



# Solar in Wisconsin

---

**Samantha Whitens**

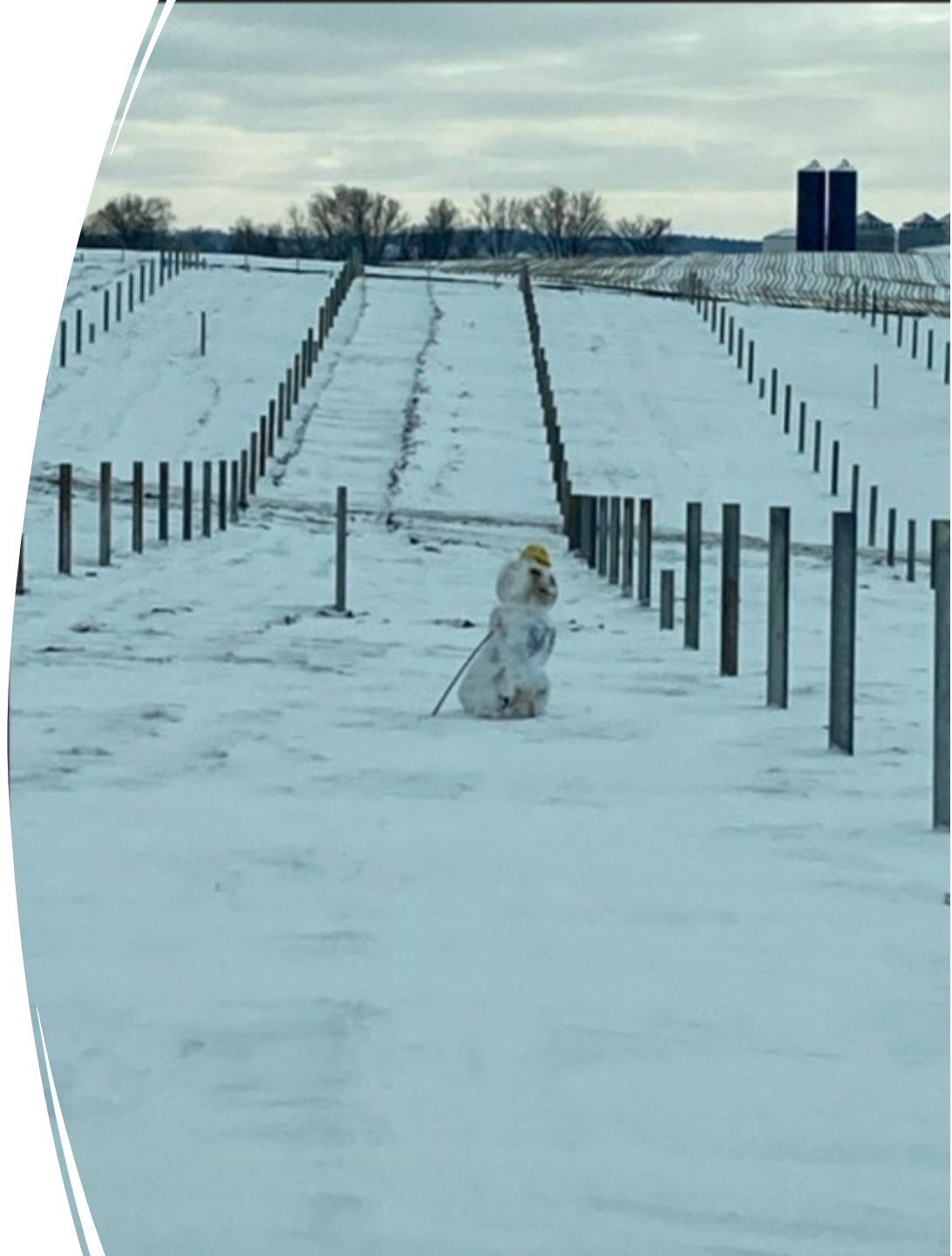
Storm Water Engineer

Wisconsin DNR

# Outline

---

- Background
- Types of Solar
- National Trends
- Vista Sands





# Background

- 1-7,000+ acre sites
- Developers from across the country
- *Wisconsin electric providers reported plans to add approximately 6,000 MW of new solar energy capacity by 2030*

