings.

Total first-year savings fall from about $458 million to about $271 million. The families who do participate still save about 25%, but far fewer families benefit.

Even partial delays can be costly.

To fully take advantage of the congressionally authorized tax credits that remain in effect through the end of 2027, EPA needs to restore the grants and work efficiently with grantees to implement program designs that work within the new framework.



Giorgio Trovato via Unsplash

State Results

Table 1: State-level impacts from an immediate restart of Solar for All

Prompt restart scenario. Total and household savings are first-year electricity bill savings. State figures are EPN model estimates, not grantee plans.

State	Households reached	Total savings	Household savings
Alabama	2,039	$781,905	$383
Alaska	11,376	$7,864,505	$691
Arizona	19,184	$6,537,974	$341
Arkansas	11,639	$3,612,828	$310
California	57,425	$52,536,146	$915
Colorado	26,209	$7,384,823	$282
Connecticut	12,501	$6,527,390	$522
Delaware	296	$112,317	$379
District of Columbia	11,522	$6,271,007	$544
Florida	30,338	$10,381,991	$342
Georgia	24,718	$9,018,414	$365
Guam	9,349	$3,267,924	$350
Hawaii	11,469	$17,829,809	$1,555
Idaho	6,901	$1,965,464	$285
Illinois	32,517	$10,956,677	$337
Indiana	18,543	$6,305,417	$340
Iowa	435	$130,259	$299
Kansas	764	$229,443	$300
Kentucky	7,513	$2,297,586	$306
Louisiana	16,752	$5,265,581	$314
Maine	11,449	$9,037,453	$789
Maryland	13,097	$5,803,381	$443
Massachusetts	30,461	$22,900,844	$752
Michigan	35,515	$16,831,012	$474
Minnesota	11,475	$3,430,120	$299
Mississippi	8,148	$2,811,106	$345
Missouri	20,731	$7,125,458	$344
Montana	5,805	$1,661,489	$286
Nebraska	7,240	$1,995,859	$276
Nevada	18,018	$4,653,013	$258
New Hampshire	8,061	$5,026,157	$624
New Jersey	30,894	$17,144,784	$555
New Mexico	23,627	$5,931,080	$251
New York	60,079	$44,325,066	$738
North Carolina	24,710	$7,903,088	$320
North Dakota	7,081	$2,095,459	$296
Ohio	32,332	$11,973,908	$370

State	Households reached	Total savings	Household savings
Oklahoma	859	$274,491	$320
Oregon	12,330	$3,885,836	$315
Pennsylvania	40,395	$17,076,188	$423
Puerto Rico	24,279	$8,486,568	$350
Rhode Island	9,074	$6,359,578	$701
South Carolina	17,090	$5,818,816	$340
South Dakota	7,636	$2,477,527	$324
Tennessee	17,901	$5,806,882	$324
Texas	37,553	$13,538,689	$361
U.S. Virgin Islands	9,349	$3,267,924	$350
Utah	7,794	$1,825,857	$234
Vermont	11,386	$5,879,930	$516
Virginia	23,699	$8,985,950	$379
Washington	20,061	$6,090,106	$304
West Virginia	13,489	$4,554,006	$338
Wisconsin	13,339	$4,365,272	$327
Wyoming	3,761	$1,065,507	$283
Tribal awards (see Table 2)	74,337	$28,613,921	$385
Total	**1,004,545**	**$458,299,785**	**$456**

Tribal Households Reached

Table 2: Tribal households reached from an immediate restart of Solar for All, by state

Analysis of state-by-state impact of grants with a specific focus on serving Tribal populations

State	Households reached	Total savings	Household savings
Alaska	11,280	$7,798,475	$691
Arizona	4,291	$1,462,346	$341
Colorado	1,969	$554,732	$282
Michigan	3,753	$1,778,570	$474
Minnesota	3,270	$977,375	$299
Montana	3,431	$981,898	$286
Nevada	1,395	$360,351	$258
New Mexico	1,818	$456,370	$251
North Dakota	2,998	$887,104	$296
South Dakota	3,229	$1,047,745	$324
Utah	1,509	$353,482	$234
Wisconsin	8,651	$2,831,123	$327
Wyoming	3,371	$954,802	$283
Other/Multi-state	23,372	$8,169,548	$350
Total	**74,337**	**$28,613,921**	**$385**

05 Recommendations

What Must Be Done Now

EPN calls on EPA to forgo appeals, comply with the courts' orders, and restart Solar for All immediately. The recommendations below are aimed at getting systems operational before December 31, 2027.

