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Jeffrey King, jking@mwkog.org; Jeannine Altavilla, jaltavilla@mwkog.org
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Federal Regulatory Updates

- ✓ **EPA Says 2010 Fuel Economy Ekes Up (November 17):** The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced the average fuel economy for cars sold in the US in model year 2010 was 22.5 miles per gallon. This is slightly higher than 2009's rating of 22.4 mpg. This is the sixth straight year with an increase, translating to an average 395 grams of carbon dioxide (CO₂) per mile, down from 397 grams per mile in 2009.
- ✓ **Interior Department Launches Atlantic Offshore Wind Energy Initiative (November 24):** The Department of the Interior launched a "Smart from the Start" initiative to speed offshore wind development. The initiative will be run by the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Regulation, and Enforcement and will save up to 6-12 months on the offshore leasing process. By January 2011 wind energy areas will be identified off the coasts of Delaware, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Rhode Island and Virginia.
- ✓ **EPA Again Delays Tighter Ozone Restrictions (December 9):** The decision on whether to tighten limits on ground-level ozone has been delayed for the third time in less than a year. EPA announced that it will not be prepared to decide until next July. The delays are due to the costs of up to \$90 billion annually that businesses could incur in 2020 to meet the proposed standard of 60 ppb.
- ✓ **EPA Tasks States to Cut Emissions (January 9):** EPA has allowed states with approved plans to take responsibility and authority to regulate carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Arizona, Arkansas, Florida, Idaho, Kansas, Oregon and Wyoming's programs were taken over by EPA because implementation plans were not submitted. Texas is suing EPA and refusing to implement the regulation.
- ✓ **Texas Loses Bid to Block EPA GHG Permitting (January 12):** The DC Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that Texas cannot block EPA from issuing permits for new or substantially renovated large stationary sources of GHG emissions in Texas. EPA's rules took effect on January 2nd, 2011. This is the fourth try for Texas, and sixth attempt overall where the courts have upheld EPA's authority to regulate greenhouse gases.
- ✓ **EPA Grants Greenhouse-Gas Rule Exemption (January 13):** EPA announced that the agency will provide a three-year reprieve from the new GHG regulations for facilities that burn wood chips and other biomass products to generate electricity. The agency cites a need for more scientific analysis.
- ✓ **EPA Expands Climate Agenda to the Current Fleet of Power Plants and Refineries (January 19):** EPA proposed a rulemaking timeline for Clean Air Act "New Source Performance Standards" (NSPS) for GHG emissions, which addresses existing facilities as well as new and modified facilities. The rulemaking timeline would settle pending legal challenges alleging EPA's failure to update the NSPS.
- ✓ **Obama Climate Adviser to Depart in Latest Staff Change (January 25):** Administration officials announced that Carol Browner, climate change adviser to President Obama, will step down as White House coordinator of energy and climate policy. She will stay on "long enough to ensure an orderly transition."

Federal Legislative Updates

- ✓ **House G.O.P. Eliminating Global Warming Committee (December 1):** The House Select Committee on Energy Independence and Global Warming will be eliminated in the 112th Congress. The select committee was created by Nancy Pelosi in 2007. Climate change matters are overseen by the House Energy and Commerce Committee as well as the Natural Resources Committee.
- ✓ **House Lawmakers Afraid Letter Grades Are Biased to Favor EVs (December 9):** 53 House members told EPA and DOT that the proposal to use letter grades would hurt the sales of SUVs and trucks. The group (17

Democrats and 36 Republicans) said that a fuel-efficient SUV or truck would still receive a below average grade of C or C+.

- ✓ **Changes in Climate Related Congressional Leadership for the 112th Congress (December 13):** Rep. Fred Upton (R-MI) was selected to chair the Energy and Commerce Committee and named the chairmen for the [subcommittees](#). Rep. Upton has opposed a renewable electricity standard. Rep. Ralph Hall (R-TX), who expressed skepticism that human behavior is behind climate change, was selected to chair the Science Committee. Senate Energy and Public Works Committee Chair Barbara Boxer (D-CA) announced that the climate change agenda in the committee will focus on the science, rather than moving comprehensive climate legislation until there are sufficient votes. Rep. Ted Poe (R-TX) introduced a bill that would prohibit EPA from spending money that would create a program for or regulate GHG emissions. Sens. David Vitter (R-LA) and John Barrasso (R-WY) introduced legislation to have NASA create an official dataset on the historical temperature record with statistical uncertainties quantified.
- ✓ **Obama Extends Ethanol, Biofuel Subsidies (December 17):** The tax deal signed near the close of the 111th Congress included extensions to several tax credits for renewable energy and energy efficiency. Ethanol, solar power, and home improvements are included.
- ✓ **SAVE Act Championed by Senator Michael Bennet (D-CO):** The SAVE (Sensible Accounting to Value Energy) Act would add energy costs to current mortgage underwriting and home appraisal practices. The Act would accelerate the supply of and demand for energy-efficient new homes, as well as allow homeowners to benefit from their investment in energy improvements if they sell their home. The bill is championed by Senator Michael Bennet of Colorado.

