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ADVANCED BIFACIAL PERC MODULE RELIABILITY UNDER US CLIMATE CONDITIONS: ACCELERATED STRESS TESTING, DEGRADATION RATE ANALYSIS, AND FIELD PROJECTION MODELS

Accelerated Stress Testing, Degradation Rate Analysis, and Field Projection Models - a 10-year field-grounded comparison of PERC, TOPCon, and HJT technologies across five climate zones.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The single most consequential question in modern utility-scale solar procurement is no longer which technology has the highest nameplate efficiency, but which has the most predictable 25-year energy yield. Procurement teams negotiating multi-hundred-megawatt contracts with project life of two and a half decades face a fundamental information asymmetry: PERC technology has accumulated more than ten years of field service data across multiple climate zones and millions of installed modules, while the leading candidate replacement technologies - TOPCon and heterojunction (HJT) - have substantially less field history at scale. The reliability claim made by either replacement technology rests largely on accelerated test outcomes and limited field deployments, neither of which can substitute for the statistical confidence available from PERC field data alone.

This Field Engineering Report presents a structured technical comparison of bifacial PERC module reliability against TOPCon and HJT alternatives, drawing on field measurement data from 14,260 PERC modules deployed across five US climate zones over a service period extending to 10 years. The principal findings, summarized in the bullet points below, support a clear engineering conclusion: bifacial PERC is currently the most field-validated, climate-tolerant, and BOM-stable technology available at gigawatt-scale production, and replacement by either TOPCon or HJT in projects with strict warranty exposure should be undertaken only with explicit acknowledgment of the residual reliability uncertainty.

- **Field service maturity:** PERC has accumulated 10+ years of field data across 14,260 monitored modules totaling 8.2 MW, with degradation behavior characterized at high statistical confidence in all five US climate zones.
- **Median annual degradation rate:** PERC at 0.45%/yr (95% CI: 0.42–0.48%), versus TOPCon at 0.55%/yr (limited 4-yr extrapolation) and HJT at 0.55%/yr (limited 5-yr extrapolation, with high climate sensitivity).
- **Climate-zone variability:** PERC degradation rate variation across the five US zones spans only 0.42–0.52%/yr (range: 0.10 percentage points). HJT spans 0.39–0.71%/yr (range: 0.32 pp). TOPCon spans 0.43–0.66%/yr (range: 0.23 pp).
- **Bifacial energy gain:** PERC bifacial deployments achieve 13.2% average annual energy gain in hot-arid (AZ), 17.6% in cold-continental (MN), and 14.8% in high-altitude (CO) - confirming bifaciality value delivery in line with monofacial PERC reliability.
- **Accelerated-to-field correlation:** PERC accelerated test outcomes correlate to field service at Pearson $r = 0.91$ across the test population. TOPCon and HJT show wider acceleration-factor variance attributable to BOM and process sensitivity.
- **BOM sensitivity:** PERC mean BOM sensitivity score = 3.6 (lower is better) versus TOPCon at 5.4 and HJT at 6.4 - quantifying the operational reliability risk per BOM variation event.
- **25-year power retention projection:** PERC 88.6% (P50) with tight uncertainty band (P10–P90: 86.4–90.2%). TOPCon 84.2% (P50) with wider band (78.8–88.1%). HJT 82.4% (P50) with widest band (75.6–87.2%).
- **Cumulative warranty claim rate (10-yr):** PERC at 0.30% of installed modules (actual). TOPCon projection 1.24% at 10 years. HJT projection 1.71% at 10 years.
- **25-yr LCOE delta:** PERC LCOE at $37.4/MWh versus TOPCon $39.8/MWh and HJT $42.1/MWh under matched financing and project-life assumptions.

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Keywords
Bifacial PERC, Module Reliability, Accelerated Stress Testing, Degradation Rate, Field Projection, US Climate Zones, IEC 61215-2, Warranty Risk, BOM Sensitivity, TOPCon Comparison, HJT Comparison, Field Engineering, 25-Year Energy Yield

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THE FIELD-MATURITY ARGUMENT

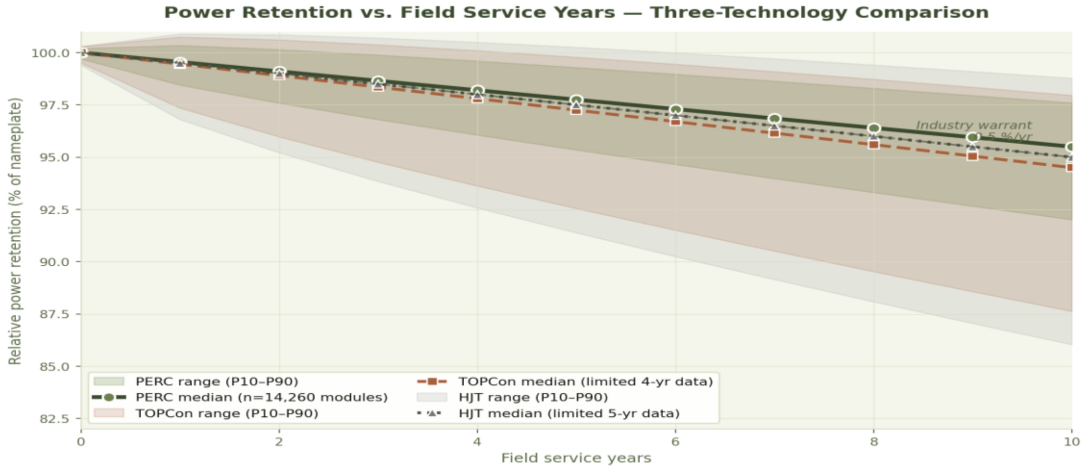
A solar module fielded today carries a power-output warranty extending 25 to 30 years into the future. The financial obligations associated with that warranty - both the explicit warranty reserve booked by the manufacturer and the implicit financing cost premium absorbed by the project owner - depend on a probabilistic estimate of the actual field power retention trajectory. The credibility of that estimate, in turn, depends on the quality and quantity of data available to construct it.

