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California Legislature enacts bills to bring clean power online faster and cheaper; lawmakers must fix wildfire liability to protect the grid

AB 2493, AB 1156, AB 550 advance reliability and affordability

Sacramento, CA — American Clean Power-California commends the California State Legislature for passing AB 2493 and AB 1156, two bills aimed at reducing delays and costs to connect clean energy to the grid. But ACP-CA urges the Legislature to heed Speaker Robert Rivas's [call to action](#) Tuesday to hammer out [structural wildfire reforms](#) that will maintain financially healthy utilities and protect ratepayers.

AB 2493, authored by Assembly Utilities and Energy Committee Chair Cottie Petrie-Norris, D-Irvine, and co-sponsored by ACP-CA and the Union of Concerned Scientists, holds California transmission owners — including the state's three large investor-owned utilities — accountable for completing equipment upgrades on time when clean energy projects are waiting to connect to the grid.

The bill addresses a widespread problem: Across California, 22 gigawatts' worth of clean energy projects — enough to power more than 16 million homes — are waiting on delayed upgrades from Pacific Gas and Electric Company and Southern California Edison alone, according to the [California Public Utilities Commission](#). Some delays stretch for years, driving up costs and constraining the state's ability to meet rising energy demand.

[AB 2493](#) adds a new monitor at the CPUC to oversee progress on transmission upgrades, providing visibility into project status earlier in the development process and creating an independent watchdog to get clear answers when projects face delays. If a transmission

owner doesn't improve, the bill requires the CPUC to order fixes — which may include earlier equipment orders, expanding opportunities for third parties to complete the work, and fast-tracking upgrades that affect 100 MW or more of clean energy capacity.

Faster grid hookups also depend on transmission owners having access to affordable financing. As ACP-CA and other clean energy trade groups warned in an [August 20 letter](#) to lawmakers, utilities facing financial distress cannot raise the capital to fund the grid transformation that clean energy integration demands. PG&E and SCE's market valuations [plunged](#) after lawmakers proposed limited reforms in SB 492, demonstrating the proposals were not adequate to address the risk of further credit downgrades.

"California can't afford more delays bringing new clean power online," said **ACP-CA Executive Director Alex Jackson**. "AB 2493 addresses the biggest bottleneck in California energy development, but the state's transition to clean power depends on continued investment in our transmission grid. Without structural reforms to wildfire liability, that investment will be a lot more expensive and harder to secure."

"For California to meet its clean energy and climate goals, we must urgently connect a massive amount of renewable energy resources to the grid," said **Daniel Barad, UCS Associate Director, Western States Policy**. "AB 2493 will increase transparency on interconnection delays and allow the state to take the action necessary to bring clean energy online at the pace and scale its ambitious targets demand."

[AB 1156](#), authored by Assemblymember Buffy Wicks, D-Oakland, makes it easier and cheaper to build clean energy on fallowed Central Valley farmland. The bill lets farmers who want to put solar on their property suspend restrictive contracts entered into under the Williamson Act, a 1965 law providing tax breaks to keep land in farming and open space. The change aligns California's clean energy and groundwater management goals while offering an economic lifeline to farmers affected by groundwater restrictions.

In another win for clean energy, the Legislature passed [AB 550](#), authored by Petrie-Norris, which creates a permitting pathway to accommodate plants and animals that are candidates for protection under the California Endangered Species Act.

Measures like these, along with wildfire liability reform, are needed to help California meet energy demand that the California Energy Commission projects will rise roughly 50% by 2045. The state's SB 100 clean energy goals [call for](#) tripling California's supply of clean power by the same year, requiring 6 to 7 gigawatts of new capacity annually for the next two decades. Transmission capacity will need to [more than double](#), requiring both a streamlined approach to new infrastructure and reliable access to affordable financing for the utilities building it.

The American Clean Power Association is the leading voice of today's multi-tech clean energy industry, representing energy storage, wind, utility-scale solar, clean hydrogen, and transmission companies. ACP is committed to meeting America's energy and national security goals and building our economy with fast-growing, low-cost, and reliable domestic power. Learn more at cleanpower.org.

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