

Solar Means Business

Tracking Solar Adoption by America's Top Brands



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About SEIA

The Solar Energy Industries Association (SEIA®) is the driving force behind solar energy and is building a strong solar industry to power America through advocacy and education. As the national trade association for the U.S. solar energy industry, which employs more than 242,000 Americans, we represent all organizations that promote, manufacture, install and support the development of solar energy. SEIA works with its 1,000 member companies to build jobs and diversity, champion the use of cost-competitive solar in America, remove market barriers and educate the public on the benefits of solar energy.

Our Work



**Government
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Education**



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Leadership**

About this Report

Solar Means Business tracks U.S. solar photovoltaic (PV) installations that support commercial activities at U.S. facilities.

- The report focuses on America's largest companies, but includes available data for companies of all sizes
- Systems can be located on-site and provide electricity to the facility directly, or off-site and offset electricity costs for a company through virtual net metering or similar financial relationship
- Both company-owned and third party-owned (PPA or lease) systems are included
- Report covers commercial systems **installed by the end of 2018**

This is the **7th annual edition** of this report. You can find previous versions at www.seia.org/solar-means-business-report

This report **does not capture data on every commercial solar installation in the U.S.**, but every attempt has been made to ensure that the solar portfolios of America's largest corporate users are accurately represented.

- Rankings and analysis are based on **system-level data for over 35,000 commercial solar PV systems**
- Data in **this report captures nearly 70% of all U.S. commercial solar capacity** through the end of 2018
- Previous versions of this report only tracked on-site installations. **For the first time, this edition tracks off-site projects** as well, capturing a growing trend in commercial solar procurement.

Data comes from a variety of sources:

- Directly from the system owners or hosts
- From installers, with permission of system owners or hosts
- From publicly available data sources such as state regulatory bodies, press reports and research reports

All data in this report can be cited to *SEIA Solar Means Business 2018*, unless otherwise noted.



Key Findings

- Accounting for both on-site and off-site projects, **Apple is the top U.S. corporate solar user** with 393 megawatts (MW) installed, after adding 130 MW in 2018.
 - Amazon moves into the second spot with 330 MW installed, an increase of 36 MW from 2017.
 - Target rounds out the top three with 242 MW installed, while retaining the top spot for on-site installations at 230 MW.
- 2018 ranks as the **second-largest year for commercial solar installations**, with 1,144 MW installed.
 - **More than half of all corporate solar capacity has been installed in the last three years.**
 - With more than 7 gigawatts (GW) installed across 35,000 installations, **corporate solar deployment is 23 times larger today than it was a decade ago.**



Key Findings

Top 10 Corporate Solar Users

1		Apple	393.2 MW
2		Amazon	249.8 MW
3		Target	229.7 MW
4		Walmart	208.9 MW
5		Switch	179.0 MW
6		Google	142.9 MW
7		Prologis	126.3 MW
8		Kaiser Permanente	120.3 MW
9		Equinix	105.0 MW
10		Solvay	81.4 MW

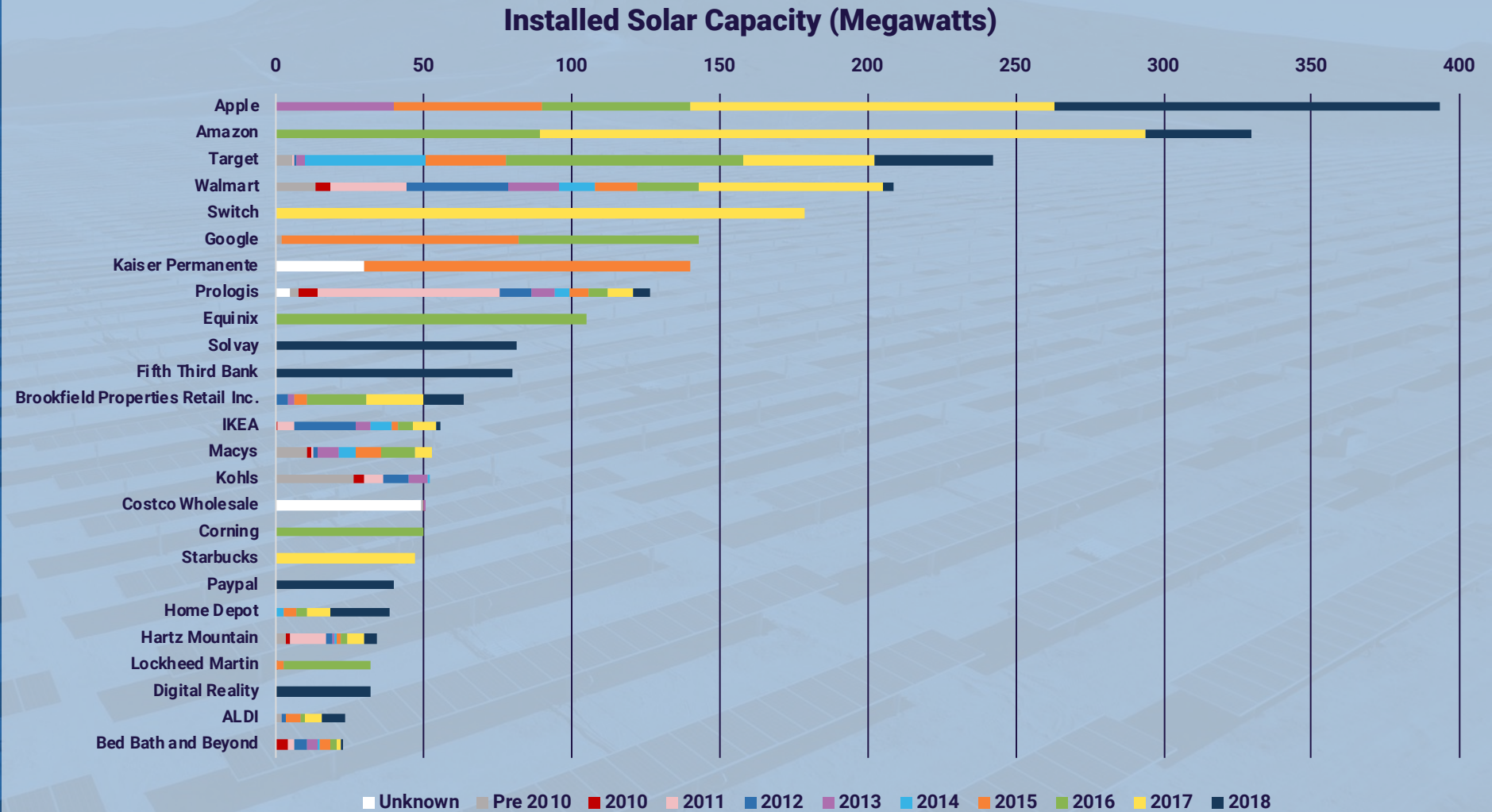
- The systems tracked in this report **generate 10.7 million megawatt-hours of electricity annually**, enough to power 1.4 million homes.
 - The solar generation from these systems offsets 7.5 million metric tons of CO2 every year, equivalent to taking 1.6 million cars off the road.
- Growth in corporate solar demand has been led primarily by declining prices, which have **fallen by 63% over the last decade**.
- Off-site corporate procurement is growing rapidly. The 1.6 GW of off-site systems installed since 2014 represent nearly a third of all installed commercial capacity over that time period.
 - Nearly **4 GW of new off-site corporate projects have been procured** over the last 18 months.
- **The future is bright for commercial solar:**
 - Reductions in module tariffs will remove a major distortion in hardware costs.
 - Continued rapid growth in corporate off-site and community solar is expected.
 - Price declines for solar + storage will open market opportunities for more companies.
 - Demand will be led by continued corporate commitments for 100% renewable energy.