Federal Budget Updates

- ✓ **Agriculture Secretary Vilsack Announces New Steps to Meet the Challenge of Climate Change (December 9):** Secretary Vilsack announced \$15 million in Conservation Innovation Grant funds through the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). The funds will go to large-scale demonstration projects to accelerate adoption of new approaches reducing GHG emissions and promoting carbon sequestration on private lands.
- ✓ **DOE to Provide \$7 million to Support Updated Building Codes in 24 States (December 17):** Virginia will receive \$244,799 as part of the Department of Energy's (DOE) Building Energy Codes Program, funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). The program helps states update building codes to include more energy-efficient measures.

State Government Updates

- ✓ **Maryland Clean Energy Center Launches Low-Cost Home Efficiency Loan Option (December 20):** The Maryland Clean Energy Center (MCEC) launched a new Maryland Home Energy Loan Program (MHELP) using ARRA funding to help homeowners pay for energy efficiency home upgrades.
- ✓ **ICLEI's STAR Beta Communities Selected (December 21):** The District of Columbia is one of nine beta communities selected to pilot ICLEI's new STAR communities performance management tool which helps governments measure and improve their sustainability efforts.
- ✓ **District Energy Benchmarking (December 23):** The District released FY 2009 building energy use information for 194 public buildings over 10,000 square feet and collected FY 2010 information on private buildings over

200,000 square feet. Each year the minimum building size for mandatory energy use reporting will decrease. Reports must be completed with ENERGY STAR's Portfolio Manager.

- ✓ **Bill Would Add Natural Gas to Renewables Incentive (December 26):** Legislation has been filed to add natural gas to Virginia's renewable energy program. State Delegate Will Morefield, R-Tazewell, says that adding natural gas will help create jobs in Virginia and incentivize natural gas power plants.
- ✓ **Cheh Introduces Two Electric Reliability Bills (January 4):** DC Councilmember Mary Cheh (Ward 3) introduced two bills that would improve reliability of the District's electricity grid. The first bill would establish reliability standards and authorize the Public Service Commissions to impose penalties if utilities do not meet standards. The second bill would require all solar energy for the Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard (RPS- requiring 2.5% of District electricity consumption come from renewable energy by 2020) to be located within the area served by the District's distribution grid. Maryland lawmakers are also considering changes to their RPS to allow solar water heating to qualify for the solar renewable energy credits (SRECs) needed to meet their goal.
- ✓ **Democrats Try to Curb Cuccinelli's Powers (January 19):** Virginia Attorney General Ken Cuccinelli II has subpoenaed files from Michael Mann, a former University of Virginia climate. Cuccinelli is using a statue designed to catch government employees defrauding the public of tax dollars. The University of Virginia alleges that the request infringes on the academic freedom of its faculty. Democrats in the state General Assembly are trying to limit the Attorney General's powers to conduct similar inquiries, shielding academic work.

Regional Updates

- ✓ **Metropolitan Washington Alternative Fuels Clean Cities Partnership (November 1):** The DOE National Clean Cities program office transferred the Clean Cities Coalition previously housed by COG into a stand-alone 501(c)(3) entity to be renamed the "Washington Regional Clean Cities Coalition." COG has agreed to assist with a smooth transition and to coordinate with the new organization, including providing representation on the Executive Board. COG will continue to work independently in the alternative fuels area.
- ✓ **Solar Panels Coming to Prince George's County (November 28):** Bladensburg is one of nine cities and towns in Prince George's County that will have solar panels installed on their city halls. The cities hope to collectively save almost \$30,000 a year on electricity.
- ✓ **Cheverly Wind Turbine: A Window into the Not-So-Distant Future (December 2):** The town of Cheverly in Prince George's County, MD began installing a wind turbine at their Public Works facility to generate half of the facility's electric use. Town Administrator David Warrington believes the wind turbine will save \$5,000 to \$15,000 a year. The project was funded with EECBG (Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant) funds.
- ✓ **Greater Washington Board of Trade (BOT) Green Business Certification (January 18):** The BOT is looking to create a green business certification program. A survey of area members will inform on green business sustainability practices and interest in the region, identifying best practices and policies. The Green Committee plans to have a third party certification for the green business program that could become a national model for the US Chamber.
- ✓ **Frederick's First 'Green' Development Breaks Ground on North Bentz Street (January 20):** Nexus Energy Homes broke ground on the model home in a neighborhood of net-zero homes. The model home should be completed by May. The development will feature 54 duplex 3 or 4 bedroom homes ranging from high \$200 to high \$300,000s. Twelve of the homes are earmarked for public housing residents.

- ✓ **City of Frederick Hears Proposal for Cheaper Energy Rates (January 21):** Direct Energy presented to the Board of the City of Frederick, proposing to partner with the city to provide city residents with reduced rates and a civic contribution. Direct Energy would use the deregulated electricity market to offer discounted rates. Residents would still receive one bill from the current electricity provider, with distribution and transmission charges remaining with Allegheny Power. Direct Energy says the company can beat the typical price of electricity by six to eight percent.

