



Green Power and Market Research News

A free bi-weekly news service from Western's Renewable Resource Program covering green power, renewable energy and market research strategies for educational purposes.

Responsibility for the factual accuracy of each press release rests entirely with the individuals or organizations identified on the release.

Week of January 2, 2012 [Contact us](#) [Subscribe](#) [Previous issues](#)

Green Power

Austin Energy raising fuel charge

Reflects higher costs for generation, utility says

Austin Energy customers will see an increase in their fuel charge on their utility bills for 2012.

The charge will increase from the current 3.10 cents to 3.61 cents per kilowatt-hour of electric use effective with January electric bills. An average residential bill will increase by \$5.10. Customers who subscribe to the Austin Energy green power program are not affected because they pay a green power rate that replaces the Fuel Charge on their electric bill. [Read more](#). *Source: KXAN Austin, 12/28/11*

Green House Data Doubles Its Renewable Energy Purchases for Data Center

Green House Data, a highly energy efficient data center offering cloud hosting and colocation services, increased their green power purchase by over 100% in 2011.

Announced today, Green House Data has increased their purchase of Renewable Energy Credits (RECs) by 100% in 2011. Due to the company's exceptional growth of cloud hosting and colocation services, paired with their voluntary commitment to 100% renewable energy, Green House Data has expanded their green power purchase to 1.8M kWh. This annual electricity purchase is equivalent to avoiding 1,303 tons of

carbon dioxide emissions, or in other words, eliminating the green house gas emissions of approximately 250 cars each year. [Read more](#). *Source: PR.com, 12/18/11*

Poll: Green Power and Data Center Site Selection

Facebook said yesterday that its data center site location policy "now states a preference for access to clean and renewable energy." The announcement ended a long-running feud between the social network and the environmental group Greenpeace, which had targeted Facebook in a social media and PR campaign because the company's two data centers in Oregon and North Carolina each relied upon utility power that originated primarily from coal. [Read more](#). *Source: Data Center Knowledge, 12/16/11*

Visit U.S. DOE EERE [Green Power Network](#) for more information.

Renewable Energy Technologies

Backyard Wind Power

Some homeowners are installing wind turbines in their backyards. These windmills are connected to the grid, and deliver renewable, green energy to the owner's home. MarketWatch's Stacey Delo talks with San Francisco homeowner Robin Wilson about putting in a wind turbine in an urban area. [Watch the video](#). *Source: YouTube, 12/28/11*

Biomass Facility At Savannah River Set To Save DOE Nearly \$1 Billion

A biomass generation plant serving a giant Department of Energy installation has been delivered under the largest Energy Savings Performance Contract to date.

The 20 MW biomass power facility will provide roughly 30% of the 310 square mile Savannah River Site's power needs once it becomes fully operational in 2012. During six weeks of performance tests the biomass facility produced more than 3 million kilowatt hours of power. [Read more](#). *Source: AOL Energy, 12/28/11*

Geothermal Project Could Get the Go Ahead

An experiment with geothermal energy in Central Oregon is closer to approval. Two companies; [Davenport Newberry](#) and [Altarock Energy](#) hope to try an experiment to get some hot water out of a dry hole near the Newberry Volcanic Monument.

Altarock spokesperson Susan Petty says the geothermal drilling is nothing like the controversial "fracking" that gas companies use to extract natural gas. "When you do this kind of project, you're going to make cracks in the ground by putting cold water on

the hot rock, it fractures. And then we extend those fractures by using a combination of pressure and the cold temperature difference between the cold water and the hot rock. And that cracking can generate micro-seismic events."

Petty says if there is any seismic movement from their experiments, it would feel like a large truck driving nearby, and even then it would only affect La Pine and Sunriver. The project is still in its first phase; getting permits from the government to drill some of the holes to inject the cold water, but they expect to be able to drill by 2013. *Source: KBND 1110, 12/28/11*

Long Beach apartments harnessing the power of wind

Apartment community gets wind turbines

Think of a windmill and you're likely to picture a scene from "Oklahoma" or a structure surrounded by tulips in the Netherlands. There are no cattle or flowers near the one on U.S. 90 at Arbor Station Apartment Homees, but there is the essential ingredient: wind.

This one, which is better known as a wind turbine, was installed at noon Wednesday by Robert Harris, owner of Gulf Coast Green Power. He has installed similar turbines in Florida, Alabama and near Terry. The Arbor Station turbine, a Skystream 3.7, is a 2,400-kilowatt system; operating in a 12 mph constant wind, it can produce 400 kilowatt-hours per month, he said. [Read more](#). *Source: Biloxi-Gulfport Sun Herald, 12/28/11*

Eco Wave Power is Riding the Wave to Success

Eco Wave Power has completed the construction and testing phase of its' first sea wave energy generation models the "Wave Clapper" and the "Power Wing."

