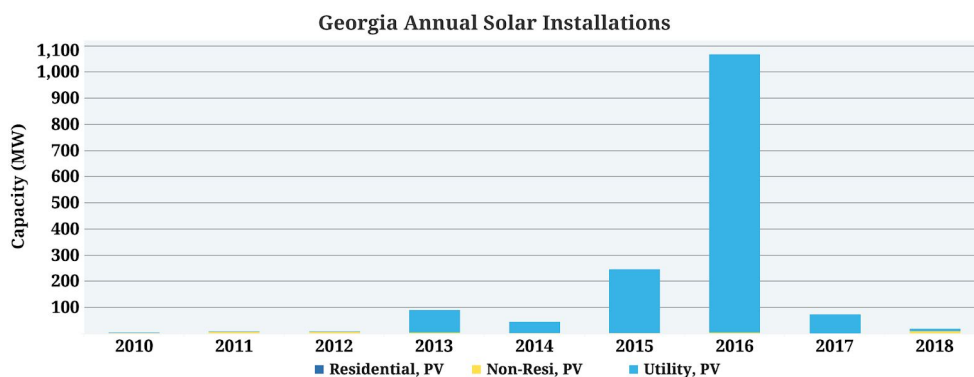


Two years ago, at the 2017 Stockholder Meeting, Tom Fanning said, “Solar panels, heck yeah!” And proceeded to say Southern Company was decreasing its capital expenditures (capex) on renewables from \$2.5 billion to \$1.5 billion.¹⁸ Which means that the 10% increase in renewable energy mix in the past decade mostly happened before 2018, and Georgia is already lagging behind again.



Graph: SEIA, whose state rankings use data from several quarters back.

In 2018, Georgia made the top 10 solar states for total deployed solar power, up from #22 in 2017 to #10 in 2018.¹⁹ Back in 2016, Georgia was even briefly #6, and this Georgia solar boom is widely, and correctly, I think, attributed to the Georgia PSC requiring Georgia Power to buy more solar power.²⁰

We see in the above graph what happened when the PSC’s solar requirement lapsed. As Tom Fanning announced at Stockholder Meetings, Southern Company renewable energy budgets went way down. Georgia Power being the biggest part of Southern Company, Georgia solar deployments went down with that budget. While Georgia was standing still, other states continued to deploy solar power, and by Q4 2018 Georgia had dropped to #11²¹ Georgia lags behind not just obviously sunny places like California, Arizona, Nevada, Texas, and Florida, but even behind North Carolina, New York, New Jersey, and snowy Massachusetts, which has almost 2.5 GW already deployed.²²

We need solar power now in Georgia, for reduced power bills, for rural jobs, for fewer greenhouse gases, for no cooling water, and for profit. In the 2019 IRP, Georgia Power proposes only 1 gigawatt (GW) of new renewable energy, mostly solar power, by 2024. That’s not much, considering that Georgia has about 1.5 GW of solar power already deployed:²³ Another 1 GW would only get Georgia by 2024 to where cold Massachusetts is now.

Overall U.S. solar power deployment has been more than doubling every two years for the past decade.²⁴ By that nationwide rate, Georgia Power should have at least 12 GW by 2024. Since 12 minus 1.5 is 10.5, a reasonable requirement for the PSC to make would be to **replace the IRP’s 1 GW figure with 10.5 GW. Even better, round 10.5 GW up to 12 GW by 2024 so Georgia could pull ahead again.**

Five years ago, in 2014, that SO started a research project on offshore wind.²⁵ Where are the results of that research? While Georgia has none, wind projects are being built offshore in

¹⁸ "Video: Solar panels, heck yeah! –Tom Fanning, CEO, at SO stockholder meeting 2017-05-24," John S. Quarterman, LAKE, 29 June 2017, <http://www.l-a-k-e.org/blog/?p=18717>

¹⁹ "Solar Power in Georgia 2018 – How Are We Doing? Georgia Cracks the Top 10 for Solar Capacity," Coastal Solar Energy Solutions, accessed 8 June 2019, <https://coastalsolar.com/solar-power-georgia-industry/>

²⁰ "How Georgia Became a Top 10 Solar State, With Lawmakers Barely Lifting a Finger," James Bruggers, inside climate news, 14 June 2018, <https://insideclimatenews.org/news/14062018/georgia-solar-power-renewable-utility-scale-clean-energy-investments-2018-election>

²¹ "Georgia Solar, Data Current Through: Q4 2018," SEIA, accessed 8 June 2019, <https://www.seia.org/state-solar-policy/georgia-solar>

²² "Top 10 Solar States," SEIA, accessed 7 June 2019, <https://www.seia.org/research-resources/top-10-solar-states-0>

²³ "Solar State By State," SEIA, accessed 7 June 2019, <https://www.seia.org/states-map>

²⁴ "Electric Power Monthly, Data for March 2019," U.S. Energy Information Administration, 24 May 2019, https://www.eia.gov/electricity/monthly/epm_table_grapher.php?t=epmt_1_01

²⁵ "Georgia Power studying possible wind turbines on Georgia’s coast or off Tybee’s shore," Corey Dickstein, Savannah Now, 20 June 2014, <https://www.savannahnow.com/news/2014-06-20/georgia-power-studying-possible-wind-turbines-georgias-coast-or-tybees-shore>