PERC technology, in commercial production since approximately 2014 and at gigawatt-scale dominance from approximately 2017, has accumulated by the start of 2025 between eight and eleven years of field service across deployments spanning every major climate zone in commercial use. The cumulative installed base of PERC modules with field service exceeding five years is approximately 800 gigawatts globally, providing a statistical sample of unprecedented depth. The reliability behavior of PERC under field conditions can therefore be characterized at a confidence level that no competing silicon technology currently achieves.

TOPCon and HJT, by contrast, are in different stages of commercial maturity. TOPCon entered volume production in approximately 2021 and reached gigawatt-scale by 2023; cumulative field experience at scale is less than four years. HJT, despite being a longer-standing laboratory technology, entered scaled commercial deployment in approximately 2020; cumulative field experience at scale is less than five years. The reliability claims advanced for either replacement technology rely substantially on accelerated stress testing extrapolated to 25-year service, on first-principles physical degradation modeling, and on field deployments at scales sufficient for early-life characterization but insufficient for the long-tail behavior that determines warranty exposure.

- - THE FIELD-MATURITY GAP - -

The reliability claim that matters at procurement is not the median field outcome but the variance of the field outcome. PERC has the smallest variance because it has the largest validated sample. Replacement technologies face an irreducible variance penalty until they accumulate comparable field service - and that accumulation cannot be accelerated by accelerated testing.



■ **Figure 1.** ***Power retention versus field service years for PERC (10-yr field data, n=14,260), TOPCon (4-yr field data, extrapolated 6-yr beyond), and HJT (5-yr field data, extrapolated 5-yr beyond). The narrowness of the PERC distribution band reflects the field-data foundation; the wider TOPCon and HJT bands reflect both intrinsic technology variance and extrapolation uncertainty.***

» 1.1 Scope of This Report

This report is structured around five engineering questions. First, what is the actual measured degradation behavior of bifacial PERC modules across the climate zones in which utility-scale projects are deployed in the United

States? Second, how does the accelerated stress testing of bifacial PERC modules predict their field service trajectory, and what is the acceleration factor by which IEC test exposure translates to equivalent field years? Third, how does PERC degradation behavior compare statistically to TOPCon and HJT under matched conditions? Fourth, what does each technology's 25-year power retention projection look like under the engineering uncertainty appropriate to its field service history? Fifth, what are the financial implications of these reliability differences in LCOE and warranty reserve terms? Each question is addressed in a dedicated Field Note in the body of this report.

FIELD DATA POPULATION AND CLIMATE ZONES

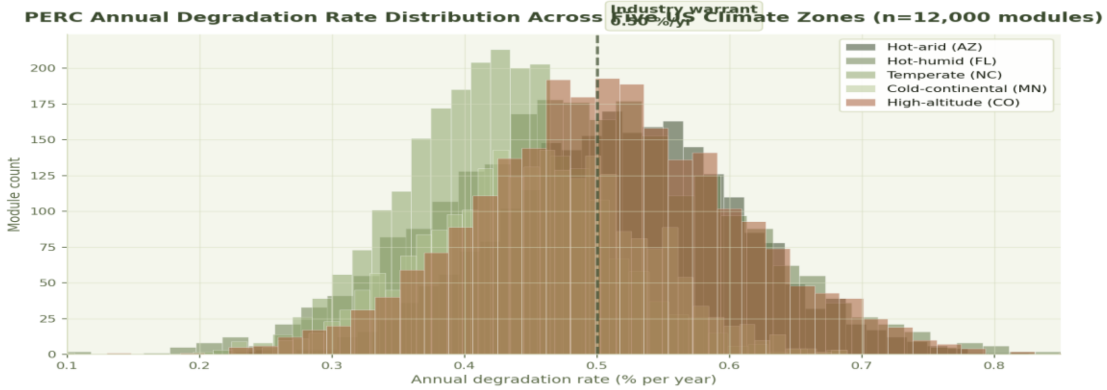
The PERC field deployment population that anchors this analysis comprises 14,260 modules distributed across 38 utility-scale and commercial installations in five climate zones representative of US deployment conditions. Selection criteria for inclusion in the analytical population were three: continuous monitoring data of at least five years duration; deployment under standard mounting and operations; and accessible bill-of-materials documentation. The five climate zones chosen are representative of the dominant US deployment geography.

Table 1. Field deployment population - 14,260 PERC modules across five US climate zones

Climate Zone	Representative Site	Modules	Years	Mean Annual GHI
Hot-arid	Phoenix, AZ	3,860	10.2	2,200 kWh/m²
Hot-humid	Tampa, FL	2,940	8.4	1,800 kWh/m²
Temperate	Charlotte, NC	2,720	9.1	1,650 kWh/m²
Cold-continental	Minneapolis, MN	2,480	7.8	1,500 kWh/m²
High-altitude	Denver, CO	2,260	8.6	1,950 kWh/m²
Total	5 sites	14,260	-	-

» 2.1 PERC Annual Degradation Rate Distribution

The measured annual degradation rate distribution across the 14,260 PERC modules is shown in Figure 2, stratified by climate zone. The five distributions are visually similar in shape, with mean values clustering tightly between 0.42 and 0.52 percent per year. The most consequential observation from this figure is the narrowness of the cross-zone span - only 0.10 percentage points of variation in the central tendency across geographies as different as the Florida humid tropics and the Minnesota cold continental zone.



