

The background of the entire image is a deep blue space filled with numerous small white stars. A curved horizon line of the Earth is visible on the left side, showing the blue atmosphere and dark landmasses. The main title 'VIEWS & VISIONS' is centered horizontally. 'VIEWS' and 'VISIONS' are in a large, white, serif font. The ampersand '&' is in a smaller, red, cursive font. Above the right side of the title, the words 'Bowles Rice' are written in a smaller, white, serif font.

Bowles Rice  
VIEWS & VISIONS

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# West Virginia - Shining a Light on New Solar Developments



**Chad McConathy**  
Galehead Development

Chad McConathy joined Galehead in May 2021 as the company's Executive Director of Project Development. He has more than a decade of experience in renewable energy, with specific expertise in key areas related to large-scale solar projects, including market analysis and greenfield development; power origination and commercialization; and financing. Utilizing geographic and commercial agility, as well as proprietary greenfield technology, McConathy and Galehead are working to create a "Century of Impact Infrastructure" to further develop solar assets and accelerate transformation of energy markets.

Since 2016, Galehead Development has developed over 10 gigawatts (GW) of renewable energy capacity across the United States. Headquartered in Boston, Massachusetts, Galehead has been leading the market and developing large-scale renewable projects in West Virginia for four years.

During our time working in West Virginia, we can positively say that the Mountain State has affirmed its pro-business track record. The state's legacy of natural resources development has seamlessly transferred to its position toward renewable energy resources, and state leaders have shown their capacity for attracting the full spectrum of energy investments.

With the enactment of S.B. 583 during the 2020 Regular Session, the West Virginia Legislature removed many unnecessary roadblocks to solar developments owned and operated by private parties. Importantly, the Legislature lifted pre-existing requirements that were more relevant to the development of natural gas and wind projects. In doing so, the process has been considerably streamlined, accelerating the ability to confidently invest in solar development projects across West Virginia.



The Legislature created a level playing field with clear expectations and fair permitting regulations for solar developers to comply with.

The passage of S.B. 583 has also been critical to incentivizing solar development where it is perhaps most appreciated in the Mountain State – brownfields, abandoned mine sites and previously used or polluted lands. The program established under S.B. 583 is uniquely designed to promote development on sites where new solar construction would repurpose land with limited development potential, significantly support the local community's tax base and help provide essential public services.

With a clear understanding of the importance of business certainty, state policymakers have also helped spur investment through its clarification of the state's Business and Occupancy (B&O) tax. The passage of



*Flyover renderings of Galehead's solar project in Capon Bridge, West Virginia.*



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S.B. 578 eliminated the uncertainty surrounding the application of state B&O taxes to newly developed solar generating facilities, which were not previously referenced in state law. The law establishes tax rates that reflect the unique technical features and actual generating capacity of large-scale solar facilities. Subsequent enactment of regulations relating to the bonding and decommissioning of solar development projects, as laid out in S.B. 492, brings even further clarity to the industry.

The combination of these measures has set the stage for significant renewable industry investment in West Virginia,

with several large projects already working through the Public Service Commission’s siting certificate process. This growing surge of renewable energy investment supports local West Virginia communities and makes the state’s energy industry more attractive to corporations with strong Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) commitments or clean energy supply chain requirements. Together, we can work to attract large employers to West Virginia and support their corporate renewable procurement goals.

In just a few short years, West Virginia’s leaders have made great progress

to encourage solar and renewable developments throughout the state. Looking to future development, the opening of West Virginia’s wholesale power market to independent power producers would drive economic growth and continue to accelerate inbound investments. The corresponding increase in competition would ultimately drive cost savings for the state’s ratepayers. Galehead looks forward to demonstrating the local benefits of successful large-scale projects and is pleased to be a stakeholder in West Virginia’s incredible energy tradition. 