

One year after OBBBA, clean energy projects withstand (for now) federal headwinds

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It's no secret that [President Trump is not a fan of "windmills"](#) (by which he means wind turbines, as windmills are used to grind grain or pump water rather than generate energy) specifically, and clean energy development generally. The president has vowed to support traditional energy sources and undercut renewable sources, and has strongly acted on both promises. One might have expected the clean energy industry to falter in response, but it has proven resilient, sparking great interest in its present and future. This article explores clean energy trends.

Our insatiable appetite for energy, and the turn to alternative sources

In the musical *Hadestown*, King Hades presides over a booming energy empire, fueled, pun intended, by a growing demand for power. This demand is explained by the love story between Hades and Persephone, the goddess of spring (as Persephone spends time away from the King in the underworld, he seeks ever greater means to show his domination over the landscape as a demonstration of his devotion). Energy demand in the United States is not so romantic. Rather, after being stagnant for years, the need for power and capacity is being driven by artificial intelligence (AI)-driven data center development and electrification efforts across the country. The strategy for meeting those needs is being impacted by ongoing conflicts involving oil rich producers such as the Russia-Ukraine war and the ongoing conflict with Iran, as well as general angst about the economy.

Nearly 50 years ago, the U.S. Supreme Court recognized that traditional, fossil fuel-based energy resources would not and should not be enough to satisfy our energy demand, stating that "Our decision today in no way disparages the national interest in energy conservation. We accept without reservation the argument that conservation, as well as the development of alternative energy sources, is an imperative national goal." *Central Hudson Gas & Elect. Corp. v. Public Serv. Commission of New York*, 447 U.S. 557, 571 (1980).

Traditional fossil fuel-based energy resources cannot meet today's energy demands (and in the near term) because as vast as they are, they are finite. They also should not be our sole source of energy because their emissions contribute to climate change. Thus, alternatives to fossil fuel-based resources, like nuclear, solar and wind, are needed. Forty-six years later, the development of what used to be referred to as "alternative" energy sources, now simply called clean energy resources, [continues to expand](#), with solar and battery storage accounting for 91 percent of all new electricity-generating capacity in the first quarter of 2026 (and solar providing 60 percent of that new capacity).

Until recently it seemed that the case for clean energy—it offers affordable, timely, and much-needed power—was unquestionable and that [clean energy projects would continue to be built](#) (or, at least, not be hindered or disfavored). Indeed, the renewable energy industry received a

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major boost from the federal government during the Biden administration, with the passage of the 2024 Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), putting in place significant tax incentives for the development and construction of clean energy projects. Inflation Reduction Act of 2022, Pub. L. No. 117-169, 136 Stat. 1818.

The federal campaign against clean energy and its consequences

Last summer the Trump administration pushed to end the IRA's tax incentives with the passage of the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA).¹ Since January 2025, it has issued multiple executive orders that significantly slowed or limited the development of projects with cumbersome review procedures and sluggish administrative approvals,² and it has [outright halted offshore wind projects](#), buying out existing leases for those projects using taxpayer dollars to permanently halt construction.

Recent court rulings have started to block some of the administration's policies preventing clean energy projects from moving forward. For example, in December 2025, a [Massachusetts federal judge blocked a Trump executive order](#) that had paused wind projects, calling it arbitrary and capricious. This past April, Chief Judge Casper of the U.S. District Court for the District of Massachusetts issued a preliminary injunction to [block agency actions that imposed significant restrictions on both wind and solar projects](#), including that the secretary of the interior needed to personally approve projects that used any Bureau of Land Management land. In August, another federal judge required that the Department of Defense [renew reviews of applications for wind projects](#) to determine whether they pose a hazard to military installations, the lack of which had effectively halted all wind project development for months across the country.

Still, the impact of the federal campaign against clean energy has been significant. A recent [BlueGreen Alliance report](#) suggests nearly \$83 billion in projects have been canceled or delayed because of Trump administration policies since 2025, and a recent [American Clean Power report](#) stated that although "[t]he pipeline for clean power projects rose by 6% compared to Q1 2025, driven primarily by a 13% growth in the solar pipeline and 8% growth in the battery storage pipeline . . . in contrast, the pipeline for land-based wind has stagnated, and offshore wind has plummeted by 35%." More than 6.4 gigawatts (GW) of clean power capacity that had been expected to become operational during Q1 of 2026 has been delayed, joining a 53 GW backlog of delayed projects. While some of those delays are attributable to issues that existed prior to 2025 (lengthy permitting processes, pricing and timing uncertainty for key equipment, and extensive interconnection queues), it's undeniable that the onslaught of federal policies aimed at slowing the expansion of clean energy projects have taken their toll.

The resiliency of renewable energy and its future

Yet, developers continue to develop, construct and finance their clean energy projects, and banks and tax equity continue to support them. At least three reasons explain this surprising resiliency. First, state policies that have mandated the purchase of energy from renewable sources at the state level for more than a decade remain largely intact. Second, those developers and project

¹ H.R.1 — 119th Congress (2025-2026).

² Executive Order on July 7, 2025, to end "unreliable, foreign controlled energy resources."

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sponsors who managed to achieve “beginning of construction” for federal income tax purposes, are now working to ink contracts to complete projects in time to qualify for the last IRA tax credits. Finally, clean energy advocates of various stripes continue to mount legal challenges to the Trump administration’s anti-clean energy campaign.

Meanwhile, record heatwaves over the summer are testing the limits of electrical grids across the country, focusing our attention on the current portfolio of resources to meet demand and our continued dependence on projects whose greenhouse-gas emissions are fueling a climate crisis.

The resiliency of the clean energy industry may offer a clue as to its future, bolstered by a common-sense market imperative: facing unprecedented power demands and a need to reign in carbon emissions, sensible energy policies and strategies ought to include clean energy sources