Utilities Updates

- ✓ **Dominion Power Rates Going Up As Credits Expire (December 31):** Credits that benefited Dominion Virginia Power customers in 2009 expire at the beginning of 2011. Customers using 1,000 kilowatt-hours per month will see electricity costs increase by about 4.6%, or \$4.50. The surcharges help to recover the cost of building new power plants and improving the transmission system.
- ✓ **Pepco: New Device Reduces Outages to Seconds (January 10):** Pepco says that smart meters will help reduce time without power from hours to minutes by rerouting power in the case of a power outage. Pepco will install meters in all DC locations by the end of 2011, and hopes to have Maryland Public Service Commission approval in time to install meters in all Maryland locations by the end of 2012.
- ✓ **Solar Plant Work Begins in March (January 11):** Dominion Virginia Power announced a partnership with a North Carolina company to build a 1.4 megawatt photovoltaic solar farm to supply electricity to meet the needs of up to 160 homes.
- ✓ **Perdue Going Solar (January 20):** Perdue announced that 11,000 solar panels will power its headquarters and feed mills in the region. The panels will be made by a Rockville, MD company, Standard Solar, and be owned and operated by Washington Gas. Expected annual production would average 3,700 megawatt hours.

Other National and International Updates

- ✓ **Eight Leading Cities and Counties Commit to Prepare for Climate Change Impacts by Participating in Nation's First Adaptation Program (November 17):** ICLEI announced that eight cities and counties will be the first to participate in Climate Resilient Communities™ (CRC), the nation's first comprehensive climate adaptation program for local governments, developed by ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability USA.
- ✓ **Justices to Rule on States' Emissions Case (December 6):** The Supreme Court agreed to hear arguments on whether plaintiffs can turn to the courts to seek reductions in emissions by coal-burning utilities on the ground that the emissions are a "public nuisance." The original suit was filed in 2004 against utilities by eight states, New York City, and three land trusts, alleging that utilities were creating a public nuisance by emitting carbon dioxide into the atmosphere and contributing to global warming.
- ✓ **193 Nations Sign Climate-Change Package (December 12):** In a package known as the Cancun Agreements, the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) encapsulated commitments from both industrialized and developing nations, furthering the work of the Copenhagen Accords. Industrialized nations have promised to cut their emissions by 16 percent over the next decade. [Germany](#) and the UN Environment Programme will fund three climate adaptation projects totaling \$13.2 million. The projects will be in Uganda, Nepal, and Peru and will examine the vulnerability to extreme weather events. See a full summary of the agreements in Cancun from the [Pew Center on Global Climate Change](#).

- ✓ **California Cap and Trade Rules: Sweeping Regulations Set to Be Adopted (December 16):** California's Air Resources Board approved a cap and trade system to provide incentives to polluting companies to emit fewer greenhouse gases. Limits will be enforced beginning in 2012. Over time allowed emissions will decrease and more industries will be regulated.
- ✓ **Cape Wind Completes Permitting Process (January 7):** Cape Wind, an offshore wind energy project, received final approval from EPA, completing its Federal permitting process. The 468 megawatt facility can move forward to secure financing. The facility, the first fully permitted in the US, hopes to create 1,000 jobs.
- ✓ **2010 Ties 2005 as Warmest Year on Record, Researchers Say (January 12):** Scientists at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies announced that 2010 has tied 2005 as the warmest year on record. The agencies reached their conclusions separately. 2010 was also the wettest year on record in terms of global average precipitation.
- ✓ **Bill That Would Circumvent EPA Coal Permits to Be Introduced (January 17):** West Virginia Delegate Gary Howell will introduce a bill that would give the state Department of Environmental Protection the authority to grant permits to coal mines that sell their coal for use only within state borders. Howell and his bill's co-sponsors say that this would give the state power to circumvent EPA's stalling of permit reviews.

Upcoming Workshops and Events

- ✓ **January 25:** Government Operations and the Environment; District of Columbia Committee on Government Operations Roundtable on the sustainable enterprise utility contract; 2:15pm, Wilson Building Room 412
- ✓ **January 26:** Integrated Community Energy Solutions Workshop; COG Board Room; contact [Jeff King](#) for more information.
- ✓ **February 8-10:** [Green Jobs Conference](#); Marriott Wardman Park
- ✓ **February 17** (tentative): ICLEI Greenhouse Gas Inventory Training; COG; contact [Jeff King](#) for more information.
- ✓ **February 24-25:** Federal and State Climate and Energy Policy: Where do we go from here?; Pew Center on Global Climate Change at the Georgetown Climate Center
- ✓ **March 3:** Roadmap for Adapting to Climate Risks Workshop; COG Board Room; contact [Maia Davis](#) for more information
- ✓ **March 14:** Electric Vehicles Infrastructure Workshop; COG Board Room; contact [Leah Boggs](#) for more information.