For EPA

1. **Put utility bill relief for families first by restarting the Solar for All grants.**
   Reinstate every state, tribal, and multistate award EPA made following a rigorous and fairly conducted competition. Collectively, these awards reach all 50 states and many Tribal nations.
2. **Approve work plan revisions within 30 days.**
   Let grantees shift homeowner-owned rooftop projects to leased, third-party-owned, or community solar models, which can still claim the commercial credit. Pre-approve standard revision types so most changes do not require case-by-case review.
3. **Extend the Build America, Buy America solar waiver.**
   EPA's temporary Solar for All waiver covered domestically assembled solar modules bought by Dec. 31, 2025, and installed by June 30, 2026. Both dates passed while the program was unlawfully terminated. EPA should extend the waiver to systems that begin operating by Dec. 31, 2028.
4. **Make grantees whole for lost time.**
   Grant no-cost extensions for the months lost since Aug. 2025. Treat the costs of remobilizing, such as rehiring staff and re-bidding contracts, as allowable.
5. **Put shovel-ready projects first.**
   Encourage grantees to front-load projects that can be operating by the end of 2027, such as community solar sites with interconnection approval and multifamily buildings.
6. **Keep storage in the plan where it pays.**
   The federal credit for battery storage is not subject to the 2027 solar deadline. Grantees can add storage where it raises savings or resilience, even after the solar deadline passes.
7. **Commit to speed and transparency.**
   Restore staffing in the office that runs the program, set public approval deadlines, and publish monthly data on funds disbursed and systems placed in service.

For Treasury and the IRS

8. **Give grantees certainty on tax credits.**
   Confirm that leased and community solar systems funded by Solar for All can claim the commercial credit, including through elective pay for public and nonprofit owners. Give these projects priority for any remaining low-income bonus allocations.

For Grantees

9. **Move quickly to place projects in service by December 31, 2027.**
10. **Prioritize rapid bill savings for low- and moderate-income households in updated work plans.**

Methodology and Key Assumptions

This is a top-down estimate of how the program's potential impact has shifted since 2024, not a bottom-up model of any grantee's plan. EPN does not have access to grantee work plans.

Calibration

The original-program scenario is designed to match EPA's 2024 estimates of 900,000 households and about $400 in average annual savings, using 2023 prices and tax credits.

Geography

State-level awards are modeled at each state's electricity prices and usage. Multistate awards are split across each grantee's planned service area in proportion to low- and moderate-income households, using HUD data. Tribal awards are split across each grantee's listed states.

System mix

Restart scenarios assume 50% rooftop and 50% community solar, all leased or third-party-owned. Each household is served by an average of 4.4 kilowatts of solar, consistent with EPA's projection of about 4 gigawatts.

Grant math

Each household's grant covers installed cost, minus federal tax credits, minus private financing, plus other program costs such as storage and enabling upgrades, grossed up for a 25% administration and technical assistance share.

Financing

Projects borrow against the value of their electricity above each household's guaranteed savings, up to 40% of installed cost, at 6.5% over 20 years.

Prices

Electricity prices come from EIA (2023 actual; 2026 forecast). Installed prices come from Wood Mackenzie and SEIA ($3.28/W in early 2023; $3.36/W in mid-2026), plus 4% for the Section 232 tariffs. Community solar prices are EPN assumptions.

Tax credits

Leased and community solar systems claim the commercial credit at an assumed 40%, including an average low-income bonus, only if placed in service by December 31, 2027. Battery storage keeps its credit in every scenario.

Delay

The delayed scenario assumes no solar systems are placed in service by the deadline.

Lifetime savings

First-year savings are held constant in real terms over a 25-year asset life and discounted at 3% and 7%.

About This Report

Following recent court orders requiring the restart of the Solar for All program, former EPA officials analyzed potential impacts of a restart given changes in energy markets and federal policy since the grants were terminated in August 2025.

About the Environmental Protection Network

Founded in 2017, the Environmental Protection Network harnesses the expertise of more than 800 former EPA career staff and confirmation-level appointees from Democratic and Republican administrations to provide the unique perspective of former scientists and regulators with decades of historical and subject matter knowledge.

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