

CEEPAC Monthly Updates – July 2012

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

Events

- ✓ **July 30:** [Innovative Financing Tools for Energy Efficient Buildings](#); MWCOG Offices, 3rd Floor Board Room; 10:00am – 2:00pm. To RSVP, email energy@mwco.org
- ✓ **August 9:** [NASEO Webinar on Streamlined Permitting for Renewable Energy Generation](#); 3:30 – 4:30pm
- ✓ **September 17-19:** [Maryland Clean Energy Summit](#); BWI Airport Marriott
- ✓ **September 19:** [EPA Webinar: Addressing Barriers to Renewable Energy Procurement](#); 1:00 – 2:00pm.

Climate, Energy, and Environment News

['Very doable' low-carbon standard could boost economy, environment say researchers](#) (July 19) According to a series of peer-reviewed reports to be published in the journal *Energy Policy*, a low-carbon fuel standard that would expand the mix of non-petroleum transportation fuels could build on the existing renewable fuels standard to advance clean fuels development, according to researchers behind a series of new reports on the policy. Six research institutions collaborated on the reports, which lay out the policy for an LCFS and potential impact on greenhouse gas emissions, energy security and fuel prices.

[ICLEI Releases Community Greenhouse Gas Emissions Accounting and Reporting Protocol](#) (July 9) The Community-Scale GHG Emissions Accounting and Reporting Protocol is the forthcoming U.S. national standard for how to measure and report a community's greenhouse gas emissions. The Community Protocol was developed by a broad group of experts and stakeholders led by ICLEI USA. The Community Protocol will complement the Local Government Operations Protocol, and is on track to be completed by the third quarter of 2012.

[Global warming no longer Americans' top environmental concern, poll finds](#) (July 2) According to a new Washington Post-Stanford University poll, just 18 percent of those polled name climate change as their top environmental concern. That compares with 33 percent who said so in 2007, amid publicity about a major U.N. climate report and Al Gore's Oscar-winning documentary about global warming. Today, 29 percent identify water and air pollution as the world's most pressing environmental issue. Still, nearly three-quarters say the Earth is warming, and just as many say they believe that temperatures will continue to rise if nothing is done.

[Renewable Energy Investment Set Record In 2011](#) (June 11) Global investment in renewable energy reached a record of \$257 billion last year, with solar attracting more than half the total spending, according to a U.N. report released Monday. Investment in solar energy surged to \$147 billion in 2011, a year-on-year increase of 52 percent thanks to strong demand for rooftop photovoltaic installations in

Germany, Italy, China and Britain. Large-scale solar thermal installations in Spain and the United States also contributed to growth during a fiercely competitive year for the solar industry. Several large American and German manufacturers fell victim to price pressure from Chinese rivals that helped to halve the cost of photovoltaic modules in 2011.

[Climate Change Threatens Power Output](#) (June 4) In an article in the journal *Nature Climate Change*, scientists predict that by midcentury more frequent extremes in ambient temperature may make water bodies too warm to allow for full power production. The researchers who wrote the article for *Nature Climate Change* pointed out that plants running on natural gas at a higher efficiency – that is, putting more of the heat into making power and less into waste that must be absorbed by water — could be helpful. Because generating plants usually last for many decades, “adaptation options should be included in today’s planning,” they wrote.

State Update

District of Columbia

[D.C. releases energy benchmarking rules, fines](#) (July 20) The D.C. Department of the Environment on Friday released a set of proposed rules that lay out how the owners of large District buildings must benchmark their annual energy use — and the fines they’ll face for failing to turn in that data. All private residential and nonresidential buildings larger than 50,000 square feet will have to be benchmarked by 2013. Those scores will be made public.

[Bill proposed to bury D.C.'s power lines](#) (July 10) Councilmember Jack Evans, Ward 2, has introduced a bill that considers burying all power lines within the District. At the heart of the proposal is a work group made up of members from the mayor's office, the council and Pepco. Most estimates for burying power lines in the District suggest such a project would cost \$5 billion. The work group would be tasked with figuring out how realistic it is to bury the power lines and how to pay for it. Evan's bill asks the group to have a plan in place by Dec. 31.

Maryland

[Pepco studying cost of burying power lines](#) (July 16) Pepco officials have told the Maryland Public Service Commission they will deliver, within six months, an analysis on burying "all or portions" of the utility’s overhead lines and lines that supply distribution to substations. The utility is working on the analysis, Douglas Micheel, its assistant general counsel, wrote in a letter to the PSC dated July 13.

[State coming to grips with climate change](#) (July 13) According to climate scientists and a number of state officials, the events of the past two weeks are consistent with what Maryland faces as a result of climate change. State officials will review the recent events to see what steps can be taken to prepare for the future, said Zoe Johnson, program manager for climate policy in the Office for a Sustainable Future with the Maryland Department of Natural Resources. In fact, state officials began planning adjustments to climate change in 2007, when the Maryland Climate Change Commission issued its first report. Most of the work has concerned rising sea levels, attributable, in part, to climate change, and what it will mean to low-lying areas of Maryland — particularly along the Eastern Shore.

