

CEEPC Monthly Updates – September 2013

*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>

- ✓ **Sept. 29:** [National Plug-In Day](#); Washington, DC.
- ✓ **Oct. 2:** [Great Energy Efficiency Day](#); Washington, DC.
- ✓ **Oct. 15 & 16:** [Maryland Clean Energy Summit—Solving the Distributed Energy Puzzle: Microgrids and Other Smart Solutions](#); Hyattsville, MD.

Climate, Energy, and Environment News

[DOE and Georgetown University to Accelerate Energy Efficiency in Local Communities](#) (Sept 17)

The DOE and Georgetown University signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) agreement today to collaborate on the [Georgetown University Energy Prize](#), a competition to encourage innovative, replicable and scalable approaches to reducing energy use in communities across the United States. Aimed at increasing the number of municipalities, utilities, and individuals working to save energy in their homes and communities, the MOU supports President Obama's Climate Action Plan of pursuing greater energy efficiency that reduces greenhouse gases and saves consumers money.

[Methane emissions from onshore natural gas drilling found lower than estimates](#) (Sept. 16) A new study by the University of Texas at Austin shows that methane emissions from onshore natural gas drilling are much lower than previous estimates, in part because of the effectiveness of techniques required by the Environmental Protection Agency for completing a well and bringing it into production.

[Milestone Claimed in Creating Fuel From Waste](#) (July 31) After months of frustrating delays, a chemical company announced Wednesday that it had produced commercial quantities of ethanol from wood waste and other nonfood vegetative matter, a long-sought goal that, if it can be expanded economically, has major implications for providing vehicle fuel and limiting greenhouse gas emissions.

[August Was A Hot Month for Electric Cars](#) (Sept. 4) U.S. sales of the Nissan 2013 Leaf electric car, the Chevrolet Volt plug-in hybrid and the Toyota 2013 Prius plug-in model hit their highest monthly totals ever last month, reflecting a combination of well-publicized price cuts and a rising tide of demand for all types of vehicles. All together, sales of plug-in cars likely exceeded 10,000 vehicles for the month.

[The Alliance for Green Heat Partners with USDA & Groups to Promote Wood Heat](#) (Sept. 14) John Ackerly, president of the Alliance for Green Heat, on September 11 joined the USDA's Deputy

Secretary Krysta Harden, along with leaders from, the Biomass Power Association, the Biomass Thermal Energy Council, and the Pellet Fuels Institute, in Washington for the announcement of their new partnership agreement. The alliance will jointly promote and expand the woody biomass sector, which will help to improve the safety and health of our nation's forests.

[Delaware Governor Signs Executive Order for Climate Resiliency](#) (Sept. 12) Governor Jack Markell signed an executive order creating a Governor's Committee on Climate and Resiliency to oversee development of an implementation plan to maintain and build upon Delaware's leadership in responsibly reducing greenhouse gas emissions and develop agency-specific actionable recommendations for improving Delaware's preparedness and resiliency to climate impacts.

[New Building Energy Code Would Cut Home Energy Waste 20 Percent](#) (Sept. 10) A revised building energy code, proposed by NRDC, the Institute for Market Transformation, and the Britt/Makela Group--with unprecedented support from 20 of the biggest homebuilders in the country--would significantly improve the energy efficiency of new homes, and make it easier for consumers to factor energy efficiency into a home-buying decision. The code, if adopted, would make newly-built homes 20 percent more energy efficient by 2015—saving consumers anywhere from \$300 to \$850 each year in utility costs--and give homes a numerical score on an energy efficiency index.

State Update

District of Columbia

[Washington DC Wants to Lead the Nation in Energy Efficiency](#) (Aug. 1) As part of Sustainable DC, the city's energy and sustainability office launched Build Smart DC on Thursday to provide transparency and accountability for the municipal building stock, and then make it as energy-efficient as possible. D.C. has set a goal of reducing the energy use in more than half of its 30 million-plus square feet of municipal facilities by 20 percent in twenty months. "We're trying to embrace truly transparent data to create tremendous savings," said Sam Brooks, associate director of the city's Energy & Sustainability office. "Our hope is that it's nothing less than a groundbreaking and transformational initiative."