The testing took place in the wave pool of the Hydro-Mechanical National Institute of Kiev. The "wave pool", 2.5 meters deep, and 18 meters in length, had provided Eco Wave Power with the perfect conditions for testing of the unique wave energy generation technologies under controlled wave heights and wave periods. [Read more](#). *Source: PRWeb, 12/29/11*

Wayne Keith sets a new world wood gas speed record

We hear a lot about "drop-in" fuels these days. While this term typically means an infrastructure-compatible liquid transportation fuel, Wayne Keith has come up with his own version of a "drop-in" fuel: wood, or any other biomass you can deliver in small chunks, that can literally be dropped into the down draft gasifier that powers his pickup. While a retrofit to the vehicle is necessary, Wayne considers this minor and does not worry about other infrastructure-compatibility issues, because he has more wood on his small farm than he knows what to do with. [Read more](#). *Source: Biofuels Digest, 12/28/11*

What's up with Google and biomass power?

Out of all of Google's close to \$1 billion in clean power projects, turning biomass into energy seems like the least relevant technology to Google's core business. But Google has made a few small investments into biofuels and biomass to energy projects including a venture investment into CoolPlanetBiofuels earlier this year, and one I learned about this week: a project that turns waste from hog farms into electricity in North Carolina. [Read more](#). *Source: Gigaom, 12/27/11*

Rooftop turbines put house among the greenest

If Mark Wygant won the lottery, he'd buy a quiet plot of land, maybe six or seven acres, build a modest house for his wife and three children, and cover the rest of the property with windmills and solar panels.

But for now, the Wygant family will have to be content with the two 5-kilowatt wind turbines mounted on the roof of their Camden home.

Even though the project lacks the scale of Wygant's dream, the wind power system he designed and assembled is easily among the most ambitious residential green energy undertakings in Delaware. [Read more](#). *Source: Delaware Online, 12/28/11*

A123 Lands Grid Batteries in Maui and Massachusetts (Updated)

UPDATE: A123 lands 11-megawatt lithium-ion wind power energy storage project on the island of Maui

A123 Systems may be struggling with the automotive battery business, but it's making some strides on grid energy storage, announcing projects this week that illustrate different ways that large-scale lithium-ion batteries can help the power grid.

UPDATE: On Thursday, A123 announced an even bigger project to supply an 11-megawatt energy storage unit to back up a wind farm that Sempra Energy (the parent company of San Diego Gas & Electric) plans to build on the Hawaiian island of Maui. That's a lot of battery-based energy storage, though not as much as the 32 megawatts A123 is supplying to AES Energy Storage to provide frequency regulation and wind power smoothing in West Virginia. [Read more](#). *Source: GreenTechGrid, 12/22/11*

University of Notre Dame Researchers Develop Solar Cell Paint

Someday, adding solar power to your home could be as easy as applying a coat of paint, instead of having to install bulky and expensive solar panels to your roof. University of Notre Dame researchers figured out a way to create an inexpensive, energy generating "solar paint" they call "Sun-Believable." (No really; that's what it's called!) [Read more](#). *Source: PC World, 12/26/11*

Juhl Wind, Inc. Announces Completion, Startup and Acquisition of \$22 Million Valley View Wind Farm

Valley View Becomes the Third Wind Farm Investment Added to its Asset Base

Juhl Wind, Inc., the leader in community wind power, today announced the official commercial operation and its acquisition of the \$22 million Valley View Wind Farm located near the Company's headquarters in Chandler, Minnesota in the southwestern part of the state. The Valley View Project is a 10 MW facility that utilizes 5 Gamesa G87 wind turbines and is providing the clean, renewable energy to Xcel Energy through a long-term, power purchase agreement. The project involves key investment partners to Juhl Wind, including the Geo Investors Fund, as well as the ownership participation of local owners under Juhl's classic community wind structure. [Read more](#). Source: *MarketWatch via PR Newswire, 12/21/11*

Midwest Biomass Energy Demonstration Facility Showcases Renewable Green Energy

By converting biomass waste to energy America can reduce its dependence on costly fossil fuels, support the growth of agriculture, forestry, and rural economies, and create American jobs. Biomass waste includes wood waste, yard clippings, agricultural waste, animal waste, and even municipal solid waste.