America's Top Corporate Solar Users

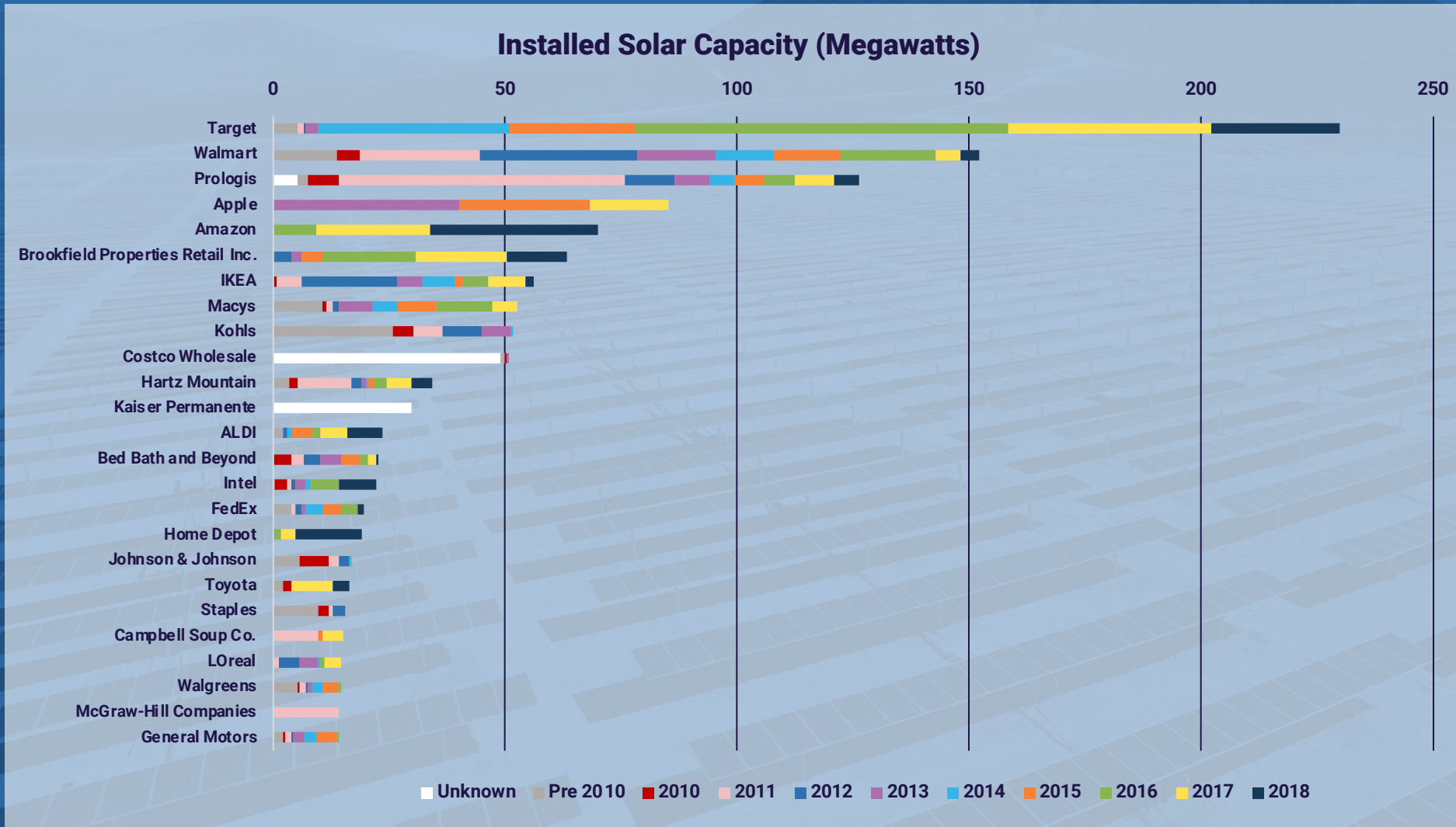
Businesses who are leading the way on solar adoption

Top 25 Corporate Users by Total Installed Solar Capacity

- Counting both on-site and off-site capacity, Apple takes the top spot with 393 megawatts (MW) of solar installed, marking the first year a company in the tech space sits atop the leaderboard.
- With its mixture of installations on Fulfillment Centers and several large off-site projects in Virginia, Amazon takes second place.
- Former champions Target and Walmart continue to increase their solar investments and remain in the top 5, followed by data center builder Switch with 179 MW of off-site solar in Nevada.
- 15 of the top 25 corporate solar users are part of the Fortune 500 rankings, along with 30 of the top 50



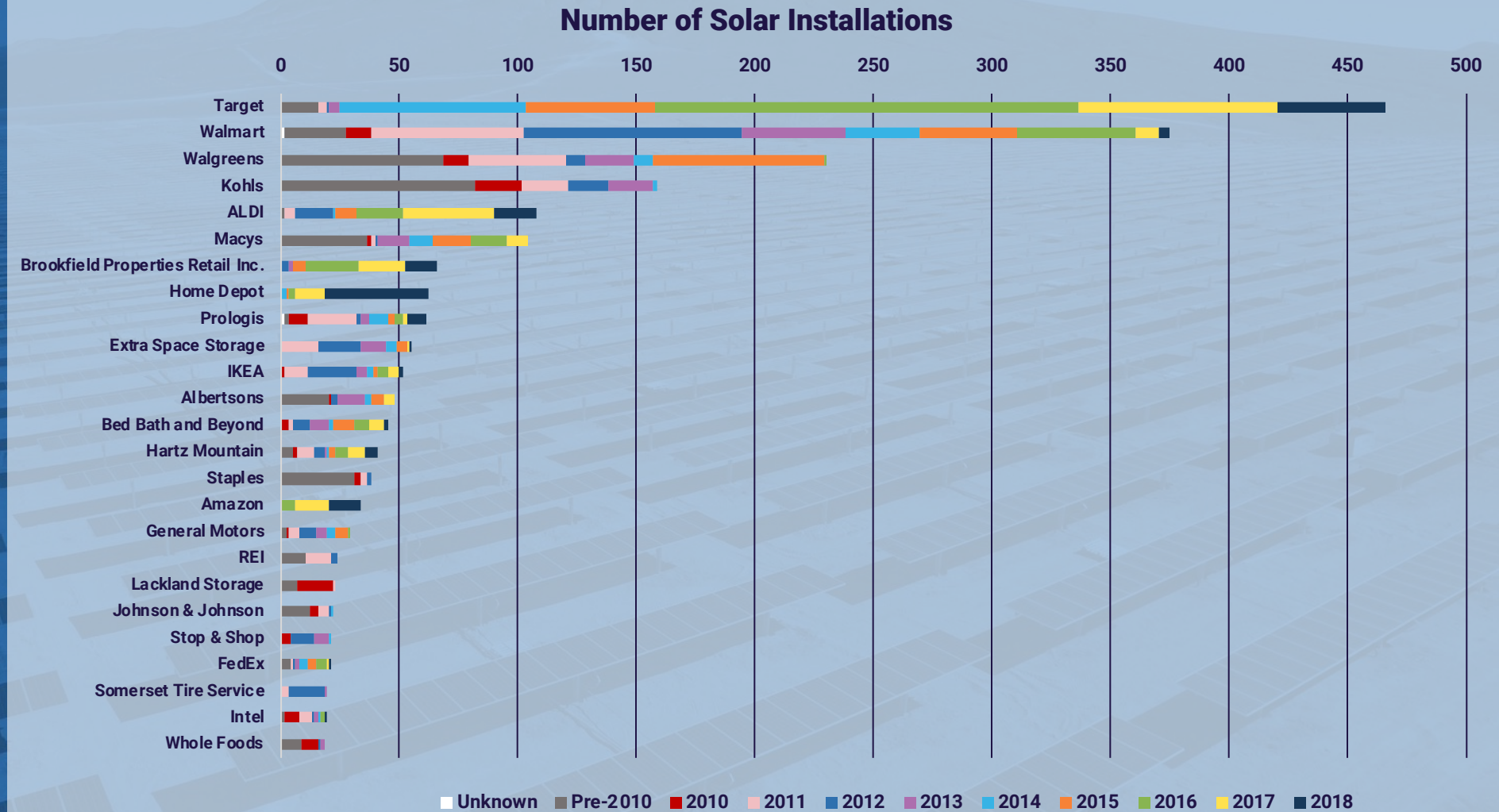
Top 25 Corporate Users by Installed On-site Solar Capacity