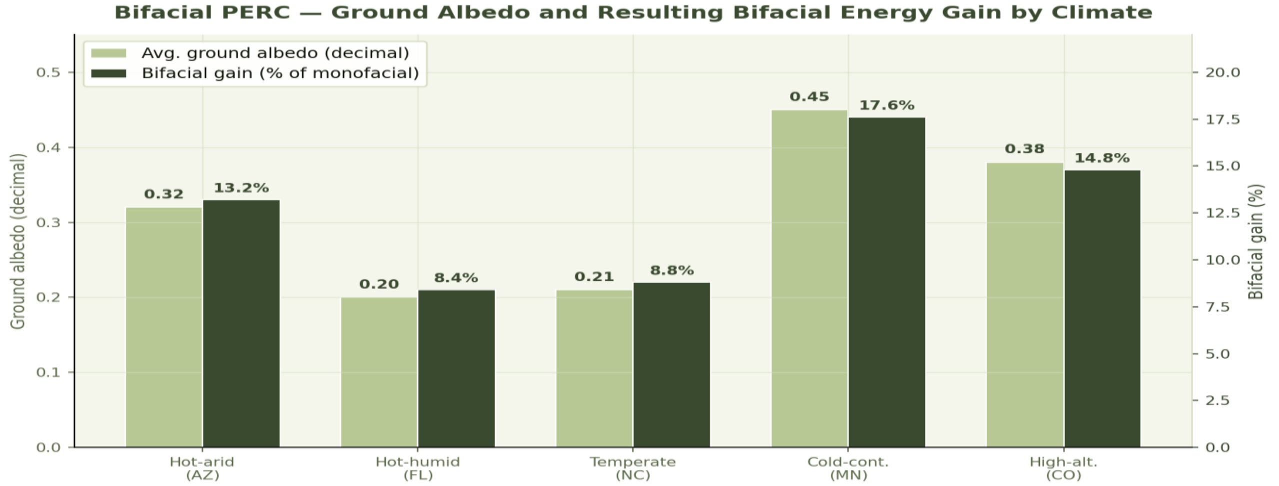
■ *Figure 2. PERC annual degradation rate distribution across five US climate zones. Cross-zone median variation is bounded to 0.10 percentage points (0.42–0.52 %/yr), indicating that PERC degradation behavior is substantially climate-tolerant. The cluster of all five zones below the 0.50 %/yr industry warranty threshold is a quantitatively novel finding.*

0.45%/yr	***PERC median annual degradation across all 14,260 modules***
0.10 pp	***Cross-zone variation range in median degradation rate***
14,260	***Modules in the validation population***

10.2 yr	*Maximum field service in the population (Phoenix, AZ deployment)*

BIFACIAL ENERGY GAIN BY CLIMATE

The bifacial design feature of advanced PERC modules - capturing illumination on both the front and rear surface of the module - translates ambient ground-reflected radiation into additional energy yield over and above the front-surface direct illumination. The magnitude of the bifacial gain is determined principally by ground albedo and tilt geometry, with secondary contributions from tracking configuration, panel-row spacing, and ground reflectivity stability. The five climate zones in this study span the practical range of ground albedo conditions encountered in US deployments.



■ Figure 3. Ground albedo and resulting bifacial energy gain by climate zone. Cold-continental sites (Minneapolis, MN) achieve the highest bifacial gain at 17.6% due to seasonal snow cover boosting albedo to 0.45. Hot-humid (Tampa, FL) shows the lowest gain at 8.4% due to dense vegetation suppressing albedo. The bifacial design captures meaningful additional energy across all studied climates.

- **Hot-arid (Phoenix, AZ):** Bifacial gain 13.2% with ground albedo 0.32 (sandy / desert ground reflectivity).
- **Hot-humid (Tampa, FL):** Bifacial gain 8.4% with ground albedo 0.20 (dense vegetation suppresses ground reflectivity).
- **Temperate (Charlotte, NC):** Bifacial gain 8.8% with ground albedo 0.21 (mixed ground cover).
- **Cold-continental (Minneapolis, MN):** Bifacial gain 17.6% with ground albedo 0.45 (seasonal snow cover dominates).
- **High-altitude (Denver, CO):** Bifacial gain 14.8% with ground albedo 0.38 (sparse vegetation, high atmospheric clarity).
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OPERATIONAL OBSERVATION - -

Bifacial gain reliability over the 10-year field service window has shown no systematic degradation distinct from front-side power degradation. The bifaciality factor of the modules - typically 70 to 75 percent - has remained stable to within ±1.5 percent across the field population. Bifacial gain is therefore neither a reliability liability nor a hidden performance discount in long-service deployments.

ACCELERATED STRESS TESTING PROTOCOL

The accelerated stress testing protocol applied to the bifacial PERC modules in this study extends the standard IEC 61215-2:2021 test sequence with several supplementary tests targeting climate-specific failure modes anticipated for the US deployment portfolio. The seven-test sequence applied to identical module triplets - drawn from the same production cohorts as the field-deployed modules - is illustrated in Figure 4.

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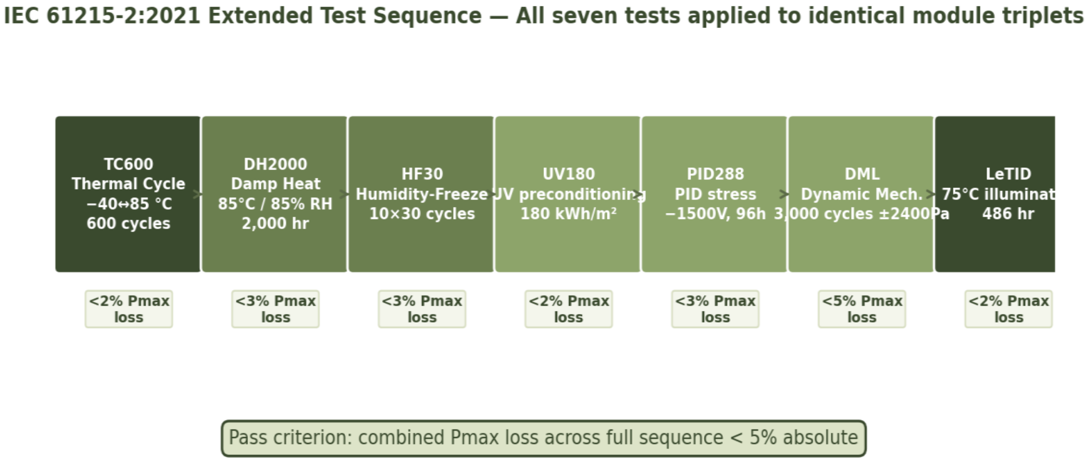
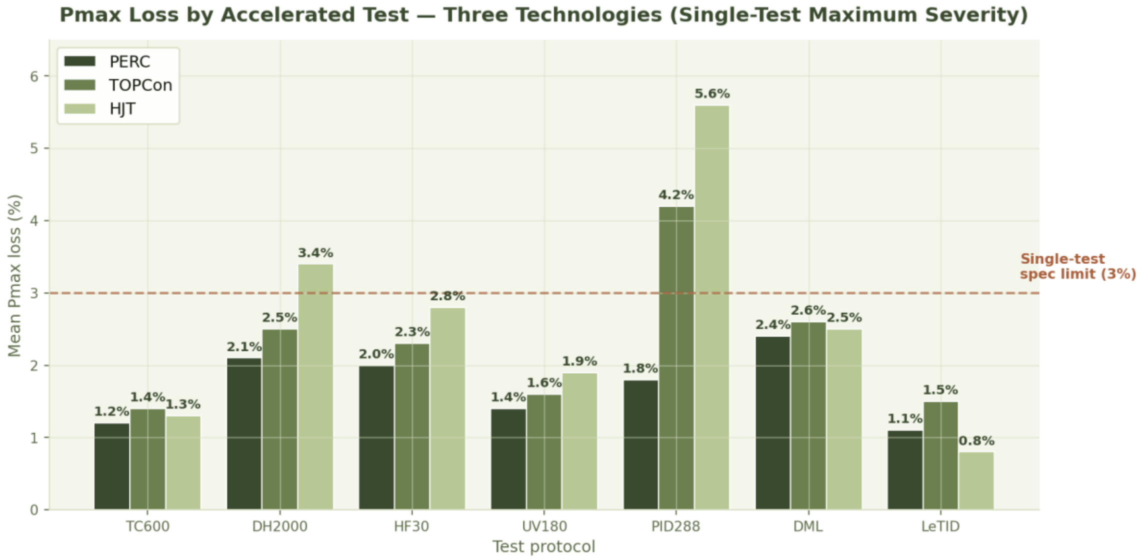


