MARKET ENTRY PLAYBOOK

UNITED STATES

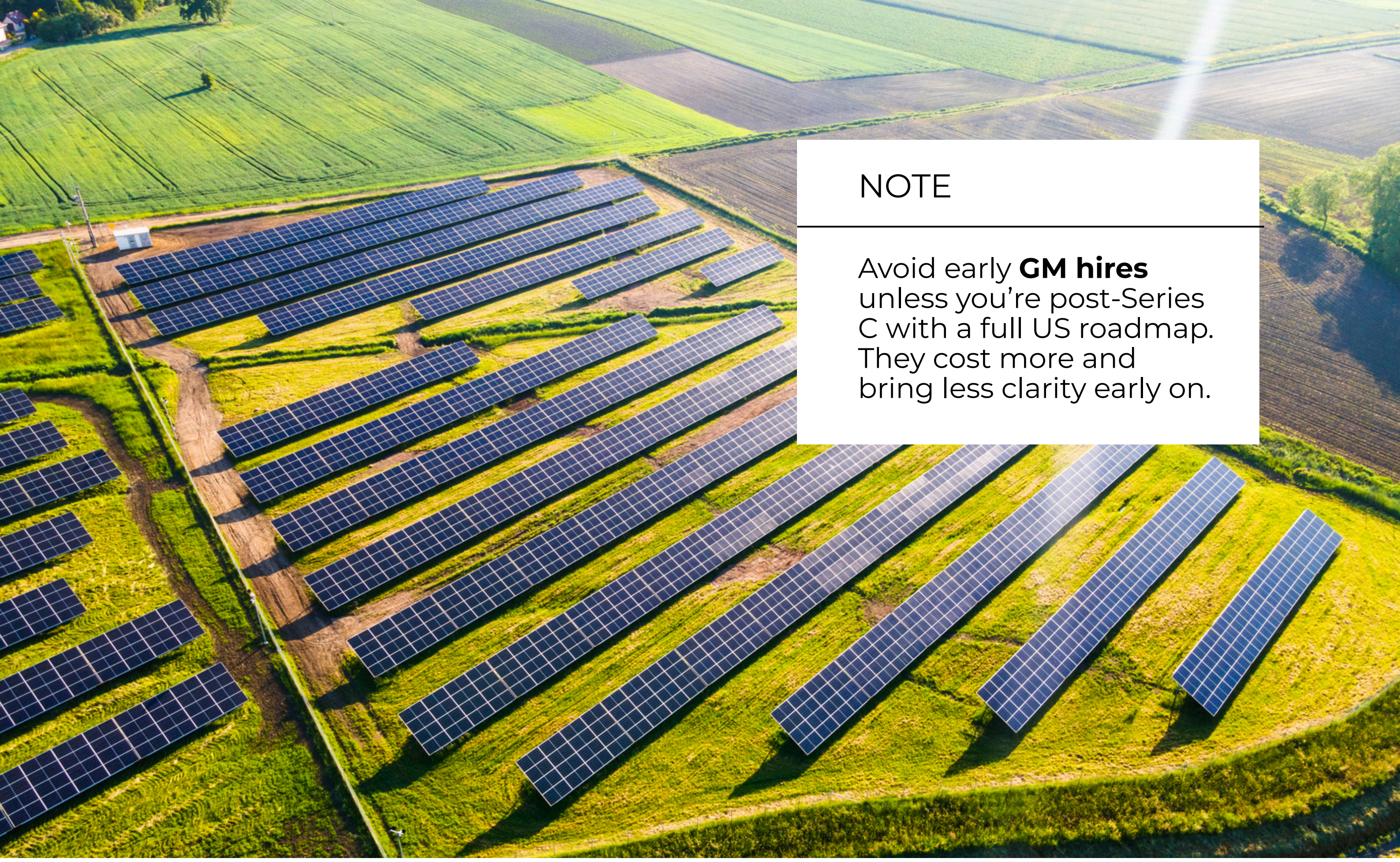
Net Zero Search

Why The US Still Matters

Yes, the headlines are chaotic. But here's what actually matters to companies entering the US clean energy market

- 22% of US electricity generation in 2023 came from renewables—and it's growing.
- Red states are renewable strongholds: Texas, Iowa, Oklahoma. Red tape is local, not federal.
- Investors are hedging elections with long-term strategies. The market will outlast the cycle.

Verdict: The US is volatile, but too big to ignore. If you can navigate it, it's your growth engine.



NOTE

Avoid early **GM hires** unless you're post-Series C with a full US roadmap. They cost more and bring less clarity early on.

First Hires: Who You Actually Need

Don't start with a General Manager. Start with revenue intelligence.

Top 3 Roles for First-Mover Advantage:

1. Market Development Director (Grid-Connected Assets)
Focus: Market entry, interconnection, regulatory navigation.
Salary Benchmark: $180K–$240K base + 20–30% bonus

2. Origination Lead (Clean Infra / BESS / Solar+Storage)
Focus: Sourcing offtake, PPA negotiations, JV setups.
Salary Benchmark: $200K–$280K base + upside tied to deal flow

3. Head of Policy or External Affairs
Focus: State-level advocacy, incentive capture (IRA), community buy-in.
Salary Benchmark: $160K–$220K + equity potential if early-stage

Compensation Expectations

You're not just paying more in the US, you're paying differently.