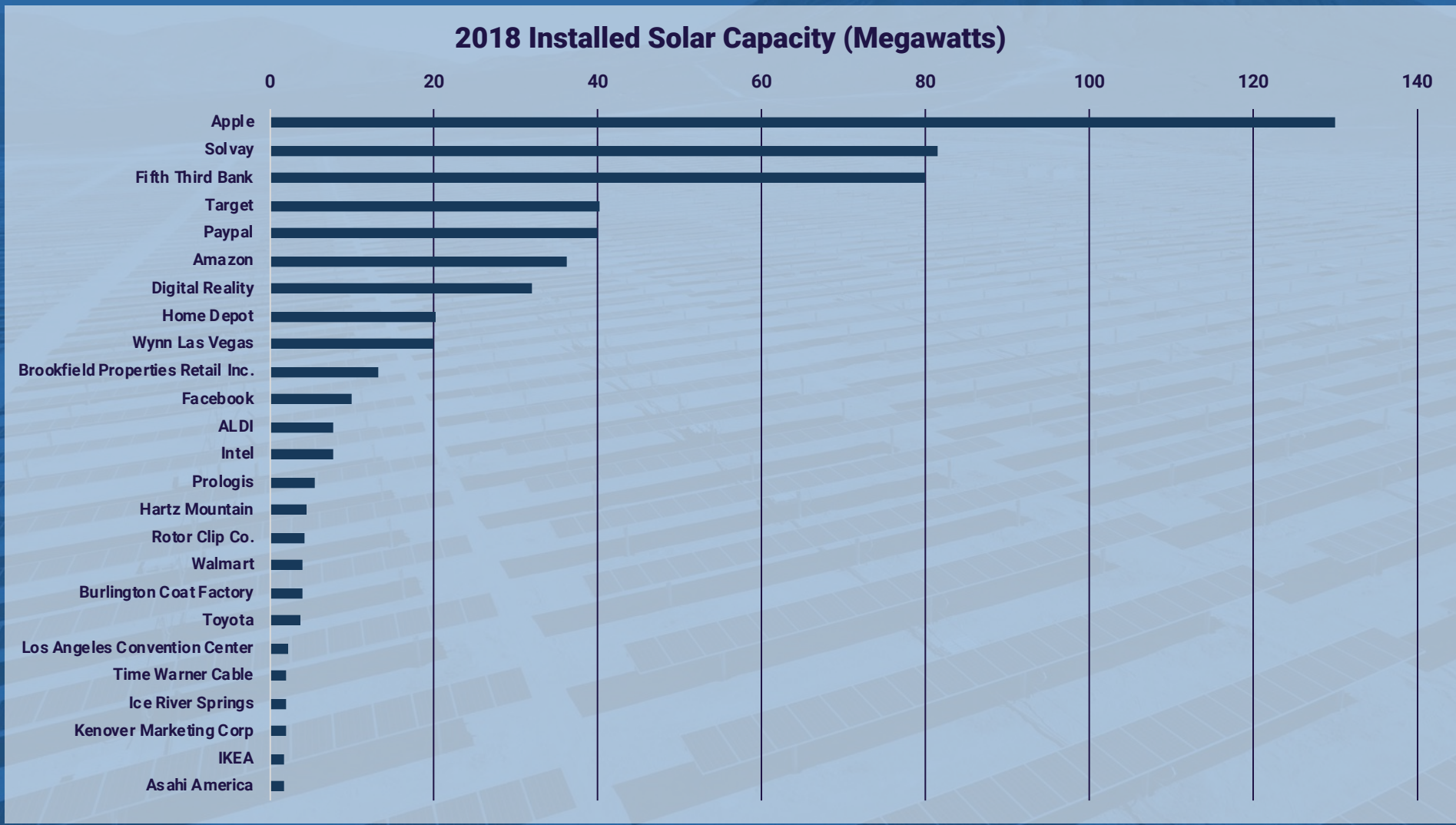
- Looking only at on-site solar installations, Target claims the top spot for the third year in a row, extending their lead by more than 20 MW.
- Walmart has ranked first or second for on-site installations every year since this report debuted in 2012.
- Prologis continued to add solar to their properties in 2018 while fellow Real Estate firm Brookfield acquired GGP Inc. to further expand its solar portfolio.

Top 25 Corporate Users by Number of Solar Installations

- Target and Walmart continue to pace the field for number of individual solar installations.
- Fellow retailers Walgreens, Kohl's and Macy's round out the top 5, making use of their hundreds of rooftops nationwide.
- Most companies on this list utilize mid-sized rooftop systems to achieve their solar goals, in contrast to the large ground-mounted systems used by companies at the top of the overall rankings.



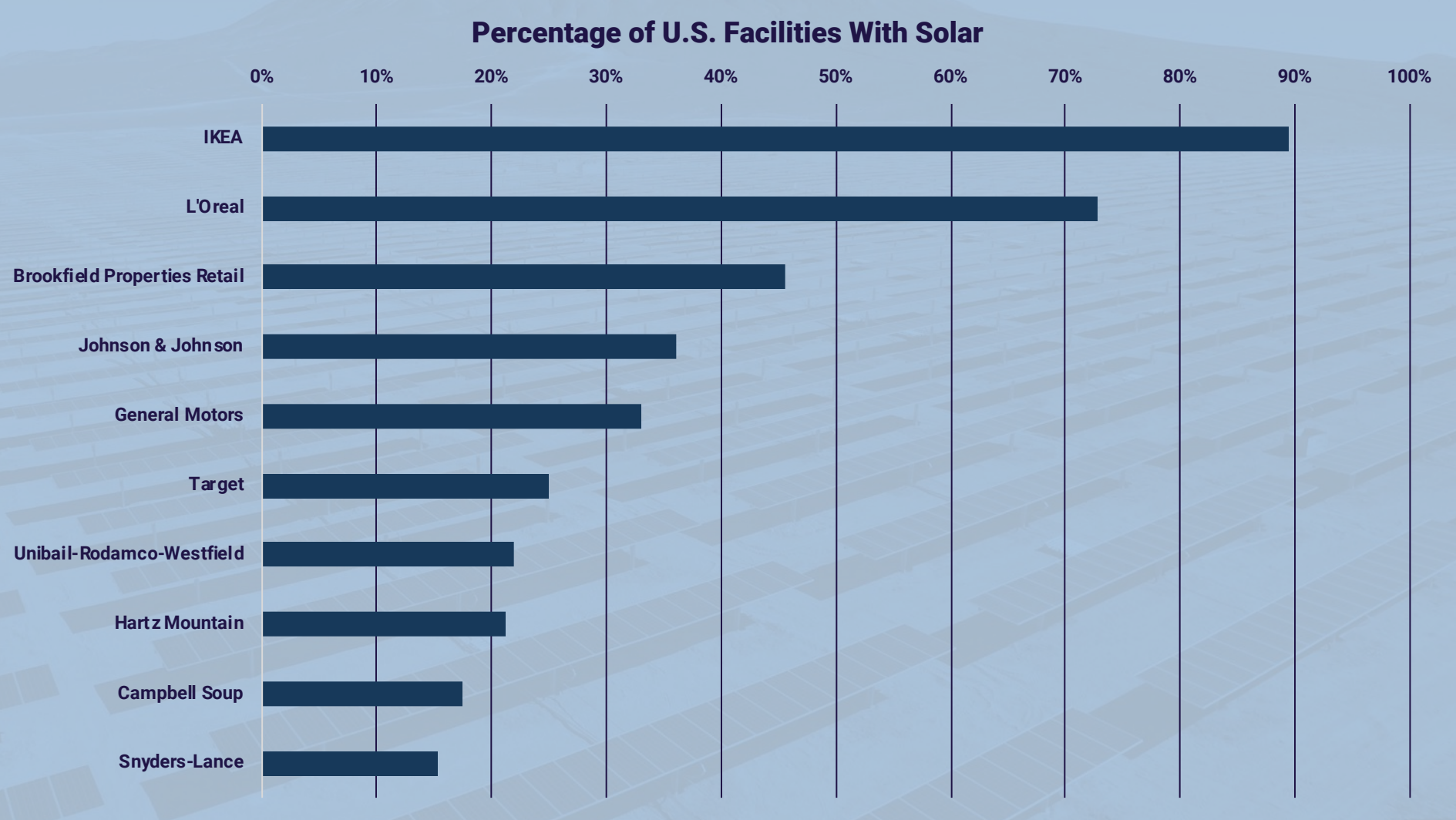
Top 25 Corporate Users by Solar Capacity Installed in 2018



- Apple takes the top spot for 2018 installed capacity in addition to the overall rankings, attributable to a 130 MW off-site project that came online in California.
- Similarly, Solvay, Fifth Third Bank, Paypal, Digital Reality, Wynn Las Vegas, and Facebook all saw large off-site projects come on-line in 2018.
- Amazon installed the most on-site solar in 2018 with 36 MW deployed.
- Target saw 27 MW of on-site installations in 2018, coupled with 13 MW in new community solar.