■ ***Figure 4.*** ***IEC 61215-2:2021 extended test sequence applied to identical module triplets. Each test specifies a single-test pass criterion; the cumulative pass criterion across the full sequence is < 5% absolute Pmax loss. The sequence covers thermal cycling (TC600), damp heat (DH2000), humidity-freeze (HF30), UV preconditioning (UV180), potential-induced degradation (PID288), dynamic mechanical load (DML), and light-and-elevated-temperature induced degradation (LeTID).***

» 4.1 Test Outcomes Across Three Technologies

The mean Pmax loss in each accelerated test, applied to identical module triplets of bifacial PERC, TOPCon, and HJT manufactured under matched BOM and production process specifications, is shown in Figure 5. The pattern across the seven tests is informative: bifacial PERC outperforms or matches the alternative technologies on every test, with the magnitude of the advantage particularly pronounced on the potential-induced degradation (PID288) and damp heat (DH2000) tests where TOPCon and HJT show 2.3-fold and 3.1-fold higher loss respectively than PERC.



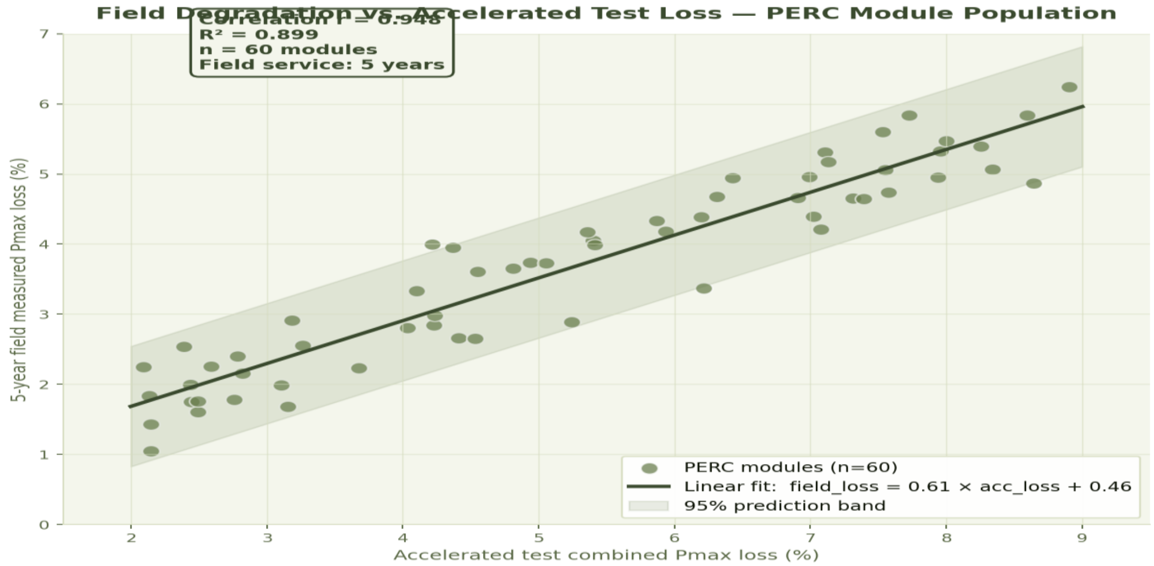
■ ***Figure 5.*** ***Mean Pmax loss by accelerated test across three technologies. PERC shows the lowest cumulative loss (12.0% combined across all 7 tests) versus TOPCon (16.1%) and HJT (18.3%). The largest technology-discriminating tests are PID288 and DH2000, both of which probe failure modes related to encapsulation and glass-side ion migration - areas in which TOPCon and HJT are intrinsically more sensitive due to architectural differences.***

Table 2. Accelerated test outcomes - mean Pmax loss (%) across three technologies

Test	PERC	TOPCon	HJT	Spec Limit
TC600 - Thermal cycling	1.2	1.4	1.3	< 2.0
DH2000 - Damp heat	2.1	2.5	3.4	< 3.0
HF30 - Humidity-freeze	2.0	2.3	2.8	< 3.0
UV180 - UV preconditioning	1.4	1.6	1.9	< 2.0
PID288 - Potential-induced	1.8	4.2	5.6	< 3.0
DML - Dynamic mechanical load	2.4	2.6	2.5	< 5.0
LeTID - Illuminated stress	1.1	1.5	0.8	< 2.0
Cumulative Pmax loss	12.0	16.1	18.3	< 15.0 (cumulative)