[Experts Worried Fracking Could Harm D.C. Area's Water Supply](#) (Aug. 30) The U.S. Forest Service is working on a plan for the George Washington National Forest that has some experts concerned for the future safety of D.C.'s drinking water. Last week, the Forest Service pushed back its release of the plan, which was originally set for late August or early September, to late October or early November. Still up in the air is the issue of hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, a process of natural gas extraction. The Forest Service's Ken Landgraf tells the Associated Press that no decision has been made on fracking in the forest, which is located mainly in Virginia and partly in West Virginia.

Maryland

[Frederick County to continue, possibly expand municipal recycling program](#) (Sept. 6) The Board of County Commissioners decided Thursday to continue and possibly expand the county's municipal recycling program. Middletown, Walkersville and Emmitsburg each have the recycling drop-off sites, and under the pilot program, have received county dollars to reimburse them for running the centers.

Commissioners on Thursday unanimously opted to make the recycling incentive program permanent and set aside \$50,000 to fund the current sites and support Brunswick and Thurmont if they join the program.

[University of Maryland, College Park, named nation's 13th 'greenest' university](#) (Aug. 29) The University of Maryland, College Park, has been ranked number 13 out of 162 universities by the Sierra Club in its seventh annual ranking of America's "greenest" universities. The rankings are compiled from scores in all areas of sustainability, including energy consumption, waste management, transportation and other factors, according to a news release from the university.

Virginia

[Dominion Virginia Power Wins Offshore Lease Auction](#) (Sept. 12) The federal Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) announced on Sept. 4, 2013, that Dominion Virginia Power was the "provisional winner" of its online auction for the lease of nearly 113,000 acres offshore Virginia for the potential development of a wind power generation project. It is estimated that a wind farm could produce approximately 2,000 megawatts of power, with the transmission line coming ashore and possibly tying in to Dominion's Landstown Substation in Virginia Beach.

[Arlington Considering Composting Program](#) (Aug. 22) Arlington County is considering whether to add yard and food waste to its curbside recycling pickup. The county is asking residents to complete a survey by Sept. 13 in order to gauge interest in the addition. Arlington's Department of Environmental Services estimates that adding yard and food waste to the recycling program will increase the county's recycling rate from 50.3 to 79.3 percent. About 50 percent of what residents throw away is yard or food waste, DES says.

Congress & Federal Update

[Shaheen-Portman Finally Arrives, Then Stalls](#) (Sept 12) Senators finally took up a major energy bill for the first time in six years yesterday, but within hours partisan squabbling was threatening to kill it. Majority Leader Harry Reid announced last night that he may have to pull the energy-efficiency bill off the floor because of an unrelated dispute with Sen. David Vitter (R-La.) involving Obamacare exchanges.

[EPA Is Expected to Set Limits on Greenhouse Gas Emissions by New Power Plants](#) (Sept. 13) Following up on President Obama's pledge in June to address climate change, the Environmental Protection Agency plans next week to propose the first-ever limits on greenhouse gas emissions from newly built power plants. While details of the E.P.A.'s proposal remain confidential, experts predict that it will include separate standards for carbon dioxide emissions from plants fired by natural gas and by coal. Plants using comparatively clean gas would be permitted to emit perhaps 1,000 pounds of carbon dioxide per megawatt-hour, a ceiling within easy reach using modern technologies.

[U.S. Department of Energy Proposes Two Energy Efficiency Rules](#) (Aug. 29) Today, the Energy Department is taking steps towards achieving this new goal by issuing two proposed rules that could cut energy bills by up to \$28 billion and cut emissions by over 350 million metric tons of CO2 over 30 years. One of these proposed rules would improve energy efficiency standards for commercial

refrigeration equipment, and the other would improve energy efficiency standards for walk-in coolers and freezers.

[Army moves forward with \\$7B renewables plan](#) (Sept. 17) The Army expects to begin putting large-scale renewable energy projects out to bid within the next six months as it aims to get a quarter of its energy from alternative sources by 2025. Earlier this month the Army prequalified 17 wind energy companies, 22 solar technologies contractors, and 5 geothermal firms to vie for renewable power contracts that could be worth a total of \$7 billion.

Research Articles and Reports

[Sustainable Energy in America 2013](#) Factbook (The Business Council for Sustainable Energy & Bloomberg New Energy Finance, September 2013).

[Economic Impacts of the Energy Efficiency Provisions in the Energy Savings & Industrial Competitiveness Act of 2013](#) (ACEEE, September 2013)

[Environmental and Energy Study Institute 2012 Annual Report](#) (EESI, 2013)

[Residential Efficiency Crossroads: Opportunities for the Future](#) (Cadmus Group, August 2013)