

CEEPAC Monthly Updates – November 2012

*Events, News and Announcements related to Climate, Energy, & Environment
in the Washington Region*

Events

Please bookmark MWCOG's Regional Energy Events Calendar:

<https://ncrportal.mwcog.org/sites/surveys/climate/Lists/Calendar/calendar.aspx>

- ✓ **November 27-28:** [MD-DC-VA Solar Energy Industry Assoc. 6th Annual Solar Energy Focus Conference](#); Marriott at Metro Center, 775 12th Street, NW
- ✓ **November 30:** [Scrutinizing and Supporting Green Business](#); 2000 L Street, NW, Suite 620
- ✓ **December 7:** [EPA Green Power Partnership Webinar: "Global Warming's Six Americas: Understanding and Communicating with a Diverse Public"](#)
- ✓ **January 30-31:** [VCU Energy & Sustainability Conference](#); Greater Richmond Convention Center

Legislative Update

B19-0715 Community Renewables Energy Act

- Establishes virtual net metering, allowing district electricity customers to invest in solar energy systems elsewhere in the city, and receive credits off their bill for a share of kWhs produced.
- Expands renewable energy access to renters, low-income residents, and those unable or preferring not to install solar on their property.
- **STATUS:** Currently under review by utility and stakeholder working group to resolve FERC and PSC issues. Expected to be carried over to 2013.

B19-0749 Energy Innovation and Savings Amendment Act - PASSED

- Exempts EV charging stations from public utility regulation (bringing DC's policy in line with existing MD and VA law)
- Exempts solar and cogeneration systems from personal property tax (conventional energy systems are exempt)
- Requires commercial properties to keep doors and windows closed if running AC (exempts small businesses, restaurants, and hotels)
- **STATUS:** Approved 11-0; Awaiting Congressional review period and Mayor's signature

B19-0756 Sustainable DC Act

- Omnibus bill containing 9 provisions, including: Making changes to the commercial PACE program, funding DDOE's EnergyStar benchmarking program, extending the Renewable Energy Incentive program to 2013, extending low-income weatherization and heating system retrofit programs.
- **STATUS:** Committee hearing held July 2; awaiting further action.

Climate, Energy, and Environment News

[**Poll: Renewable energy helped swing US election**](#) (Nov 15) A poll conducted by the American Council on Renewable Energy (ACORE) found that a majority of 2012 voters in four swing states indicated that energy impacted their vote – 66% in Colorado, 60% in Virginia, 58% in Iowa, and 57% in Ohio. The poll found these same voters want to see cleaner energy encouraged in their state, ranking solar, wind, and natural gas higher than all other energy sources.

[**Home energy storage with used electric vehicle batteries is explored**](#) (Nov 14) ABB and General Motors have announced that they have developed a product that repackages battery packs built for cars, for use as home energy storage devices. The prototype would provide a market for past-their-prime batteries, giving them a resale value that will lower their cost of ownership and providing distributed storage that could be used to shore up weak spots on the grid or to absorb energy from intermittent sources like solar panels and wind machines and deliver it in a steady stream suitable for the power grid.

[**On-Bill Repayment Approved By California Public Utilities Commission**](#) (Nov 12). The new program would allow property owners to pay for energy efficiency upgrades through regular installments on their utility bill. The idea is that the energy cost savings would cover or exceed the loan or the leasing repayment added to the bill each month. Repayment remains on the property's utility bill until it's paid off, even if the property changes ownership, and the utility would have the authority to cut off service for nonpayment.

[**California's Carbon Trading Market Launches**](#) (Nov 15) California's new system for limiting industrial greenhouse gas emissions by putting a price on carbon is not likely to spur a similar federal program anytime soon, but it might influence other states to follow suit, energy policy experts said. The state's Air Resources Board on Wednesday began auctioning permits called "allowances" for greenhouse gas emissions, launching the world's second-largest marketplace for carbon emissions.

[**ENERGY STAR homes accounted for 26% of new construction in 2011**](#) (Oct 16) Homes built to voluntary ENERGY STAR® specifications made up about 26% of all new homes constructed in the United States during 2011. Under the latest update of the specifications that went into effect earlier this year, ENERGY STAR homes consume at least 15% less energy than those built to the 2009 International Energy Conservation Code (IECC).

[**Smart meter deployments continue to rise**](#) (Nov 1) Electric meters with enhanced communication capabilities—an essential component of the smart grid—are becoming more prevalent. In 2011, more than 23% of all U.S. electrical customers had smart meters. At the end of 2011, more than 33 million U.S. customers had smart meters. So far in 2012, progress has continued, with nearly three million additional smart meter installations reported to EIA between January and August.