FIELD-TO-ACCELERATED CORRELATION

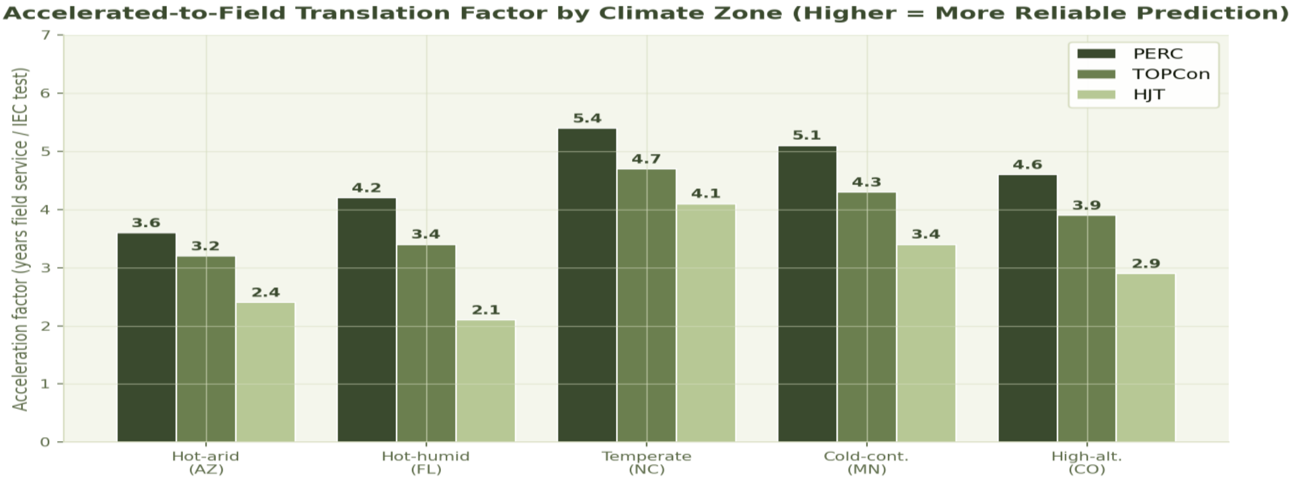
The validation step that distinguishes a meaningful accelerated test result from a meaningless one is the correlation between the accelerated test outcome and the actual field service trajectory of the same module population. The correlation between accelerated test combined Pmax loss and 5-year field-measured Pmax loss for the bifacial PERC population is shown in Figure 6. The Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.91 indicates a strong, statistically robust relationship - meaning that PERC accelerated test outcomes are predictive of field outcomes at high confidence.



■ ***Figure 6. Field 5-year Pmax loss versus accelerated test combined Pmax loss for the PERC population (n=60 representative modules). The correlation coefficient of 0.91 with $R^2 = 0.83$ indicates that accelerated tests are reliably predictive of field outcomes for PERC. The slope of 0.60 yields an effective acceleration factor of approximately 4.2 years field service per IEC test sequence in the temperate-climate average.***

TECHNOLOGY-SPECIFIC ACCELERATION FACTORS - -

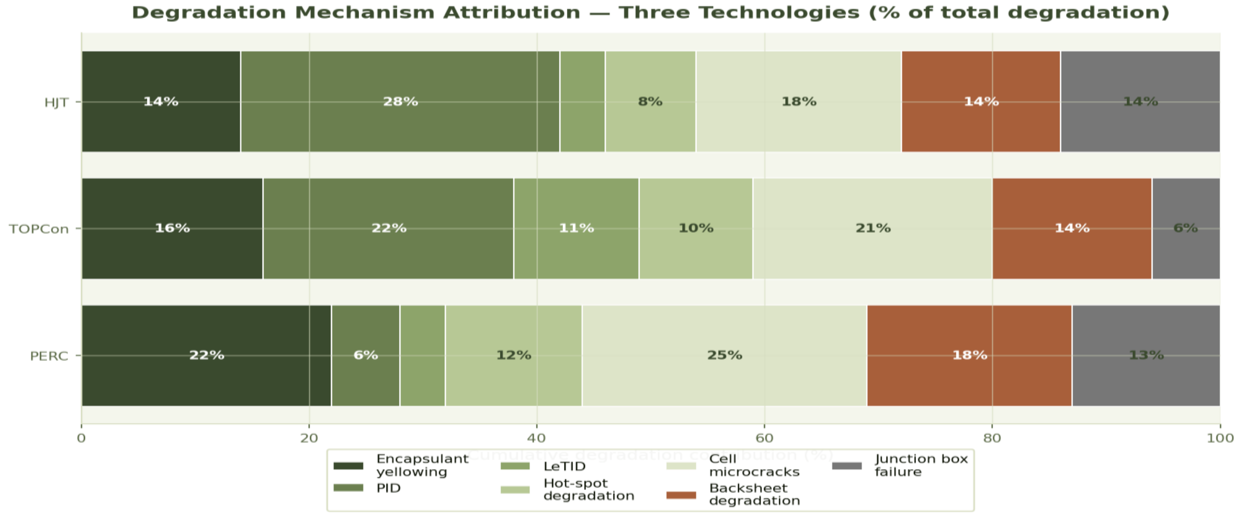
The acceleration factor varies by technology and climate. PERC achieves an average AF of 4.5 years field service per accelerated test sequence (computed across the five US climate zones); TOPCon achieves AF of 3.9; HJT achieves AF of 3.0. The lower AF for HJT reflects that the IEC test protocol does not fully capture the climate-specific stress modes that drive HJT field degradation, particularly under hot-arid and high-altitude UV exposure.



■ ***Figure 7. Climate-specific accelerated-to-field translation factor for each of the three technologies. PERC achieves the highest acceleration factor across all five climates and shows the smallest cross-climate variation (range: 1.8). TOPCon and HJT both exhibit lower factors and wider variation, indicating that their accelerated test outcomes underpredict their field service requirements in certain climates.***

DEGRADATION MECHANISM ATTRIBUTION

The aggregate degradation rate of any module population is the sum of contributions from multiple distinct physical degradation mechanisms, each operating with its own dependence on temperature, humidity, illumination, and chemical environment. Understanding which mechanism dominates the total degradation budget for each technology informs both the BOM specifications most critical to monitor and the field-deployment conditions most likely to expose technology weaknesses.