Draft Strategic Energy Assessment, PSC



# Types of Solar

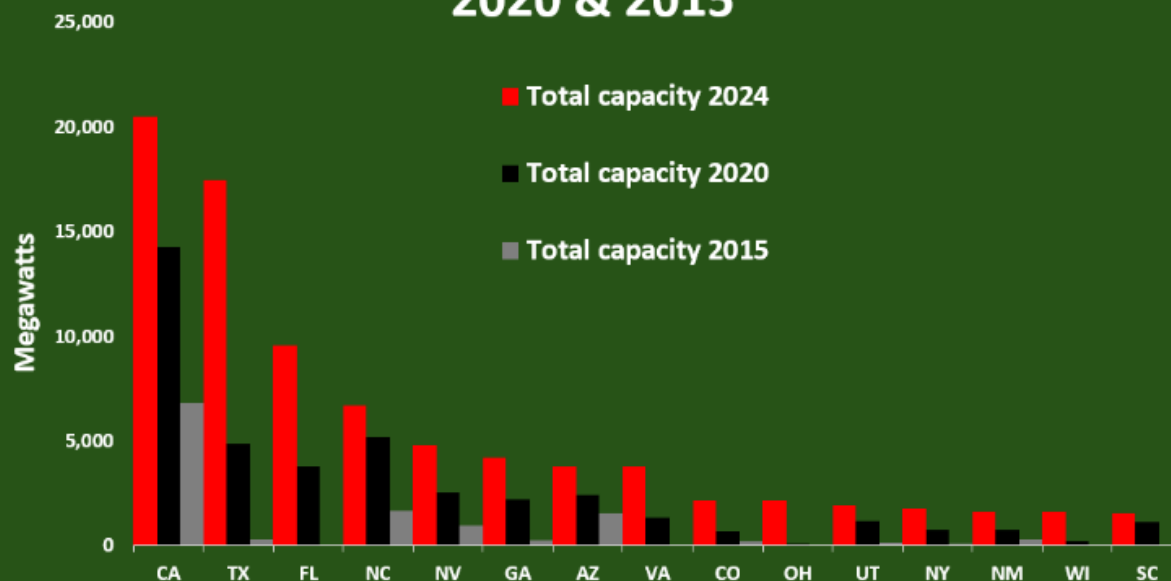
---

- Residential
  - Rooftop
- Community
  - <50 acres
- Utility
  - Up to 7,100+ acres



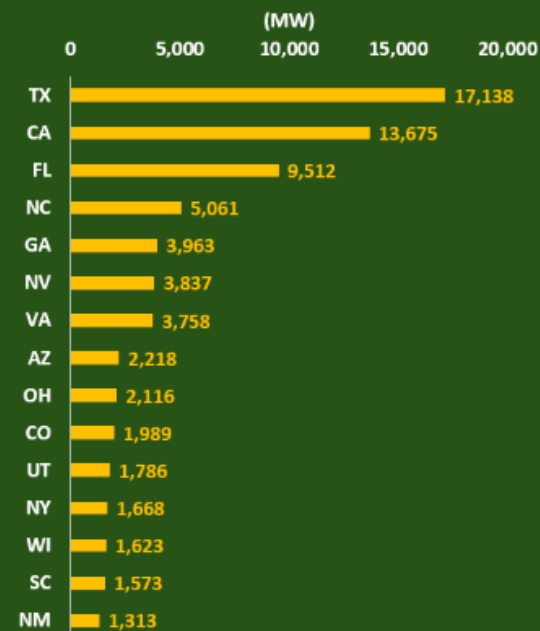
# Key U.S. states for solar capacity additions since 2015