State Update

District of Columbia

[Long-Term Sea Level Rise In Washington, D.C. Could Have Significant Impact](#) (Nov 1) The nation's capital is likely to face flooding and infrastructure damage in both the short- and long-term brought about by sea level rise (SLR), current trends and predicted increases suggest. The rise is linked to thermal expansion of the oceans and melting of global ice sheets as a result of global warming, researchers say in a new study focused on real-estate property and government infrastructure impacts in Washington, D.C. Short-term predictions suggest that sea level will rise 0.1 meters by the year 2043 and flood about 103 properties and other infrastructure, costing the city about \$2.1 billion. By 2150, 0.4 meters of SLR is likely to impact 142 properties.

Maryland

[Md. renewable-energy program addresses often-ignored wood and pellet stoves](#) (Nov 14) The Maryland Energy Administration has just started the Clean Burning Wood Stove Grant Program, which could ultimately help thousands of rural Marylanders get a new stove or upgrade from their older, polluting stoves. 85 percent of all renewable energy in Maryland is from wood heating, and about 25,000 Maryland families use wood as a primary heating source, and roughly 200,000 as a secondary source. One wood stove can reduce up to 1.5 times as much carbon as a solar PV system for one-sixth of the cost. Families can save more than \$750 annually on energy bills, and have a price-stable energy supply.

[Maryland invests in "game changer" clean technologies](#) (Nov 8) The Maryland Energy Administration has announced the winners of its Game Changer Competitive Grant Program, which provides cost-sharing grants for innovative clean energy generation technologies in Maryland. The winning projects include a solar energy microgrid, a community-scale wind project, a biomass boiler project, solar water heaters, and solar powered energy storage/EV charging stations.

Virginia

[Local Energy Alliance Program \(LEAP\) Announces the Winners of the Northern Virginia Home Energy Makeover Contest](#) (Nov 8) The Local Energy Alliance Program, a consumer advocacy and energy efficiency education non-profit organization, announced the winners of the Northern Virginia Home Energy Makeover Contest, presenting \$18,000 total to three homeowners and contractor services for retrofits. In addition to LEAP, other partners include local governments in Arlington, Alexandria and Reston interested in energy savings. Financing institutions which are providing low interest energy efficiency loans are Arlington Community Federal Credit Union and Commonwealth One Federal Credit Union in Alexandria. The Northern Virginia Regional Commission is assisting LEAP in promoting the contest, along with support from The Dominion Foundation and the State Corporation Commission's Virginia Energy Sense campaign.

Federal Update

[Short-term PTC extension gaining momentum as bridge to phaseout](#) (Nov 16) The production tax credit for wind energy is scheduled to lapse Dec. 31, although the industry has been aggressively lobbying for an extension and has collected an impressive number of supporters on both sides of the aisle. While the credit's immediate fate largely depends on the outcome of larger year-end negotiations, several key lawmakers are beginning to look ahead to where the PTC will fit into broader tax reform discussions expected to occupy Congress and the Obama administration next year.

[Interior Dept. Announces Lease for Delaware Offshore Wind](#) (Oct 23) The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) has reached agreement on a lease for commercial wind energy development in federal waters that covers 96,430 acres approximately 11 nautical miles off the coast of Delaware. This is the first lease completed under Interior's "[Smart from the Start](#)" approach to facilitate environmentally responsible offshore wind development along the Atlantic Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) by identifying wind energy areas in a coordinated, focused approach with extensive environmental analysis, public review and large-scale planning.

International Update

[EU freezes airlines carbon emissions law](#) (Nov 12) The European commission has made an unexpected climbdown over greenhouse gas emissions from airplanes, by suspending the carbon penalties it levies on flights taking off or landing from EU member states. The unexpected move means airlines from the US, China and other countries which have objected to the emissions trading system will now be exempt from its strictures, pending further notice.

Research Articles and Reports

["Developing and Assessing Economic, Energy, and Climate Security and Investment Options for the US."](#), **The Center for Climate Strategies**. New study identifies existing local, state, and federal policies – not cheap natural gas or economic downturn – as largest driver behind declining carbon emissions. [Press Release](#).

[World Energy Outlook](#), **International Energy Agency**. The International Energy Agency released its annual flagship publication yesterday, the World Energy Outlook. The IEA made an historic statement in the executive summary. It said, "No more than one-third of proven reserves of fossil fuels can be consumed prior to 2050 if the world is to achieve the 2 °C goal," the internationally recognized limit to average global warming in order to prevent catastrophic climate change.

[Climate Change Report Outlines Perils for U.S. Military](#), **National Research Council**. The study, "[Climate and Social Stress: Implications for Security Analysis](#)," was commissioned by the C.I.A. and other intelligence agencies. It finds that climate change is accelerating, and it will place unparalleled strains on American military and intelligence agencies in coming years by causing ever more disruptive events around the globe.