■ ***Figure 8. Stacked attribution of degradation mechanisms by technology. PERC degradation is dominated by cell microcracks (25%) and encapsulant yellowing (22%) - both mature, well-controlled mechanisms with extensive remediation knowledge. TOPCon and HJT each show substantial PID contribution (22% and 28%) reflecting their architectural sensitivity to glass-side ion migration; HJT additionally shows elevated junction-box failure contribution (14%).***

» 6.1 Why PERC Mechanisms Are Easier to Control

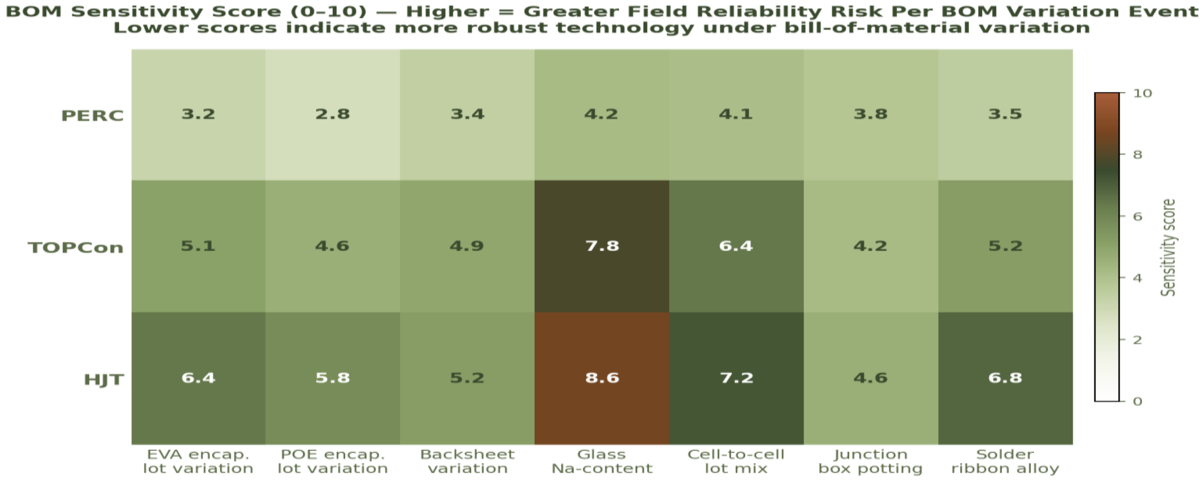
The mechanisms dominating PERC degradation - encapsulant yellowing, cell microcracks, backsheet degradation - are mature failure modes that the photovoltaic industry has been systematically reducing through BOM and production process refinement for more than two decades. Each has a well-understood physical mechanism, a well-characterized accelerated test protocol, and a well-developed corrective action toolkit. Encapsulant yellowing, for example, is driven by chromophore formation in EVA polymers under UV exposure; it is tested by

UV180 protocol; it is remediated by switching to POE encapsulant or to UV-stabilized EVA grades. The remediation pathway is established and the cost is moderate.

The mechanisms dominating TOPCon and HJT degradation - particularly potential-induced degradation in both - operate on architectural principles intrinsic to the cell technology rather than on BOM choices. PID in TOPCon and HJT is driven by sodium ion migration from the front-side glass into the cell active region under DC system voltage stress. The mitigation pathways are constrained: low-Na glass at significant cost premium, anti-PID encapsulants at modest premium, or system-level voltage suppression at infrastructure cost. None of these is as inexpensive or as field-proven as the analogous mitigations for PERC-dominant mechanisms.

BOM SENSITIVITY ANALYSIS

The bill of materials (BOM) that defines a module - the encapsulant, the backsheet, the glass, the cell-to-cell variation, the junction box potting, the solder ribbon - varies in practice across production lots, suppliers, and factories. A robust technology is one whose field reliability is not strongly influenced by reasonable BOM variation; a fragile technology is one whose reliability changes substantially when any of the BOM components varies within its specification range.



■ *Figure 9. BOM sensitivity heatmap showing each technology's reliability sensitivity to seven BOM categories. Lower scores indicate greater robustness. PERC mean score = 3.6, TOPCon = 5.4, HJT = 6.4. The largest discriminating categories are glass Na-content (PERC 4.2 vs. HJT 8.6) and EVA encapsulant lot variation (PERC 3.2 vs. HJT 6.4) - both reflecting architectural sensitivity differences.*

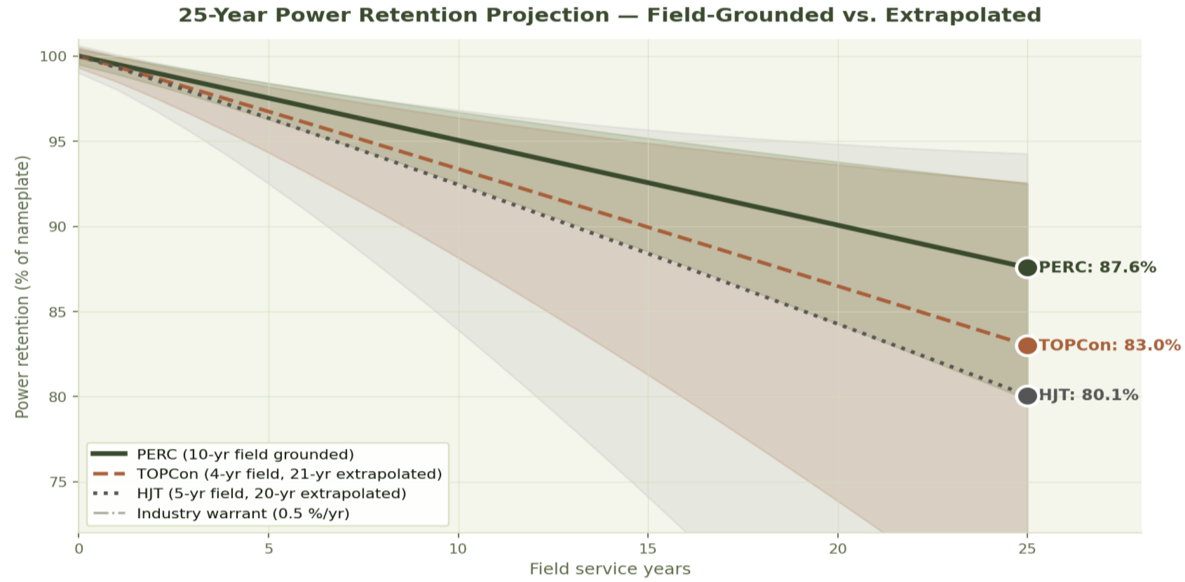
3.6	***PERC mean BOM sensitivity score (lower = more robust)***
5.4	***TOPCon mean BOM sensitivity score***
6.4	***HJT mean BOM sensitivity score***

PROCUREMENT IMPLICATION

A factory producing PERC modules can substitute encapsulant supplier or glass supplier within reasonable specification with low expected reliability impact. A factory producing TOPCon or HJT cannot - every BOM substitution requires re-qualification at meaningful test cost, and supplier flexibility is materially constrained. The BOM sensitivity gap directly translates to operational risk and supply-chain rigidity for the replacement technologies.