Top 10 Corporate Users by Percentage of Facilities with Solar

- IKEA has led this category since the first edition of this report, as they continue to work towards renewable energy solutions for each of their properties.
- Cosmetics manufacturer L’Oreal follows closely behind IKEA with solar supporting operations at 16 of their 22 U.S. locations.
- While they are not listed here, hundreds of small businesses across the country have solar on 100% of their facilities.



Top 5 Corporate Users by Industry (MW Installed)



Corporate Solar Coast to Coast

From Wall Street to Main Street

Map: U.S. Corporate Solar Installations



Explore every system in
the Solar Means
Business database using
our interactive map at:
solarmeansbusiness.com

State Spotlights

- California continues to lead the nation for commercial solar due to a supportive policy environment and an excellent solar resource, resulting in a diverse mix of smaller on-site and larger off-site projects.
- New Jersey, New York and Massachusetts have consistently been near the front of the pack for commercial solar, with solid state-level policy and high building density resulting in many smaller rooftop systems.
- Large off-site projects have pulled North Carolina, Nevada and Virginia into the top 10. In all three of those states, the existence of large data centers has created opportunities for large-scale solar solutions.
- IKEA leads all businesses with installations in 27 states, followed by Brookfield Properties Retail Inc. with installations across 23 different states. Target rounds out the top 3 with solar installations in 22 states.

Top 10 States by Total Commercial Capacity

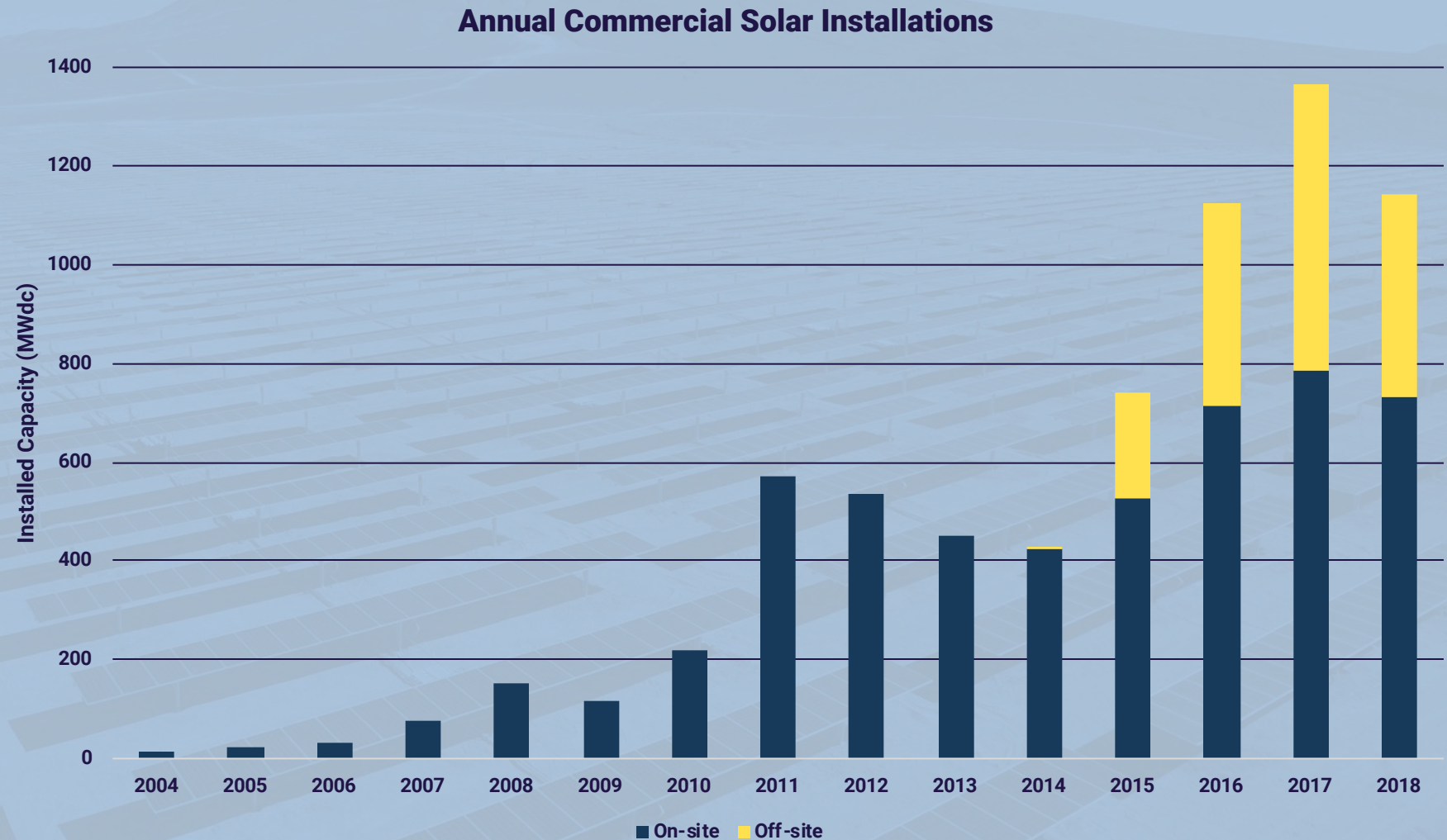
Rank	State	Capacity (MW)
1	CA	3,033.4
2	NJ	995.4
3	NY	619.6
4	MA	583.9
5	NC	356.0
6	NV	294.2
7	VA	265.5
8	AZ	147.7
9	SC	100.8
10	UT	88.0