[Clean Energy Jobs Find Fertile Ground In Maryland](#) (June 27) A recent survey conducted by the Maryland Clean Energy Center found that a rapidly growing clean energy industry has become a major source of jobs in Maryland, despite the national sluggish economy. Almost half of the 179 green businesses polled in the 2012 Maryland Clean Energy Industry Survey expect to employ more workers in 2012 compared to 2011, and nearly 13 percent already employ more than 100 workers. Nearly 55 percent of all respondents said Maryland's state and local policy and tax incentives have led to expansion of their business. Eighty percent say uncertain policy at the federal, state, or local level as the biggest barrier to their success.

Virginia

[SCC seeks comment on Dominion solar incentives](#) (June 16) The State Corporation Commission is seeking public comment on Dominion Virginia Power's solar-power incentive program. Dominion is seeking approval to buy solar-generated power from residential and small commercial customers at 15 cents per kilowatt-hour for a five-year demonstration period. Comments or a request for a public hearing on the proposal must be submitted by Sept. 14.

[Va. challenge to EPA's findings on greenhouse gas rejected](#) (June 26) A federal appeals court on Tuesday rejected a lawsuit from a number of states, including Virginia, that challenged the Environmental Protection Agency's findings that greenhouse gas emissions may "reasonably be anticipated to endanger public health." The challenge had stemmed from the EPA's endangerment finding in December 2009, which was followed by subsequent regulations on carbon emissions. The states of Texas, Alabama, Florida, Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan, Nebraska, North Dakota, Louisiana, Oklahoma, South Carolina, South Dakota, and Utah were also part of the lawsuit.

Federal Update

[D.C. appeals court upholds EPA regulations to fight global warming](#) (June 26) A federal appeals court on Tuesday upheld the Environmental Protection Agency's finding that greenhouse gases contribute to global warming and are a threat to public health, a major victory for the Obama administration and a setback to states and trade groups that oppose government regulations on carbon emissions.

[EPA Greenhouse Gas Permitting Requirements Maintain Focus on Largest Emitters/Steps to streamline process will ease burden on state and local permitting authorities](#) (July 3) The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) today announced that it will not revise greenhouse gas (GHG) permitting thresholds under the Clean Air Act. Today's final rule is part of EPA's common-sense, phased-in approach to GHG permitting under the Clean Air Act, announced in 2010 and recently upheld by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit. The final rule maintains a focus on the nation's largest emitters that account for nearly 70 percent of the total GHG pollution from stationary sources, while shielding smaller emitters from permitting requirements. EPA is also finalizing a provision that allows companies to set plant-wide emissions limits for GHGs, streamlining the permitting process, increasing flexibilities and reducing permitting burdens on state and local authorities and large industrial emitters.

[Energy Department Announces New Case Studies, Business Models to Support Energy Efficiency Upgrade Programs](#) (July 10) As part of the Obama Administration's all-of-the-above

strategy to reduce energy costs for consumers and American businesses, the Energy Department today released a new suite of resources supporting the design and implementation of energy efficiency upgrade programs. Developed through the Department's Better Buildings Neighborhood Program, these new resources include six case studies, a business model guide, and a video, all of which leverage the experiences and knowledge of participating partners in testing new program models while upgrading more than 20,000 homes. These tools will help communities across the country replicate successful energy efficiency programs—creating new jobs and business opportunities and saving consumers money on their utility bills.

International Update

[U.K. approves project for storing carbon below seafloor](#) (July 19) Britain has granted a lease to Royal Dutch Shell PLC and SSE PLC for a project to store carbon in the depleted Goldeneye gas field in the North Sea. The two companies are upgrading a power plant at Peterhead, Scotland, with carbon capture and storage (CCS) equipment. They are competing for £1 billion (\$1.6 billion) of government funding for CCS projects. Drax Group PLC and Alstom SA are also competing for the funds.

[Solar industry sees hope in new China, Japan market incentives](#) (July 19) The struggling solar industry, still reeling from sharp subsidy cuts in key European markets, is getting an unexpected push from both China and Japan. This month, China raised its target for cumulative solar installations by 40 percent to 21 gigawatts from 2011 to 2015, while Japan started offering generous incentives that may double demand for solar installations there this year, analysts say.

Research Articles and Reports

[International Energy Agency – Energy Technology Perspectives 2012](#). The publication demonstrates how technologies – from electric vehicles to smart grids – can make a decisive difference in achieving the objective of limiting the global temperature rise to 2°C and enhancing energy security. ETP2012 presents scenarios and strategies to 2050, with the aim of guiding decision makers on energy trends and what needs to be done to build a clean, secure and competitive energy future.

[NOAA - 2011 State of the Climate](#). Worldwide, 2011 was the coolest year on record since 2008, yet temperatures remained above the 30 year average, according to the 2011 State of the Climate report released online today by NOAA. The peer-reviewed report, issued in coordination with the American Meteorological Society (AMS), was compiled by 378 scientists from 48 countries around the world. It provides a detailed update on global climate indicators, notable weather events and other data collected by environmental monitoring stations and instruments on land, sea, ice and sky.