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## **How South Carolina became a major solar market... and why the industry may be threatened**

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By now, most of us have caught a glimpse of a solar farm driving on the interstate or a rural highway in South Carolina, something that was not a very common sight a few years ago. What explains the sudden appearance of these farms?

The rise of solar energy production in South Carolina can be attributed to three factors. First, the South Carolina legislature modified or lifted several restrictions that made solar development very difficult if not impossible. In addition, the investor-owned utilities operating in South Carolina have been mandated by a number of other states' "renewable portfolio standards" to have a certain percentage of their energy production generated by renewable energy sources, like solar, wind, and hydropower. South Carolina does not have a renewable portfolio standard, but, due in part to the laws in other states, utilities are embracing solar energy as a way to meet these standards, as well as their own self-imposed sustainable and environmentally friendly goals.

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