Trends in Corporate Solar Procurement

Keeping tabs on the most dynamic, fast-changing market in solar

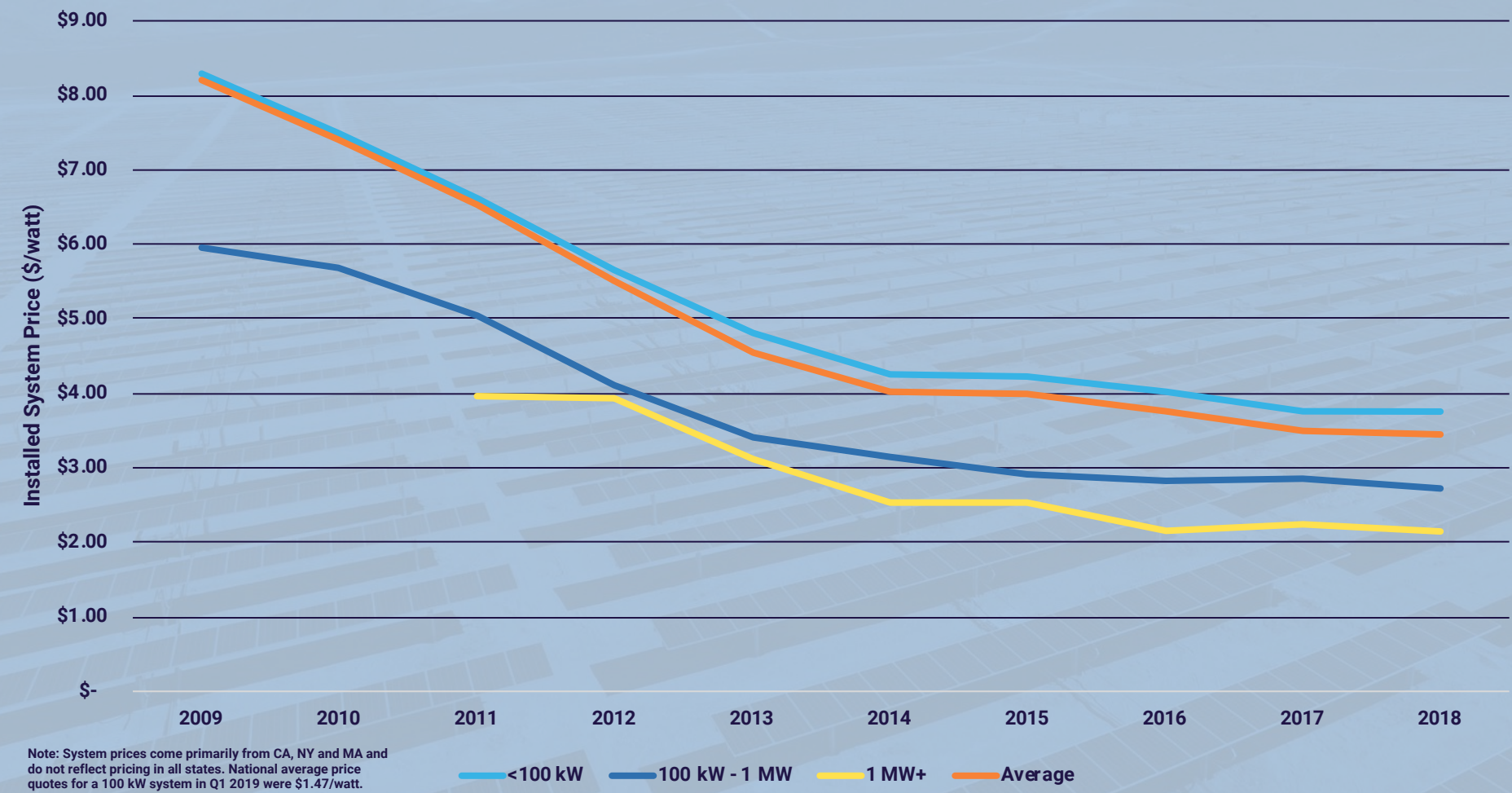
2018 the Second-Largest Year for Commercial Installations

- After mixed growth in the early part of this decade, corporate solar adoption has surged over the past several years, with more than half of all capacity installed since 2016. The 1,144 MW installed in 2018 is second to only 2017 for annual commercial deployment.
- Falling prices and more flexible procurement options have led to rapid growth in off-site adoption, which made up more than 1/3 of all commercial solar deployment in 2018.
- Demand pull-in from upcoming changes to rate structures and incentives in major state markets drove on-site procurement in 2017 and the early part of 2018. The transition has led to slower growth over the last 12 months, but installs are expected to pick back up due to falling prices and demand pull-in from the step down of the solar Investment Tax Credit (ITC).



Commercial Solar Prices Continue to Decline

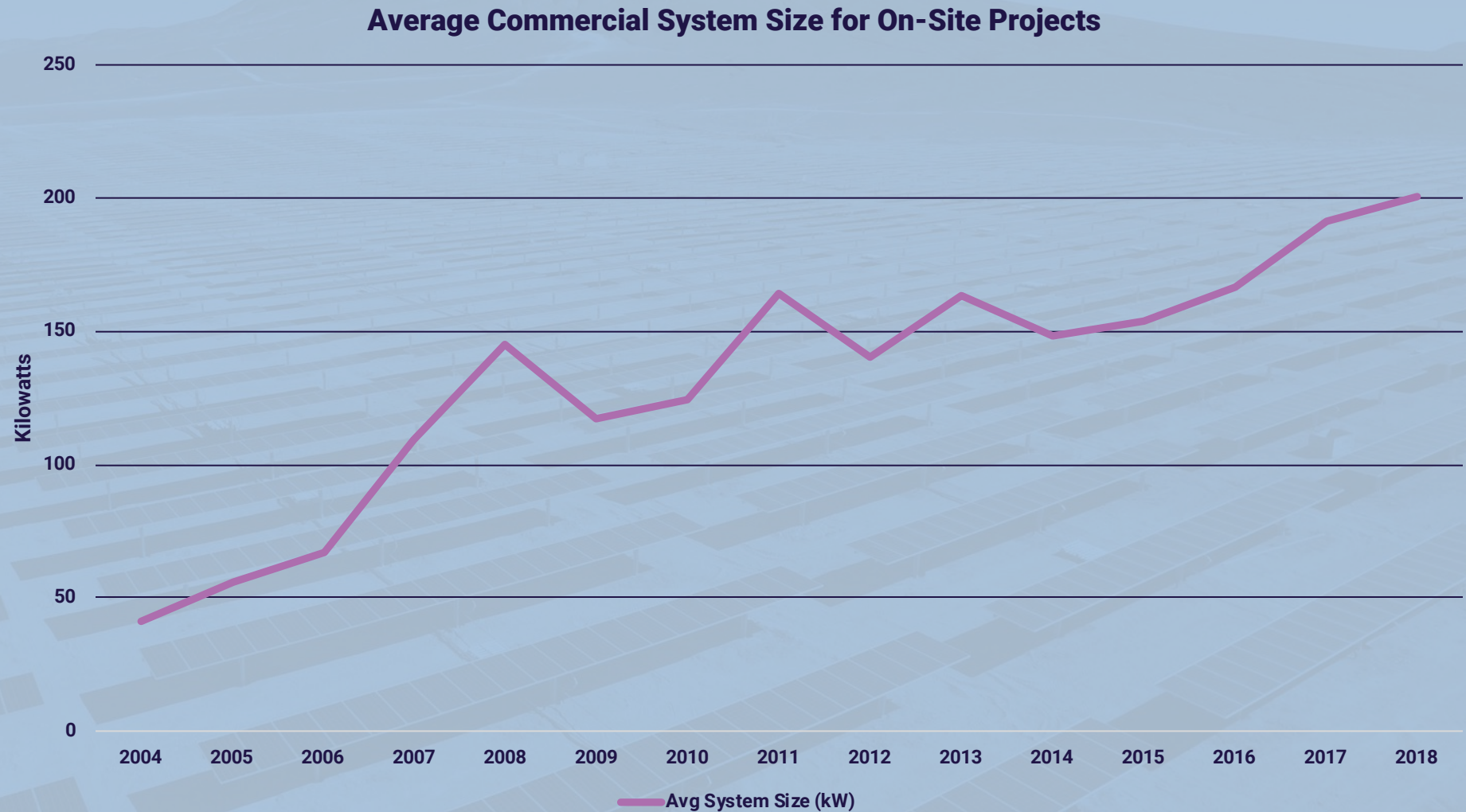
Average Commercial System Price by System Size for On-Site Projects



