With little resistance from Congress, the Trump administration is doing what it can to discourage the further development of renewable energy resources, showing a special lack of affection towards solar and wind. Through various executive orders and through direct payouts to some potential developers, the administration has worked to block and reverse permits on federal land and in federal waters. In its one Big Bill last year, Congress dramatically reduced access to federal renewable energy tax credits and slashed other related Biden-era laws and funds. As was recently noted, these changes have not stopped the renewables industry in its tracks. Yet undoubtedly, recent federal actions have killed off promising projects and created great uncertainty at all levels.

How are states responding to the current administration's efforts to suppress renewable energy development? Working with dozens of graduate students earlier this year, we looked at each of the states, as well as the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico to answer that question. And now, we have issued our final report. We found out that the vast majority of states are either doing nothing new to take up the slack or are actively working to discourage more renewable energy development. About 12 states have taken steps to further support renewables development. We detail all of this in the report.

That doesn't mean that all of the other 40 jurisdictions are rejecting renewables or that the solar and wind industries have ground to a halt. Some states that have taken no new steps had already created ambitious programs to support renewables. In some ways, the fact that those states are staying the course is good news for the industry. In addition, the economics for many renewables has become favorable in recent years, leaving the industry in a competitive position in most states.

It is also important to note that states such as Texas, while not declaring an intention to abandon fossil fuels, have paved the way for very substantial renewables development by simplifying permitting processes and expanding the transmission system.

But 40% of the states have taken steps to make it more difficult to develop new renewable energy projects than it was before the return of Trump. In the words of the report, "they are doing this through legislation that creates barriers to wind and solar development, mandates that prop up fossil fuel generation, restrictions on local clean energy rules, or outright bans on certain technologies. Missouri and Kentucky fall into this category, as do the growing number of states where utility commissions have delayed coal retirements, rolled back net metering, or weakened existing renewable standards."

The roster of states that are weakening support for renewables includes Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, the two Dakotas, Iowa and Missouri. Add in Tennessee, Indiana, Ohio, West Virginia and others. All of the states in the Southeast are moving backward or standing still.

Even in those states, however, it is not uniformly bad news for solar and wind. Take Indiana, as an example. Indiana is a coal-producing state with a governor (Mike Braun) who is a close ally of the President's. The state has no requirement that its utilities develop or procure renewable power. County governments, which have to issue permits for the construction of new solar and wind farms, are free to create moratoria on new development, or set such draconian conditions on new projects that they are discouraged from going forward. As of the writing of our report, 64 of Indiana's 92 counties have enacted bans or prohibitive restrictions on new development. Despite all of this, there are already 28 gigawatts of installed renewable generating capacity in the state. There are about three gigawatts of other projects under construction. The solar industry reports that Indiana was third overall among the states for new installed solar capacity in 2025.

How can all of this happen in a state that is not enthusiastic about renewables? While this question is worthy of a study of its own, some factors are likely: the industry as a whole has benefited from mandates in many states and tax credits that have recently expired. These things make it easier for the renewables industry to thrive everywhere. Not unrelated, the cost of solar and wind (as well as battery storage) have gone down dramatically over the last few years, making these technologies cost competitive with fossil generation. In addition, Indiana borders Illinois, which has a substantial appetite for renewables to meet its requirements. Finally, it is often faster to procure and install new renewables than to build a gas-fired plant of a similar size.

We offer our report in the hopes of sparking reflection in various states of the role the state wants to play in ensuring a bright future for renewables.

To request a free copy of the report, please send me an email at sweissman@berkeley.edu.