

CEEPc Monthly Updates – March 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>

- ✓ **March 20:** [Ford Alternative Fuels Showcase](#); 9:45am-1:30pm; Chantilly, VA
- ✓ **March 21:** [Economic Implications of Energy Policy](#); 12-1:30pm; Natl Economists Club, 618 H St NW
- ✓ **Now through March 28:** [DC Environmental Film Festival](#)
- ✓ **March 28:** [Sustainable DC De-Brief](#); DC Environmental Network, 1100 15th St NW
- ✓ **March 24-26:** [ACEEE National Symposium on Market Transformation](#)
- ✓ **April 8:** [Webinar on NEEP's Regional Energy Efficiency Database](#)

Climate, Energy, and Environment News

[Coca-Cola, Dell, Facebook, Hertz to offer EV charging at work](#) (March 8) Last month, 13 U.S. corporations signed on as charter members to the Department of Energy's Workplace Charging Challenge, which commits them to installing EV charging infrastructure at the workplace.

[US carbon emissions fall to lowest levels since 1994](#) (February 1) Carbon dioxide emissions fell by 13% in the past five years, because of new energy-saving technologies and a doubling in the take-up of renewable energy, according to the report compiled by Bloomberg New Energy Finance (BNEF) for the Business Council for Sustainable Energy (BCSE).

[U.S. energy intensity projected to continue its steady decline through 2040](#) (March 1) In the United States, energy intensity has been declining steadily since the early 1970s and continues to decline in EIA's long-term projection. A country's energy intensity is usually defined as energy consumption per unit of gross domestic product (GDP). Greater efficiency and structural changes in the economy have reduced energy intensity.

[Bipartisan group promotes blueprint for energy, carbon reduction](#) (March 6) Former Sens. Byron Dorgan (D-N.D.) and Trent Lott (R-Miss.), former Marine Corps Gen. Jim Jones and Bill Reilly, a former EPA administrator under George H.W. Bush, will split up to attend 20 lawmaker meetings in the next weeks to tout the Bipartisan Policy Center's energy policy report, which they say is a blueprint for how to build a consensus around energy and carbon-reduction policy in the current Congress.

[Lawmakers nearing agreement on financing for bipartisan legislation](#) (March 7) Sponsors of a marquee energy efficiency bill have decided to jettison a loan guarantee program and are nearing bipartisan agreement on a new mechanism to support efficiency upgrades in buildings, a sponsor said

yesterday. Sen. Jeanne Shaheen (D-N.H.) said the legislation she is co-sponsoring with Sen. Rob Portman (R-Ohio) is on track to be introduced in the next two weeks. The efficiency bill they offered in the previous Congress, [S. 1000](#), garnered broad support in the Senate, but a companion ran into resistance from House Republicans over the loan guarantee program.

State Update

District of Columbia

[D.C. Council bills aim for more aggressive action on environmental concerns](#) (Feb 5) The D.C. Council is preparing to more forcefully challenge federal authorities on environmental and climate change issues, including whether to outlaw the use of coal at the power plant that services the U.S. Capitol.

[Gray: Sustainable DC Plan would make District 'healthiest, greenest and most livable' city](#) (Feb 19) D.C. Mayor Vincent C. Gray is vowing to make the District the nation's "healthiest, greenest and most livable" city within 20 years and is launching dozens of initiatives to curb energy use, reduce traffic and boost access to fresh fruits and vegetables. As part of the newly detailed Sustainable D.C. plan, Gray has identified policies that he hopes will vastly change how residents and visitors experience and travel across the city.

[D.C. Government to Switch to Wind Power for Electricity Needs](#) (March 6) The D.C. government's agencies will be getting all of their electricity through wind power for at least a year, according to a news release from Washington Gas Energy Services. Under the terms of a new contract, the District will purchase all of its power needs from a Washington Gas-owned wind farm in Northern Virginia.

Maryland

[New Maryland Legislation Will Drive Offshore Wind Energy Development](#) (March 11) The Maryland General Assembly has passed a bill to enable at least 200 MW of offshore wind energy in the state. The act is now on its way to the desk of Governor Martin O'Malley, who finally has the opportunity to sign into law legislation he has championed since 2011. . House Bill 226, known as the Maryland Offshore Wind Energy Act of 2013 will create a "carve-out" in the state's existing renewable portfolio standard requiring that a certain percentage of the state's electricity be supplied by offshore wind energy beginning in 2017. The exact percentage will be determined each year by regulators with the state's Public Service Commission and cannot exceed 2.5 percent of total retail electricity sales in the state.

[Maryland regulators order utilities to improve reliability](#) (Feb 27) Maryland regulators ordered power companies such as Pepco to improve their systems to make them more reliable after storms. The PSC ordered utilities to develop plans to harden the distribution system within five years, examine their staffing levels, improve communications and review how to reduce the duration of power outages to "acceptable" levels. The commission ordered them to do cost-benefit analyses to create long-range plans on how best to restore power to 95 percent of their customers within 50 hours after an outage.

[Charles County Opens Renewable Energy Center](#) (March 1) Located at the Crain Memorial Welcome Center in Newburg, the center features several charging stations for electric vehicles and a 12-kilowatt, vertical-axis wind turbine which will provide power to the center, the EV chargers and the

grid. "The Renewable Energy Center is an important component in Charles County Government's green initiatives. It is a step forward in reducing our carbon footprint," said Candice Quinn Kelly, President of the County Board of Commissioners.

