



The GREASE Framework

An Operating System for State Industrial Strategy

January 2026

The GREASE policy framework

	Elements	Attributes
G	Governance	Clear owner, clear budget. A named office or task force has legal authority to run the program end-to-end.
R	Regional Targeting	Places that need it most. Incentives target distressed communities or strategic industry clusters.
E	Expansive Ambition	Big enough to matter. Policy magnitude meets a threshold that meaningfully influences private investment relative to peer states.
A	Accountability	Companies are accountable to the program stewards and to residents. Outcomes are published and tied to milestones.
S	Sectoral Strategies	Fits the industry. Policy tool explicitly favors the state's target industry and its supply chain.
E	Environmental Co-Benefits	Climate results. The policy enacts measurable emissions reduction and/or maximizes clean-energy deployment.

RMI Graphic. Source: RMI analysis

The United States is entering an “electro-industrial” era in which energy, manufacturing, and computing are converging into a single growth engine. In this environment, states that can align power, places, people, and capital on real-world timelines will capture the next wave of investment. The GREASE framework provides an “operating system” for states to capture this opportunity by translating high-level industrial policy goals into an actionable game plan.

GREASE stands for governance, regional targeting, expansive ambition, accountability, sectoral strategies, and environmental co-benefits – six key criteria that RMI has found tracks with the impact of economic development policies. We introduced the GREASE framework in our recent report, [GREASE Lightning: A Playbook for Investment-Led, State-Driven Electro-Industrial Economies](#). Just as engine grease makes a machine run smoothly, the GREASE framework can help state policies run more

effectively, ensuring that public investments translate into competitive advantage and public benefit.

GREASE is also a policy-evaluation tool that goes beyond whether a state has a policy in place and assesses policy strength. By looking across each element of the framework, policymakers are better able to consider the quality of policy design and not just settle for the quantity of policies passed or dollars spent.



Governance

Good policy starts with good governance. States that have consistently landed projects did not just hand out incentives — they set up the right systems to turn these projects into a competitive advantage.

State example: *Colorado’s Energy Office and Office of Economic Development and International Trade coordinate clean energy investments through an interagency forum, helping accelerate project permitting and reduce duplicative spending.*¹



Regional targeting

An investment-led policy should be tailored to unique regional assets, such that capital, permits, workforce, and infrastructure line up in the regions where they create the greatest productivity and equity gains.

State example: *Alabama’s Powering Growth Act reserves a significant share of financing for rural counties and concentrates support on specific industrial and commercial development sites — funding site-specific transmission line extensions and substation expansions and securing long lead-time grid equipment so priority locations become power-ready.*²



Expansive ambition

Expansive ambition means designing state industrial policy at a scale that matches the electro-industrial revolution, while recognizing tight state budgets and borrowing limits. By designing expansive policies, states can ultimately pursue a level of investment and coordination big enough to shift their economic trajectory and actively contribute to the electro-industrial revolution.

State example: *Virginia’s Business Ready Sites Program is a large-scale, statewide matching-grant initiative that funds both site due diligence and site development, creating a deep pipeline of project-ready industrial sites; Virginia awarded \$126 million to 23 sites in 2024 and another \$40 million to 13 sites in 2025.*³



¹ “Energy Office Programs and Interagency Coordination,” Colorado Energy Office, 2024, <https://energyoffice.colorado.gov>

² A Bill to Create the Powering Growth Act, State of Alabama Senate, February 20, 2025, <https://legiscan.com/AL/bill/SB304/2025>

³ Governor of Virginia Glenn Youngkin, “America’s Top State for Business Announces \$126 Million in Virginia Business Ready Sites Program Grants,” August 8, 2024, <https://www.governor.virginia.gov/newsroom/news-releases/2024/august/name-1031626-en.html>; “Governor Glenn Youngkin Announces \$40 Million in Virginia Business Ready Sites Program Grants,” August 1, 2025, <https://www.governor.virginia.gov/newsroom/news-releases/2025/august/name-1054353-en.html>.



Accountability

Accountability means proving that industrial policy delivers real public value, not just big headlines. States should track and publish core metrics such as dollars spent, jobs created, trainees graduated, and megawatts of new clean power, and they should enforce clear conditions through tools like pay-for-performance incentives.

State example: *North Carolina’s Job Development Investment Grant deals (e.g., Toyota Battery, Wolfspeed) locked in performance-based disbursements, formal recapture provisions, and routine public reporting through the state’s Department of Commerce to ensure companies receive these incentives only when they meet their commitments.⁴ Together, these practices protect taxpayers, build public trust, and ensure that large incentive packages translate into real, measurable gains for workers and communities.*



Sector strategies

Sector strategies mean choosing a handful of priority sectors and supply chains where a state can realistically lead, then aligning resources to develop those sectors comprehensively. Rather than offering generic incentives, states can create a bankable environment to develop their priority sectors.

State example: *Georgia’s Quick Start program and Electric Mobility and Innovation Alliance focus training and support on electric vehicle (EV) and battery manufacturing, including purpose-built centers planned for firms like Rivian and pipelines from the Technical College System.⁵ By tying incentives and workforce programs to this specific supply chain, Georgia turns generic training dollars into a targeted sector strategy that anchors long-term EV investment.*



Environmental co-benefits

Environmental co-benefits recognize that electro-industrial growth and cleaner outcomes can reinforce each other, rather than compete. States should highlight that investment-led policies will improve air quality, reduce energy bills via efficiency, strengthen the grid, and make communities more resilient, alongside the headline of economic benefits.

State example: *Texas’ Competitive Renewable Energy Zones (CREZ) program built roughly 3,500 miles of transmission to move wind from remote regions to cities, helping enable roughly 40 gigawatts of installed wind capacity by 2022.⁶*

Taken together, these elements of the framework point to a simple idea: the electro-industrial transition is not just about installing more clean hardware; it is about building a new, more productive economic system. When states align governance, regional targeting, expansive ambition, accountability, sector strategies, and environmental co-benefits, public dollars stop functioning as one-off subsidies for companies and instead operate as long-term, compounding investments in the economic stability of the state and its residents.



⁴ “Job Development Investment Grant (JDIG),” North Carolina Department of Commerce, last modified May 10, 2023, <https://www.commerce.nc.gov/grants-incentives/competitive-incentives/job-development-investment-grant-jdig>

⁵ “Georgia Quick Start: Home,” Georgia Quick Start, accessed January 7, 2026, <https://www.georgiaquickstart.org/>

⁶ “Texas Comptroller Energy Tour: Wind Energy Overview,” Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts, accessed January 7, 2026, <https://comptroller.texas.gov/economy/economic-data/energy/2023/wind.php>