



# Arkansas Legislature Solar Power

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### Why Solar Progress Stalled in Arkansas

When the Arkansas legislature debated solar energy tax credits last spring, something odd happened. A bill proposing \$15 million in renewable incentives died quietly in committee - the third consecutive year such measures failed. Meanwhile, neighboring states like Texas added 2,400 solar jobs in 2023 alone. So why can't the Natural State harness its 5.2 daily sun hours (20% more than Germany's solar leader Bavaria) effectively?

Farmers in the Arkansas Delta tell a revealing story. The state's agricultural sector could save \$28 million annually through agrivoltaics - combining crops with solar panels. Yet outdated regulations prohibit dual land use in 74% of counties. "We're stuck choosing between power and produce," laments cotton grower Sarah McAllister from Stuttgart. Her 12-acre experimental solar-crop plot? Shut down by zoning laws last October.

### The Legislative Puzzle: Renewable Energy vs. Tradition

Here's the rub: Arkansas ranks 46th in installed solar capacity despite having better solar resources than 28 states. The solar power debate often collides with legacy energy interests. Coal still provides 53% of the state's electricity, and utility lobbying expenditures hit \$1.4 million during the 2023 legislative session - a 22% increase from 2022.

But wait - there's movement beneath the surface. Municipal utilities in Fayetteville and Conway now offer solar buyback programs without state mandates. Little Rock's new sustainability plan aims for 25% municipal solar by 2025. Could cities outpace the state legislature? Environmental lawyer Jenna Cox thinks so: "We're seeing a classic American federalism play. When states stall, cities innovate."

### The Germany Comparison That Stings

Consider this: Bavaria (latitude similar to Arkansas) generates 38% of its power from solar despite 20% less annual sunshine. How? Feed-in tariffs and streamlined permitting. Arkansas's current net metering rules only compensate solar users at wholesale rates - about 4¢/kWh versus Germany's 13¢ retail rate equivalent.

### Learning From Texas: A Southern Solar Success Story

Now here's where it gets interesting. Texas - yes, oil country Texas - installed 4.8 GW of solar in 2023. Their secret? A competitive retail electricity market allowing direct consumer choice. Arkansas's regulated monopoly system gives utilities like Entergy Arkansas little incentive to adopt renewables quickly.

But let's not Monday morning quarterback too hard. The Arkansas legislature did pass Act 464 in 2023, enabling community solar gardens. Early results? 14 projects approved, mostly in Northwest Arkansas. It's a Band-Aid solution compared to Texas' solar boom, but proof that bipartisan deals can happen.

## The Quiet Rooftop Revolution Happening Anyway

Despite legislative hurdles, residential solar grew 18% in Arkansas last year. Why the disconnect between policy and practice? Three words: rising electricity costs. Entergy Arkansas rates jumped 6.3% in January 2024 - the fifth consecutive annual increase. Solar installers like Shine Solar now offer \$0-down leases that beat utility prices by 22% on average.

Take the Patterson family in Bentonville. Their 8.2 kW system installed last June cut their power bill from \$189 to \$12 monthly. "The math just worked," says dad Ryan, a high school math teacher. "We're saving \$2,100 yearly - better return than our 401(k)." Stories like this explain why solar permits doubled in Washington County since 2021.

## Your Solar Questions Answered

Can I still get solar tax credits in Arkansas?

While state incentives remain limited, federal tax credits cover 30% of installation costs through 2032. Some utilities offer \$500-\$1,000 rebates.

How long do residential solar panels last here?

Most manufacturers warrant panels for 25 years. Arkansas' moderate climate causes slower degradation than desert states - expect 80%+ output after 25 years.

Will solar increase my property taxes?

No - Arkansas exempts renewable energy systems from property tax assessments. Your home value increases without tax penalties.

What's the best solar panel angle for Arkansas?

34° tilt facing true south optimizes production. But east-west roofs still achieve 85-90% efficiency - perfect for existing homes.

Can I power my entire home with solar here?

Absolutely. Properly sized systems can cover 100% of energy needs. Battery storage adds backup capability during outages.

Web: <https://mavhone.co.za>



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