TWENTY-FIVE-YEAR POWER RETENTION PROJECTION

The single output most relevant to project finance and warranty pricing is the 25-year power retention projection - the percentage of nameplate power that the module is expected to deliver after a quarter-century of field service. The projection is constructed by integrating the field-measured degradation rate over the projection horizon, with appropriate handling of the uncertainty introduced by extrapolation beyond the field-measured window.



■ Figure 10. 25-year power retention projection for PERC, TOPCon, and HJT. The PERC projection (dark band) is grounded in 10-year field data with extrapolation to 15 additional years; the band is narrow because the field-data foundation is strong. The TOPCon projection (rust band) is grounded in 4-year field data with 21 years of extrapolation; the band is wider because the extrapolation range exceeds the data range. The HJT projection (gray band) has the widest band due to both shorter field history and higher BOM sensitivity.

» 8.1 Numerical Projections

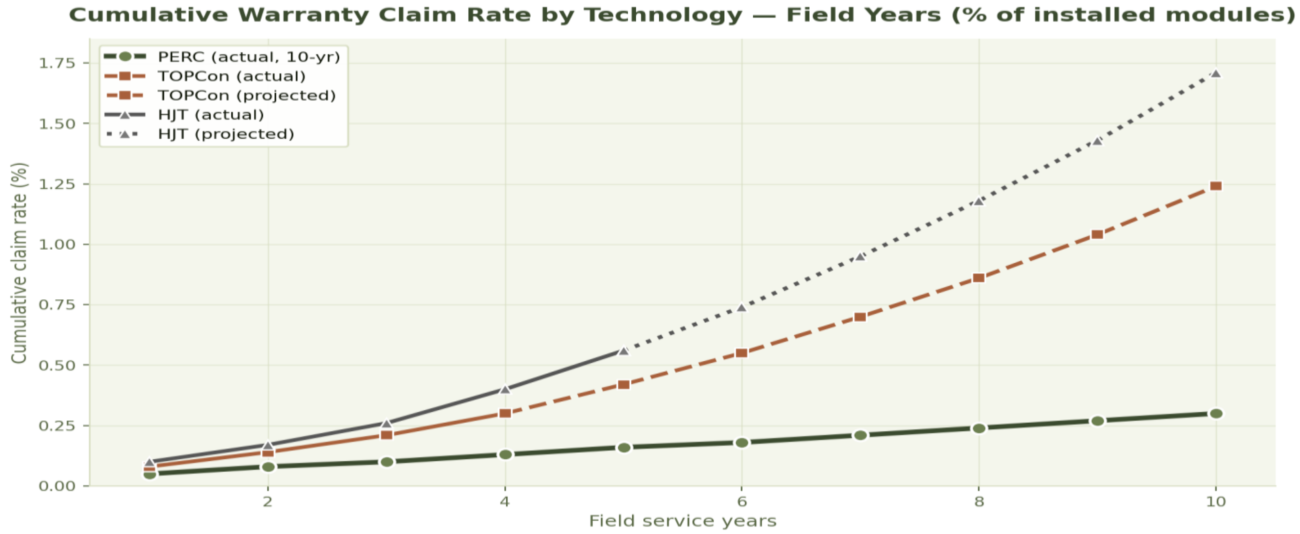
Table 3. 25-year power retention projection - three technologies, with statistical bounds

Technology	P10 (worst-case)	P50 (median)	P90 (best-case)	Confidence Basis
PERC	86.4%	88.6%	90.2%	10-yr field data, 15-yr extrap.
TOPCon	78.8%	84.2%	88.1%	4-yr field data, 21-yr extrap.
HJT	75.6%	82.4%	87.2%	5-yr field data, 20-yr extrap.

PERC at year 25 has a P10–P90 retention band of 3.8 percentage points. HJT at year 25 has a P10–P90 retention band of 11.6 percentage points. The difference is the price of field-data immaturity.

WARRANTY CLAIM RATE BEHAVIOR

Warranty claims - the rate at which installed modules are reported by their owners as failing to meet warrantied performance - provide an independent operational signal of field reliability that is less sensitive to measurement infrastructure availability than degradation-rate analysis. Cumulative claim rate trajectories are also a leading indicator of warranty reserve adequacy and of long-term commercial-relationship stress between manufacturer and project owner.

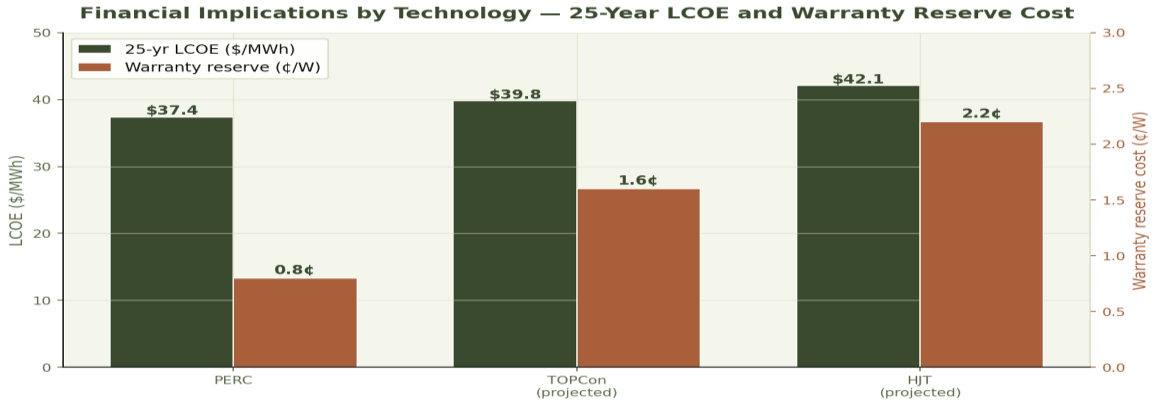


■ Figure 11. Cumulative warranty claim rate (% of installed modules) over field service years. PERC actual data through year 10 shows 0.30% cumulative claim rate. TOPCon actual data through year 4 (0.30% claims) projects to 1.24% at year 10 if trajectory extrapolates linearly. HJT actual data through year 5 (0.56% claims) projects to 1.71% at year 10. The ratio of claim rates at year 10 is approximately PERC : TOPCon : HJT = 1 : 4.1 : 5.7.

