

It's worth taking notice when any clean energy legislation is passing with bipartisan support in all kinds of states. Bills on balcony solar, also called plug-in solar, have been signed or moved forward in so many states around the country that it's probably easier to name the 16 or 17 states that are NOT working on balcony solar bills.

I've not seen one of these myself, or had the pleasure to stick 'em in, but as I understand, an entry-level plug-in system costs between \$500 and \$1,000 and can be installed in a backyard, on a balcony or on a roof. The solar juice enters your home through a standard wall outlet, where it can help you offset the electricity you draw from the grid. The relatively low cost makes this kind of solar much more accessible for people who can't plunk down \$15,000 or more on an electrician-installed rooftop array. But then again, the financial benefits are relatively small.

So far, all told, eight states in the US have adopted balcony solar legislation. They are Utah, Maine, Virginia, Colorado, Maryland, Connecticut, New Hampshire and now Vermont. Dozens more are working on bills, according to Canary Media which has [a fantastic tracker](#).

Vermont is the most recent to act on these portable, plug-in solar panels. Governor Phil Scott (a Republican) signed a bill called [S 202](#) into law on June 16. The law, which has strong bipartisan support, creates a legal framework for plug-in solar systems that are limited to 1,200 watts AC output per electrical meter. And the state's utilities are prohibited from charging extra fees or requiring prior approval for qualifying systems. The law takes effect July 1.

In Connecticut, Governor Ned Lamont [signed HB 5340](#), a broad energy bill that establishes new rules to allow for residential use of balcony solar. It takes effect on October 1.

In New York, lawmakers passed the Solar Up Now New York (or SUNNY) Act and Governor Kathy Hochul is being urged to sign it.

In Massachusetts earlier this week, the state Senate [unveiled](#) a wide-ranging energy bill that touches on lots of topics – including a provision that authorizes plug-in solar. If it passes, that bill is going to be news worthy for other things, especially whether funding for energy efficiency programs survives.

In Sacramento, a key California state Assembly committee advanced a plug-in solar

bill known as SB 868 in a unanimous 18-0 vote and now heads to Appropriations before being considered by the full assembly. It already passed the State Senate.

On top of Canary Media's tracker, there have been some good news stories on whether plug-in solar will save consumers all that much money in the states. A [story this week](#) from Dan Gearino at Inside Climate News looks at Germany as an example of a country with relatively high electricity prices. It notes that Berlin is the city with the fastest payoff of just a few years.