- **Equity matters more:** Especially for start-up/scale-up roles. No equity = no credibility.
- **Base salaries are non-negotiable:** US execs expect high base + bonus. Low base, high upside = high attrition risk.
- **Benefits packages aren't optional:** Health, dental, 401(k), etc.—these are expected. Skimp and you'll lose candidates in week one.

Where You Should *(and Shouldn't)* Hire First

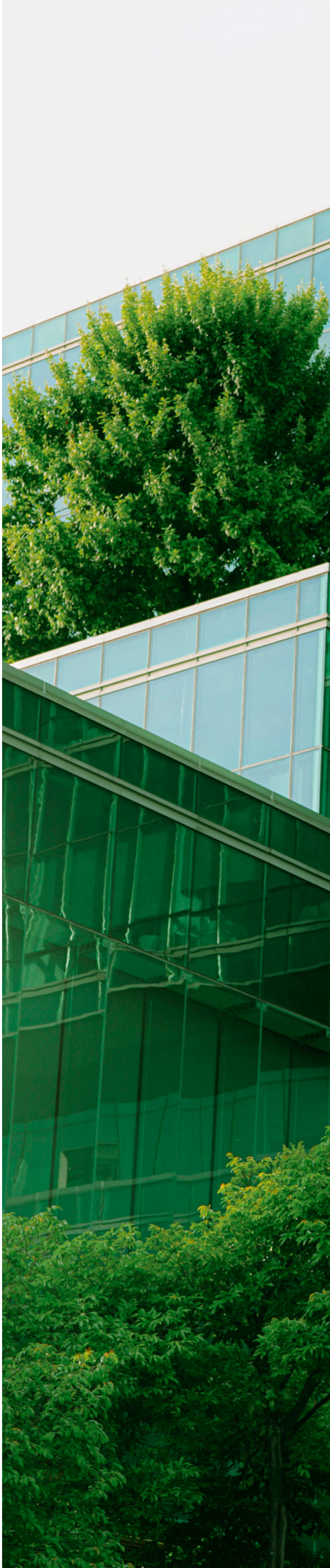
Hot Entry Markets

- **Texas** (ERCOT): Storage, grid edge, data center growth. Local talent, less red tape.
- **California**: Market maturity, innovation hubs—but expensive and highly competitive.
- **New York** / Northeast (ISO-NE / NYISO): Ideal for grid or policy-focused leadership.

Avoid Early

- **Southeast** (except Georgia): Regulatory hurdles, slow permitting, political resistance.
- **Midwest:** Good grid but limited commercial talent pools. Wait until you've scaled.

Tips, Traps & Tricks for First-Time US Market Entrants



You'll Need a US Entity Sooner Than You Think

- Corp tax varies by state and entity type. Delaware C-Corp is default—but if you're actually hiring in California or Texas, that structure can bite you later.
- Sales tax isn't federal. It's state-by-state, and wildly inconsistent. Hire a CFO who's dealt with this before, or get ready for nasty letters from state tax boards.

Visa Sponsorship Is Possible—but Painful

- H-1B visas require lottery-based approval, only open once per year (March). If your dream candidate is international, the window is tight.
- O-1 visas (for "extraordinary ability") are faster but require serious documentation—and a track record. We've done this for execs before, but most firms don't touch it.

Non-Competes Don't Work (Mostly)

- In California, non-competes are unenforceable. So if you're hiring from a competitor in SF or LA, don't be afraid to engage.
- In Texas or Florida, they're enforceable—but usually negotiable.
- National legislation is moving toward banning them. Stay ahead of this—it affects retention.

Tips, Traps & Tricks for First-Time US Market Entrants

US Benefits Aren't "Benefits" - They're Expectations

- Don't offer a $300K base without health insurance. It's not generous—it's table stakes.
- Set up a PEO (e.g., Justworks or Rippling) for fast HR + compliance infrastructure. Hiring through UK HQ for US-based staff never ends well.

Remote Isn't Optional—It's Operational

- The best US talent now expects 2–3 days remote as standard—even in infra-heavy roles.
- If you're insistent on full-time in-office, you'll limit your pool to <20% of top execs (and 0% in states like California).

State-Level Incentives Can Fund Your First Hire

- Several states offer payroll rebates or training grants for new energy transition employers.
- Texas, New York, and Georgia all have clean energy incentive programs that can reduce early burn. Most firms never claim them.

The Mistakes We See Too Often

- Hiring ex-corporates who've never built from scratch
- Ignoring state-level policy complexity
- Delaying hiring until project-ready (by then it's too late)
- Not budgeting $250K+ for critical roles

What We Offer

If you're entering the US clean energy market in the next 6–12 months, here's how we can help:

- Real-time talent mapping (not LinkedIn scraping)
- Access to US-based execs we speak to weekly
- Early insights into who's open, who's overpaid, and who's leaving
- Strategic support from Partner-level talent leads who have built US teams before

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