

Clean Energy Compass

Navigating climate, conservation and community considerations for clean energy planning

A New Resource for 3Cs Clean Energy Planning

For the first time in decades, energy demand is increasing in the United States. Meeting demand and tackling climate change will require a significant amount of new renewable energy—including large-scale wind and solar energy projects.

At the same time, developing clean energy projects is becoming increasingly complex. Successful projects must balance technical feasibility with conservation priorities, community interests, land-use considerations and permitting requirements. When potential environmental and community tradeoffs emerge late in the planning process, projects can face opposition, delays and higher costs.

The Nature Conservancy developed the Clean Energy Compass to help users identify potential **climate, conservation and community considerations**—the 3Cs—early in the planning process, when projects are still flexible and can be adjusted to support better outcomes for nature and people.

3Cs Solutions

The Nature Conservancy believes that accelerating clean energy deployment requires considering climate, conservation and communities from the outset. That is why TNC developed **the 3Cs framework**.

Integrating the 3Cs into clean energy solutions early in the process can help reduce conflict, avoid costly delays, lower project risk and support economic priorities while advancing the rapid, responsible clean energy buildout needed across the country. The 3Cs framework is designed to help deliver reliable, affordable clean energy while benefiting people and protecting nature.



What is the Clean Energy Compass?

The Clean Energy Compass is The Nature Conservancy's first-stop tool for clean energy planning. It combines an interactive national-scale map with the Compass Resource Hub to help identify conservation and community considerations early in the planning process.

The map includes more than 100 high-quality, national-scale datasets related to:

- Conservation values
- Disturbed lands
- Agricultural considerations
- Community considerations
- Probability of renewable energy buildout
- Indigenous lands

The Compass Resource Hub offers vetted information and practical guidance related to building community and Tribal partnerships, taking steps to avoid, minimize and offset impacts to nature, and planning clean energy to maximize emissions reductions.

The Clean Energy Compass is designed to support early-stage planning and information gathering. It is not:

- ⊗ A siting tool
- ⊗ A technical feasibility tool
- ⊗ A project certification program
- ⊗ A standalone ranking or scoring tool
- ⊗ A substitute for agency coordination and site-specific studies
- ⊗ A replacement for community engagement and Tribal consultation
- ⊗ A substitute for state or local planning and review processes

In other words, the data provided in the Compass is one source of information, but not the only source of information, that should be considered in renewable energy planning. It is not a map showing where renewable energy should or should not be sited. It is a map showing where additional analysis may be warranted.

It is worth noting that the Compass provides a consistent national baseline of conservation and community considerations. Many states and local jurisdictions include consideration of additional or different conservation values that go beyond or differ from what is included in the Compass.



Who should use the Clean Energy Compass?

The Compass is designed for people and organizations who have an interest in 3Cs clean energy planning and decision-making. Below are some examples of who can use the Compass and how it may be used:

Clean energy developers may incorporate data from the Compass into their own screening tools to understand potential wildlife, habitat and community considerations.

Permitting authorities can use the Compass to quickly identify potential risks early and ask the appropriate questions to address them, avoiding late-stage delays and speeding up project review.

State and federal agencies can use the Compass alongside other datasets and planning tools to help identify conservation and community considerations early in the project review and coordination processes.

Land use planners can use the conservation and community information in the Compass to proactively plan for renewable energy, reduce conflicts, minimize risk and create better outcomes for nature and people.

Clean energy buyers can use the Compass to better understand environmental and community considerations that may influence project timelines, risk and outcomes.

Economic development authorities can use the Compass to understand how clean energy development may align with local priorities, economic opportunities and community needs.

What is New

The Clean Energy Compass is the next evolution of TNC's former Site Renewables Right tool. The tool has expanded to include all lower 48 states in the U.S. and includes many new features.

While Site Renewables Right focused solely on conservation values, the Compass incorporates data related to farmland, communities and Tribes. It also shows areas where there is a higher probability of solar and wind energy development based on past siting trends—helping people better understand what areas in their communities may be considered for future clean energy projects.

The tool displays spatial information, such as the location of Tribal lands and some community characteristics that are important to be mindful of. But because not all information about a community can be understood through a map, the tool also offers accompanying resources in the Compass Resource Hub, including practical suggestions for engaging communities and Tribes and sharing benefits equitably.

Another exciting new feature of the tool is that it spotlights types of land where renewable energy development is less likely to encounter environmental or community concerns—such as mines, brownfields and abandoned agricultural lands. These are the types of areas that may provide an opportunity for renewable energy development and are less likely to encounter environmental and community concerns.

Learn More

The Clean Energy Compass is a powerful resource that can help guide renewable energy development to places that maximize benefits for climate, conservation and communities. By integrating the 3Cs into one platform, it equips decisionmakers with the information they need to plan responsibly. To dive deeper into how the tool works and who it is intended for, we encourage you to visit www.nature.org/cleanenergycompass.