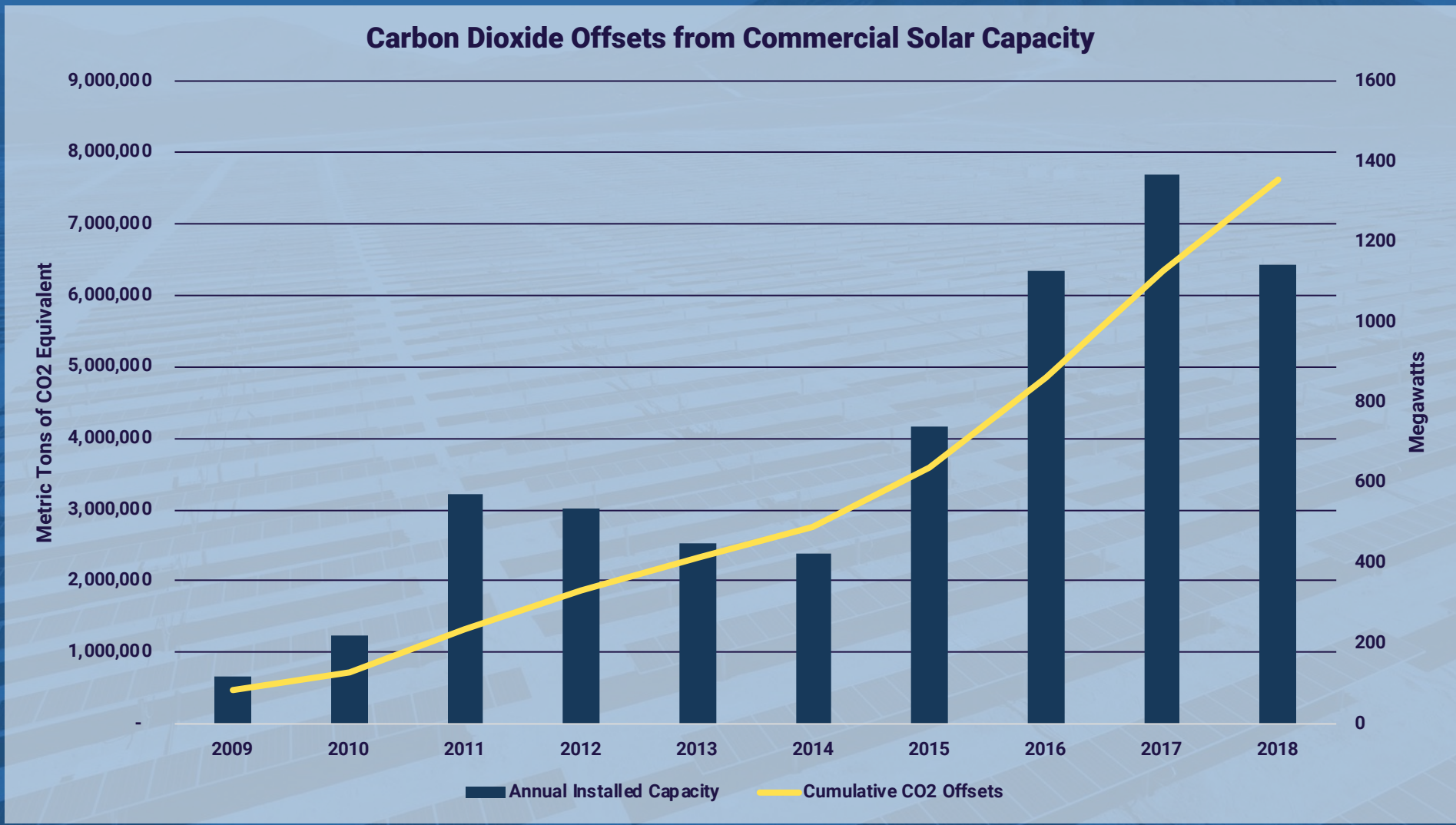
- Based on the data collected for this report, the price to install an on-site commercial system has dropped by nearly 63% over the past decade. Similar price declines are seen across all system sizes.
- Price declines have been driven by reductions in the cost of panels and other hardware, but also by improvements in labor efficiency and company overhead as markets become more competitive.
- Tariffs on imported panels have slowed price declines since their announcement in 2017, driving domestic module prices \$0.12 - \$0.13/watt higher than global prices.

Commercial System Sizes Increase as Prices Fall

- Average commercial system sizes for on-site projects climbed above 200 kW for the first time in 2018.
- Growth in system size is primarily due to falling prices, allowing companies to install more capacity for the same amount of money.
- The growth of third-party financing has also given companies more financial flexibility to make larger solar investments with less up-front capital.
- As prices come down, and corporations increase their renewables goals, we expect this growth to continue.



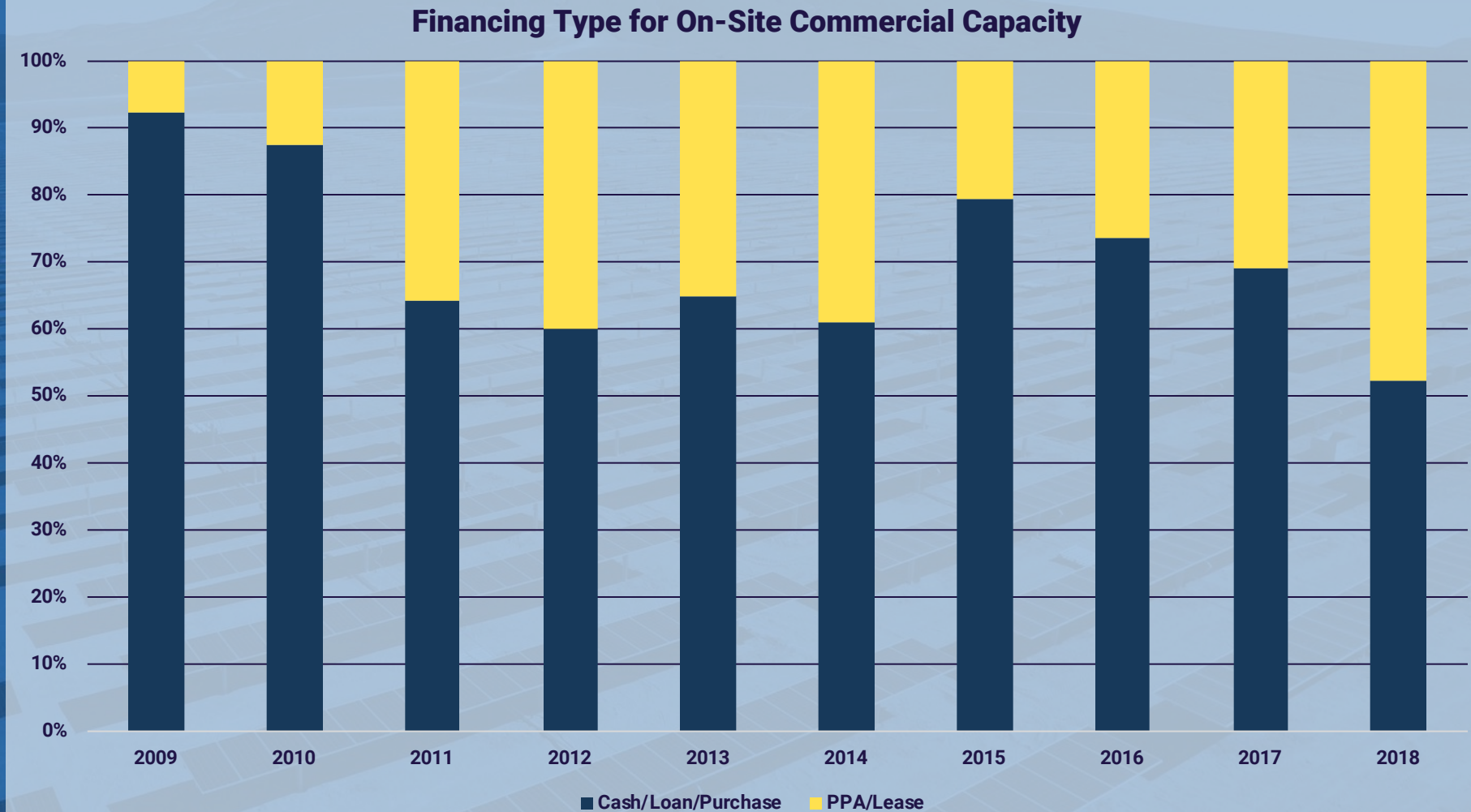
Climate Benefits Accrue as U.S. Businesses Turn to Solar



- Electricity generation from the solar installations tracked in this report offsets more than 7.6 million metric tons of CO2 emissions annually, equivalent to taking 1.6 million cars off the road or planting 126 million trees
- While companies decide on solar for many reasons, the number of companies committed to reducing their carbon footprint continues to increase.
- 188 companies have now signed the RE 100 commitment, including at least 30 featured in this report. 37 new companies signed in 2018 alone.