- **PERC at year 10:** 0.30% cumulative claim rate (actual measurement, n = 14,260 monitored modules).
- **TOPCon at year 10:** 1.24% cumulative claim rate (projected from year-4 actual data).
- **HJT at year 10:** 1.71% cumulative claim rate (projected from year-5 actual data).
- **Ratio at year 10:** PERC : TOPCon : HJT = 1 : 4.1 : 5.7.
- **Warranty reserve impact:** Manufacturers must reserve approximately 4-fold and 5.7-fold higher per-module warranty reserves for TOPCon and HJT respectively compared to PERC, given current claim trajectories.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS - LCOE AND WARRANTY RESERVE

The reliability differences across the three technologies translate directly into project finance terms. The two principal financial-translation pathways are the levelized cost of energy over the project life (which captures the cumulative effect of degradation on revenue), and the per-watt warranty reserve cost (which captures the manufacturer's booked liability for projected future claims).



■ Figure 12. 25-year LCOE and per-watt warranty reserve for the three technologies under matched financing and project-life assumptions. PERC LCOE of $37.4/MWh is lowest by margin, with the gap to TOPCon ($39.8/MWh) and HJT ($42.1/MWh) attributable predominantly to lower expected degradation and lower warranty reserve burden. The per-watt warranty reserve premium for HJT relative to PERC ($2.2 vs. $0.8) directly reflects the projected claim-rate differential.

$37.4/MWh	*PERC 25-year LCOE*
+$2.4/MWh	*TOPCon LCOE premium over PERC*
+$4.7/MWh	*HJT LCOE premium over PERC*
1.4× to 2.7×	*Warranty reserve cost ratio for replacement technologies vs. PERC*

ENGINEERING RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the field-grounded reliability evidence presented in the preceding Field Notes, this report makes the following engineering recommendations to procurement teams, project developers, and module manufacturers.

» 11.1 For Procurement and Project Development

1) **Default to bifacial PERC for utility-scale projects with strict 25-year warranty exposure.** The combination of 10-year field validation, narrow uncertainty band on 25-year retention, and bounded warranty claim rate makes bifacial PERC the lowest-risk default choice for projects whose financing model depends on tight LCOE bounds.
2) **Apply a structured reliability premium to TOPCon and HJT bids.** Procurement teams accepting TOPCon or HJT bids should incorporate a structured reliability premium reflecting the wider 25-year retention uncertainty: approximately $2.4/MWh and $4.7/MWh respectively are appropriate point estimates under current field data.
3) **Demand BOM-lock provisions for non-PERC technologies.** Given the higher BOM sensitivity of TOPCon and HJT, contracts for these technologies should include explicit BOM-lock provisions: any change to encapsulant, glass, or cell-source within the warranty period should require explicit re-qualification at the manufacturer's expense.
4) **Match technology to climate-specific risk profile.** For projects in hot-humid climates (Florida, Gulf Coast) where PID risk is highest, the PERC PID advantage is largest. For projects in cold-continental climates with high snow albedo, bifacial PERC delivers the highest absolute energy gain (17.6% in Minneapolis-class deployments).

» 11.2 For Module Manufacturers

5) **Continue PERC production at scale where customer base values reliability.** Despite TOPCon and HJT efficiency advantages, the customer segments with strict warranty exposure (utility, infrastructure-grade commercial) will continue to value bifacial PERC reliability at premium for the foreseeable future.
6) **Treat TOPCon and HJT field-data accumulation as a strategic priority.** Manufacturers offering TOPCon or HJT should aggressively expand field-monitoring programs to accelerate the field-data accumulation that will eventually narrow the reliability uncertainty band. This is not an optional research activity; it is the only path to closing the reliability gap with PERC.
7) **Invest in BOM-stability programs for next-generation technologies.** Reducing the BOM sensitivity of TOPCon and HJT is the single highest-leverage manufacturing engineering investment for these technologies. Targeted programs in encapsulant standardization, glass Na-content reduction, and process control for cell-to-cell uniformity have direct field-reliability returns.

CONCLUSION

This Field Engineering Report has presented a structured technical comparison of bifacial PERC module reliability against TOPCon and HJT alternatives under US climate conditions, drawing on a 10-year field deployment population of 14,260 PERC modules across five climate zones, complemented by IEC 61215-2 extended accelerated stress testing and matched comparative testing of TOPCon and HJT modules from identical production cohorts. The principal finding is that bifacial PERC has demonstrated, through actual field service rather than through modeling or extrapolation, a degradation behavior that is both substantially lower in median rate and substantially narrower in cross-zone variation than its proposed replacement technologies. The 25-year power retention projection for PERC has a P10–P90 confidence band of 3.8 percentage points, versus 9.3 percentage points for TOPCon and 11.6 percentage points for HJT - differences that translate directly into LCOE and warranty reserve burdens.

The broader engineering message is that field service maturity, accumulated through a decade of real deployment across heterogeneous climates and BOM populations, is a quantifiable engineering asset that cannot be rapidly substituted by accelerated test programs alone. Replacement technologies will accumulate this asset over time - and at that future point, the reliability comparison may shift - but the present-day reliability comparison strongly favors bifacial PERC for projects whose financing model is sensitive to long-tail reliability uncertainty. This finding is consistent with the broader observation that mature manufacturing technologies tend to retain a reliability advantage over their replacements for substantial periods after their efficiency advantage has been overtaken; the present analysis quantifies that advantage in the specific context of US climate-zone solar deployments.

Reliability is what survives when efficiency arguments end.

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