## Top 15 states for solar capacity in 2024 vs 2020 & 2015



Source: Cleanview, U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA)

## Change in capacity from 2015 to 2024



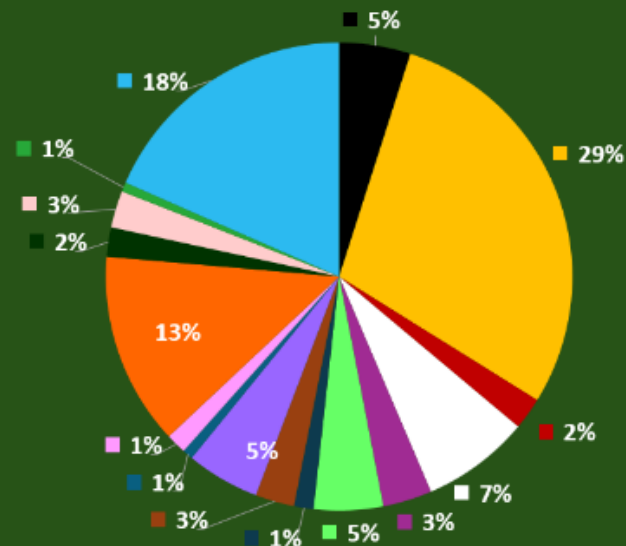
# 15 states produce over 80% of U.S. solar electricity

California & Texas alone account for 42% of national total, but 10 other states have grown over 100% since 2019

Electricity generation from solar in key U.S. states



Share of total U.S. solar electricity generation by key states



As of 2022, utility and community scale solar combined accounted for less than 1% of the total electricity produced in the state of Wisconsin.