Third Party Ownership Grows Sharply in 2018

- Development models for on-site commercial solar PV systems generally take one of two forms: direct ownership, or third-party ownership (TPO), generally executed through the use of a [Power Purchase Agreement \(PPA\)](#)
- Even as TPO has declined in the residential market due to falling prices and a growing portfolio of loan options, PPAs continue to increase their share of the commercial solar market. The low upfront investment, limited risk and predictable long-term electricity rates offered by PPAs tend to offer more value to businesses relative to homeowners.
- In 2018, 47% of on-site commercial capacity tracked in this report used a PPA, up from 31% in 2017.
- Companies wishing to retain the SRECs from their system to meet internal environmental goals likely sets a ceiling on the growth of PPAs in the commercial market.



Rapid Growth in Off-site Commercial Solar



- This year's report tracks off-site commercial solar for the first time, an area of rapid growth.
 - Since 2014, at least 32 off-site corporate solar projects have been completed, with a total capacity of 1.6 GW, representing a third of total commercial capacity over that time period.
 - Over the last 18 months, nearly 4 GW of new corporate off-site projects have been procured, with **annual procurements of 2 GW expected over the next several years.**
 - Annual deployment of off-site corporate solar is expected to hit 1 GW in 2020, and increase in proportion to future procurement expectations.
- These projects allow companies to tap into economies of scale by siting projects in areas where larger system sizes are possible.

Source: SEIA/Wood Mackenzie Power & Renewables, *U.S. Solar Market Insight*

Rapid Growth in Off-site Commercial Solar

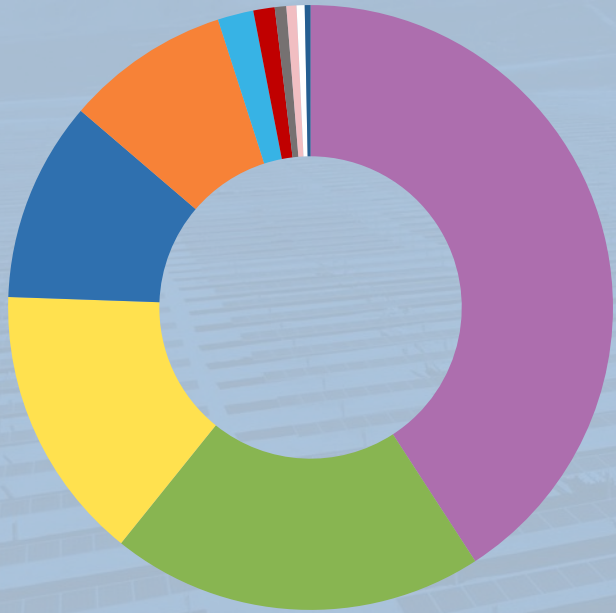
- Projects also benefit from multi-party financial arrangements in which multiple companies buy a share of the generation from a single project.
 - Enabled by physical PPAs (in which the corporate buys and takes legal title for the electricity from a system) and virtual PPAs (in which a corporate doesn't directly take title to the electricity from the system, but the revenue stream from the sale of that electricity on the open market).
 - Other utility-enabled structures, like green tariffs and similar one-off arrangements have made these projects possible.
 - Still, these projects require large movements of capital and complicated legal and financial arrangements, making it difficult for all but the largest companies to execute a contract.
- [Community Solar](#) is an additional off-site option for a wider variety of companies, with specified rate structures reducing investment complexity in many markets.
 - While this report only tracks data on 14 corporate subscriptions to community solar projects, hundreds more exist.
 - **1.5 GW of community solar projects are operational in the U.S.**, with a mix of residential and corporate off-takers.
 - New community solar programs in several northeast states offer extensive opportunity going forward, with over 700 MW expected annually from 2021 – 2024.

Source: SEIA/Wood Mackenzie Power & Renewables, *U.S. Solar Market Insight*



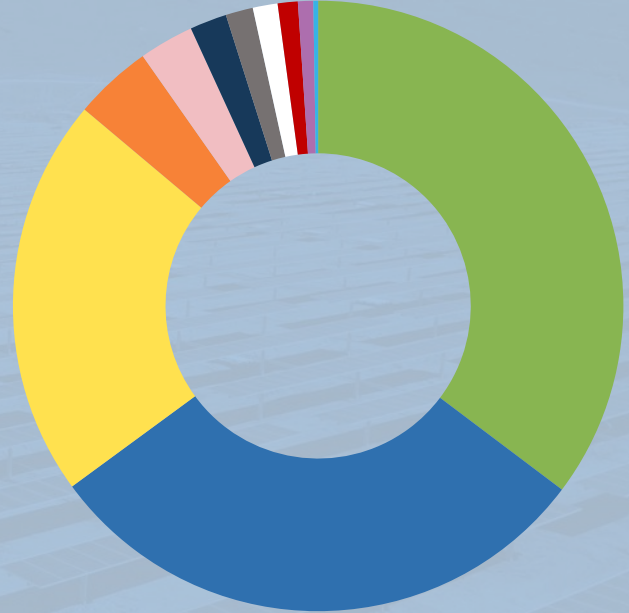
Solar Goes to Work for a Variety of Business Types

Installed Capacity by Facility Type



- Offsite
- Retail
- Manufacturing/R&D
- Commercial/Office
- Distribution/Warehouse
- Data Center
- Entertainment & Events
- Medical
- Storage
- Food & Beverage
- Agricultural

Number of Installations by Facility Type

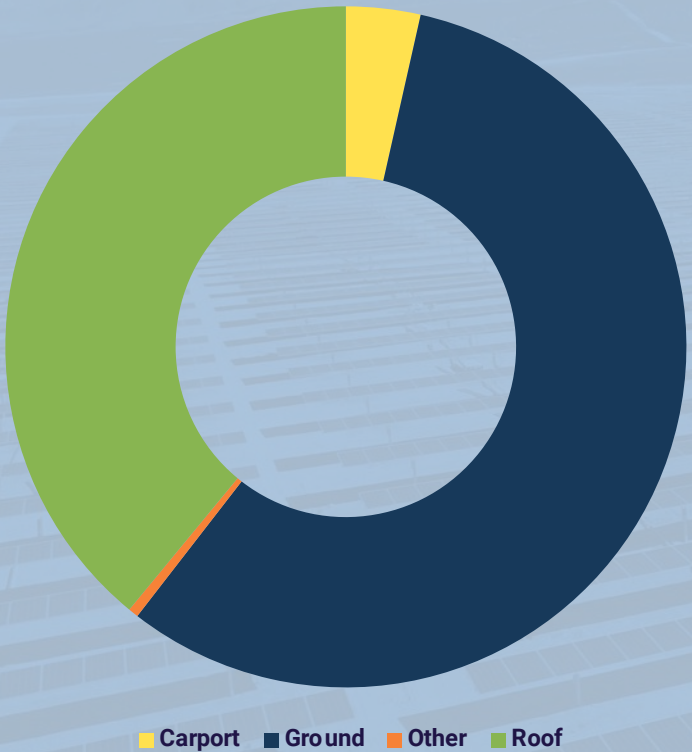


- Retail
- Commercial/Office
- Manufacturing/R&D
- Distribution/Warehouse
- Storage
- Agricultural
- Medical
- Food & Beverage
- Entertainment & Events
- Offsite
- Data Center