[Maryland might become first to enact statewide 5-cent bag charge](#) (March 7) Maryland could become the first state to impose a charge for disposable bags this year if a coalition of environmental, religious and business groups persuades lawmakers that a proposed 5-cent fee would help the environment and not burden low-income residents. Under the Maryland proposal, merchants would be able to keep about a penny per bag, and stores that offer a rebate to customers who bring their own bags could keep 2 cents for each disposable bag sold.

Virginia

[Virginia is top LEED certified state in 2012](#) (Jan 23) When it comes to LEED certified square footage, Virginia is the nation's hotspot. The U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC), home of the LEED green building certification program, announced the top 10 states for LEED certified buildings in 2012 as measured by the amount of LEED certified space per resident. Virginia came in on top with 3.71 square feet of LEED certified space per resident last year.

[Governor signs repeal of renewable energy incentives](#) (Feb 22) Gov. Bob McDonnell signed legislation Thursday repealing certain financial incentives for electric utility companies that use renewable energy sources. The change means utilities, such as Dominion Virginia Power, will no longer be eligible for a bonus for obtaining a certain portion of their energy from renewable sources, such as solar power. Reduced incentives remain for nuclear and offshore wind power. Attorney General Ken Cuccinelli proposed repealing the "adders" after a study showed they were increasing consumers' bills without having the intended environmental impact.

[Companies signal interest in offshore Va. winds](#) (Feb 14) An energy company developing the nation's first offshore wind project is among the growing number of companies expressing interest in the federally designated wind-development area 27 miles off Virginia's coast.

Federal Update

[EPA likely to delay climate rules for new power plants](#) (March 15) The Obama administration is leaning toward revising its landmark proposal to regulate greenhouse gas emissions from new power plants. Rewriting the proposal would significantly delay any action, and might allow the agency to set a separate standard for coal-fired power plants, which are roughly twice as polluting as those fueled by natural gas.

[Moniz's Interest in Energy Efficiency May Favor Electricity Storage](#) (March 9) President Obama nominated MIT physicist Ernest Moniz as Secretary of Energy to replace outgoing Secretary Steven Chu. Dr. Moniz is a supporter of President Obama's "all of the above" approach to energy policy. He is on record as supporting nuclear power, hydraulic fracking and continued research on carbon sequestration. In recent interviews he has gone out of his way to highlight his interest in energy efficiency. "The most important thing is lowering your use of energy in ways that actually save you money. It sounds trivial, but putting out lights really does matter." Dr. Moniz's statement seems to echo the President's call in his State of the Union address to double energy efficiency by 2030.

[Climate change makes government vulnerable](#) (March 4) Climate change poses a serious financial threat to the federal government, according to the Government Accountability Office's biennial "High-Risk Report" covering all federal agencies and programs. The nonpartisan investigative agency released its findings Thursday, noting that "The federal government is not well positioned to address the fiscal exposure presented by climate change, and needs a government wide strategic approach with strong leadership to manage related risks."

[Keystone XL pipeline would have little impact on climate change, State Department analysis says](#) (March 1) The State Department released a draft environmental impact assessment of the controversial Keystone XL pipeline Friday, suggesting that the project would have little impact on climate change. Canada's oil sands will be developed even if President Obama denies a permit to the pipeline connecting the region to Gulf Coast refineries, the analysis said. Such a move also would not alter U.S. oil consumption, the report added.

[GSA Seeks Public Input for Green Building Certification Systems](#) (February 5) The U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) announced that it is seeking additional input from the public regarding the federal government's use of third party green building certification systems. GSA published a notice in the Federal Register seeking public comments for the next 60 days on how the federal government can best use certification systems to measure the design and performance of the federal government's construction and major modernization projects. Every five years, GSA is required to evaluate green building certification systems for the government's use, and this review has been and will continue to be open to an extensive public process.

Research Articles and Reports

[Planting Trees May Not Reverse Climate Change, but It Will Help Locally](#) (Jan 30) Afforestation, planting trees in an area where there have previously been no trees, can reduce the effect of climate change by cooling temperate regions, finds a study in BioMed Central's open access journal *Carbon Balance and Management*. Afforestation would lead to cooler and wetter summers by the end of this century.

[Bipartisan Policy Center's Energy Project Releases New Report](#) (Feb 27) The Bipartisan Policy Center's Energy Board released a wide-ranging report entitled "[America's Energy Resurgence: Sustaining Success, Confronting Challenges](#)." The Energy Board's members span a broad ideological spectrum, and the report aims to identify opportunities for bipartisan consensus at both federal and state levels.

[Draft Climate Assessment Report Released for Public Review](#) A 60-person Federal Advisory Committee (The "National Climate Assessment and Development Advisory Committee" or NCADAC) has overseen the development of this draft climate report. Public Comments are accepted through April 12.

[Utilities Saved Enough Energy in 2011 to Power 9 Million US Homes](#) (March 5) A new report from the Institute of the Edison Foundation, [Summary of Customer-Funded Electric Efficiency Savings, Expenditures, and Budgets](#), shows the impact of energy efficiency programs on the electricity sector.