37% Natural Gas

36% Coal

4% Hydro

3% Wind

1% Solar





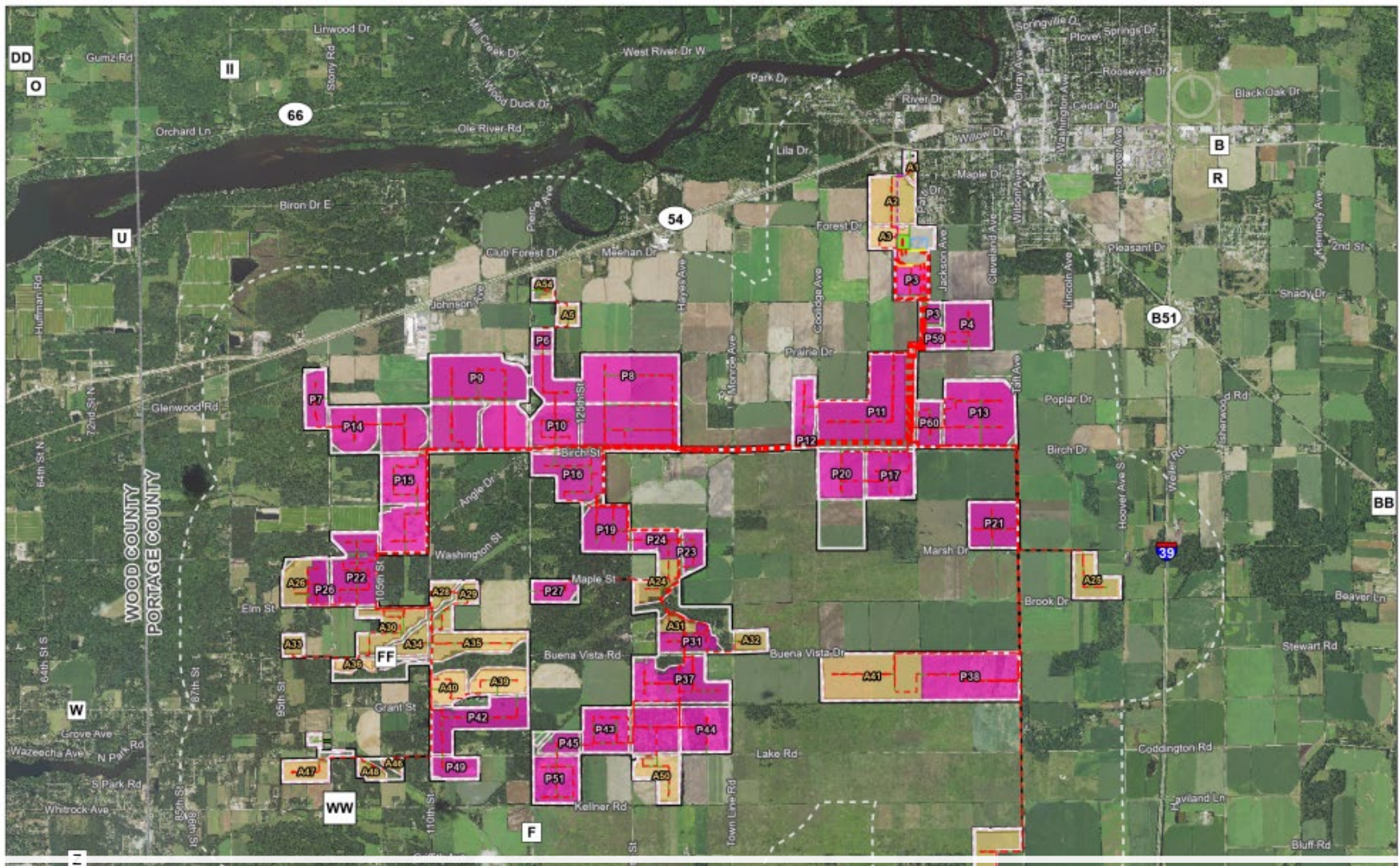


## Legend

- Project
- 1 Mile Buffer
- General
- Collection
- Access
- Boundary
- Solar P1
- Solar P2
- Project
- O&M Area
- Stormwater
- Laydown
- BESS Area



Notes:  
 1. Coordinates: NAD83  
 2. Data Source: Aerial  
 3. Date: 10/11/2023



# Vista Sands Solar





Proposed project area: 7,100 acres

1,300 MW (200,000 homes)

Towns of Plover, Buena Vista, and Grant  
(Portage Co)

Highly contentious due to proximity to  
the Buena Vista Wildlife Area which  
supports the threatened Greater Prairie  
Chicken



- [GPRC Range.pdf](#)\*
- [VS and BVWA.pdf](#)\*

\*pages from Environmental Impact Statement located here:  
<https://apps.psc.wi.gov/ERF/ERFview/viewdoc.aspx?docid=508693>



# PSC Public Comment Period

- Public outpouring of comments (1,187)
- Env. Group vs. Env. Group
- What happens when environmentally friendly projects have the potential for unfriendly environmental consequences?





# PSC Final Decision

Buena Vista Wildlife Area is located near southern portion of the proposed project and borders Array Areas 12, 20, 21, 38, 41, 44, and 53. This property is owned and managed by DNR. The wildlife area is one of the four wildlife areas in central Wisconsin where the GRPC is concentrated and is managed primarily for grassland habitat.

The Commission authorizes the applicant to use any of the primary and alternative solar array sites with the exception of Alternative Array Areas 20, 32, 41, 53; Primary Array Area 50; the southernmost approximately 30 acres of Primary Array Area 20; and the westernmost approximately 32 acres of Primary Array Area 38.



# PSC Final Decision

- PSC Final Decision Document:  
<https://apps.psc.wi.gov/ERF/ERFview/viewdoc.aspx?docid=529800>
- Vista Sands PSC Docket Info:  
<https://psc.wi.gov/Pages/CommissionActions/CasePages/VistaSandsSolarProject.aspx>

Thank You!