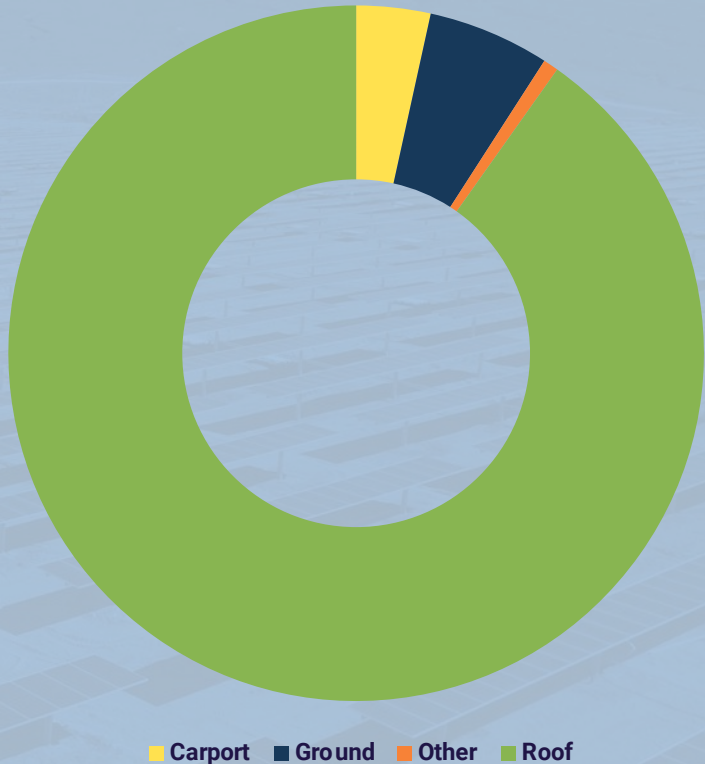
While off-site projects make up 41% of installed commercial capacity, installations on retail structures continue to be the most prominent type of solar installation. Notably, 290 MW of solar capacity on manufacturing facilities has been installed over the past 5 years, behind only off-site and retail uses, reflecting consistent and growing solar activity in that space.

Tracking Commercial Solar Mounting Options

Installed Capacity by Mounting Type



Number of Installations by Mounting Type

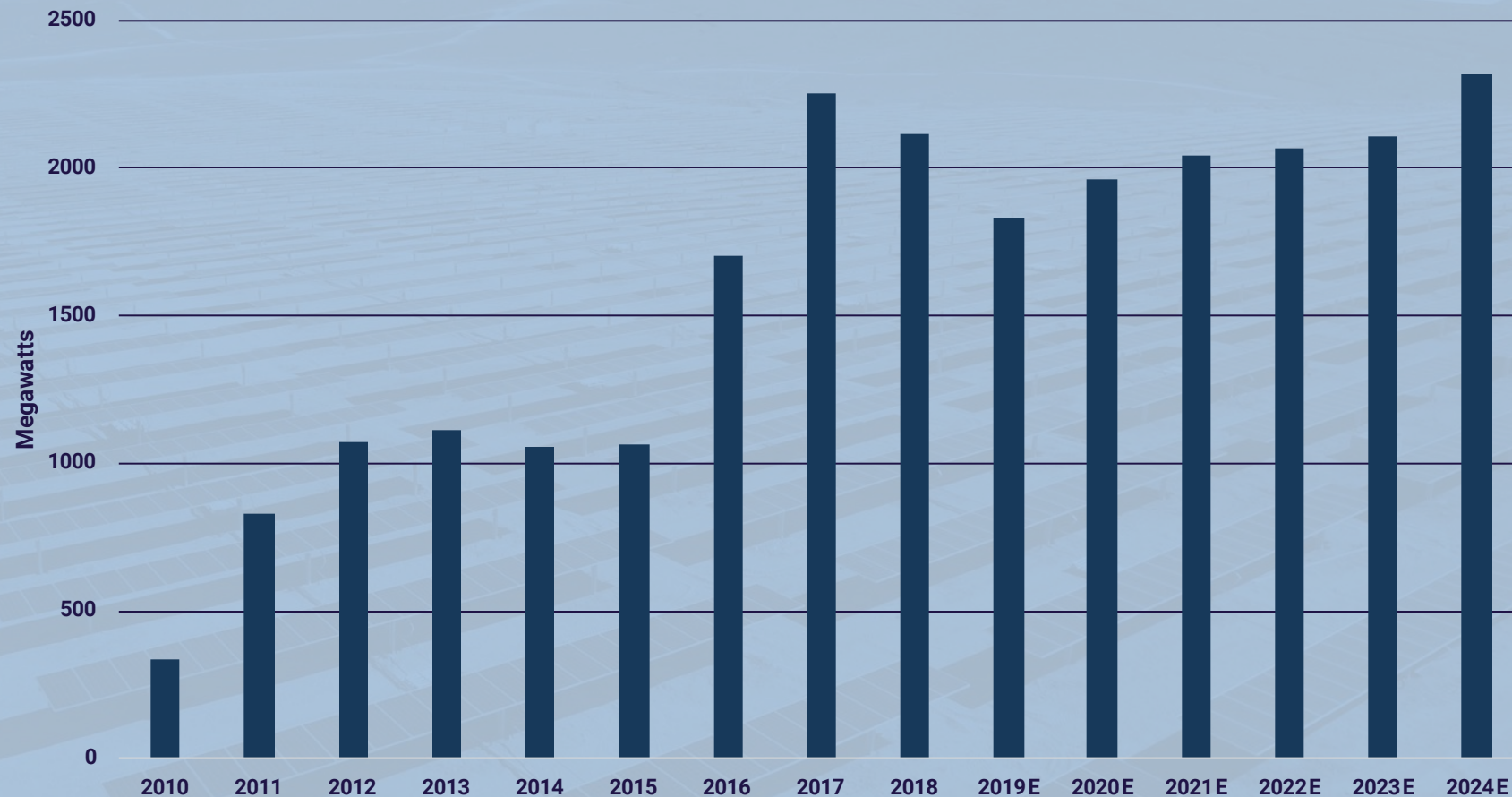


With the addition of off-site projects to this report series, ground-mount systems now make up the majority of installed commercial capacity. However, individual rooftop systems are still more common, even if they constitute a smaller share of overall capacity. Carport systems continue to be an attractive option for companies without lot of non-parking land area and unsuitable roof space.

Looking Ahead

- The Non-Residential solar market (including commercial, non-profit and community solar) is expected to decline 14% in 2019 as key state markets in California and Massachusetts continue to transition to new rate designs and incentive structures, and community solar deployment in Minnesota slows. Still, the market should see a top-three year for deployment.
- Growth is expected to resume in 2020 as module tariff reductions and ITC demand pull-in help to boost growth. Full ITC draw-down in 2022 causes market to flatten relative to what would be expected from an ITC extension. The growth of community solar programs in the outyears helps to mitigate ITC losses.
- Additionally, off-site corporate solar growth (not included in this chart) is expected to increase rapidly, with 3.3 GW procured in 2018 alone and an additional 500 MW announced in the first half of 2019. Starting in 2020, off-site corporate installations could represent more than 1 GW in deployment annually.

Non-Residential Solar Deployment Forecast



Source: SEIA/Wood Mackenzie Power & Renewables U.S. Solar Market Insight

Challenges and Opportunities for Commercial Solar

Challenges

- Solar module tariff will raise domestic prices and prevent full realization of market potential through 2021
- Declining state-level incentives in many markets
- Less attractive rate design
- Ramp-down of federal solar [Investment Tax Credit](#) scheduled to begin in 2020
- Move from early adopters to mainstream commercial consumers in established markets; customer acquisition issues

Opportunities

- Continued price decline opportunities, especially in permitting and inspection costs, which are among the highest in the world
- Increased electrification pushing wide variety of companies to think differently about electricity
- Decreasing costs of solar + storage create resiliency options, new revenue streams
- More large corporates committing to 100% renewable energy
- Increasing flexibility in pursuing large off-site projects as states, utilities and financial institutions lower barriers
- Many state markets remain untapped, creating growth potential as solar installer landscape becomes increasingly competitive

Acknowledgments

Many Thanks to Our Corporate Data Providers:



amazon

BED BATH &
BEYOND

Brookfield
Properties

FedEx®



L'ORÉAL U S A

macy's Inc



TARGET

TOYOTA

UNIBAIL-RODAMCO-WESTFIELD

verizon✓

Walmart*

WELLS
FARGO

Additional Special Thanks to:

Renewable Energy Buyers Alliance

Wood Mackenzie Power & Renewables



To access interactive data from this report, visit www.solarmeanbusiness.com

Send Us Your Data

Notice something missing? Click here to submit additional data on commercial solar projects to be included in this report.

Access the Full Dataset

SEIA Members have access to the full Solar Means Business dataset, including detailed project-level information. Contact us to receive the dataset or learn more about becoming a SEIA Member.