According to the United States Department of Energy's Billion-ton Update over 500 million tons of biomass waste is produced in the United States annually and that figure is estimated to expand beyond one billion tons by the year 2022. [Read more](#). Source: *Digital Journal, 12/20/11*

EverPower and OwnEnergy, leaders in wind energy, join forces with Pennsylvania community to build local wind farm

EverPower Wind Holdings, Inc., a subsidiary of Terra Firma, a leading private equity firm, and OwnEnergy, the leader in Community Wind, announced today that they have closed a transaction where EverPower will acquire and construct Patton Wind Farm, LLC. This is a project that OwnEnergy has been developing from inception with its local landowner partner.

The project will be 30 MW and will be fully operational by the end of 2012. An interconnection agreement with PJM has been secured and power will be sold on the merchant market. The Patton project is located in Elder, West Carroll, and East Carroll Townships across approximately 2,700 acres of agriculture land. According to EverPower, the project will provide approximately 100 jobs during construction, and up to 10 full-time jobs required to operate and maintain the project over the next thirty years. [Read more](#). Source: *OwnEnergy, 12/20/11*

Breakthrough could double solar energy output

A new discovery from a chemist at the University of Texas at Austin may allow photovoltaic solar cells to double their efficiency, thus providing loads more electrical power from regular sunlight.

Not only that, but it's way cheap. Chemistry professor Xiaoyang Zhu and his team discovered that an organic plastic semiconductor could double the number of electrons harvested out of one photon of sunlight. Yep, plastic. [Read more](#). *Source: Los Angeles Times Greenspace, 12/16/11*

Residential Solar Costs Decline, Installations Rise, Report Confirms

As we near the end of a tumultuous year for solar PV, the latest report from GTM/SEIA indicates there is more momentum than ever for residential solar. A number of factors—the growth in solar leases, the glut in global panel production, and the complex web of economic incentives—have already made this the strongest year in US history for solar PV installations. Much of the buzz around solar has focused on Solyndra and government loan guarantees, or Solar World and Chinese panel dumping. Despite the likely expiration of the highly successful federal 1603 Treasury grant, which has leveraged over \$22 billion in private capital, there is much to be excited about looking forward for residential solar. [Read more](#). *Source: The Energy Collective, 12/17/11*

Idaho History: Boise had first geothermal heating in U.S.

"Right from Hades" is how the Idaho Statesman described the hot water being pumped from the ground a few hundred yards northwest of the penitentiary in December 1890.

Kelly Hot Springs, on the east side of Table Rock, was owned by Judge Milton Kelly, editor and publisher of the Idaho Statesman; it had been a popular pleasure resort for Boiseans for a generation.

This, however, was the first time that hot water on the west side of Table Rock had been tapped by drilling an artesian well. It would be used for heating homes and businesses, and for use in a big indoor swimming pool. [Read more](#). *Source: Idaho Statesman, 12/18/11*

Buffett's Second First Solar Christmas

Warren Buffett-owned MidAmerican Energy is making a second big solar industry bet by buying a non-controlling, 49 percent stake in a \$1.8 billion, 290-megawatt solar project called Agua Caliente from NRG Energy.

The investment in Agua Caliente, which was first developed by the once high-flying industry leader First Solar is Buffett's second big push into mega-sized solar projects, signaling that the legendary investor is becoming increasingly solar minded. [Read more](#). *Source: TheStreet, 12/16/11*

Learn more about [renewable resources](#).

Outreach, Education, Reports & Studies

Technology and Program Market Data

This Web page includes market data for renewable energy technologies and programs, presented in individual reports for each area. Data includes market penetration; industry trends; cost, price, and performance trends; policy and market drivers; as well as future outlook.

The National Renewable Energy Laboratory led the effort initiated by the Strategic Planning and Analysis group of the Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy (EERE). These 10 technology and program market reports represent each of the renewable energy areas managed by EERE. [Read more](#). *Source: National Renewable Energy Laboratory, 12/28/11*

DOE: Rare-Earth Supplies May Threaten Wind Turbine Production

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) has released the 2011 Critical Materials Strategy - a report that examines the role that rare-earth metals and other key materials play in clean energy technologies such as wind turbines. [Read more](#). *Source: North American Windpower, 12/27/11*

Top 9 predictions for 2012

IDC Energy Insights is one of our sector's top research firms. Each year it issues its top 10 predictions for energy and utilities. I attended this year's webinar and came away with my own version, which I've shared with you below.

I want to emphasize that my version overlaps with IDC's but is not precisely the same. These are my interpretations and reactions to IDC's predictions. In many areas I agree with IDC. In a few others, I feel they may have over- or under-stated the issue. Case in point: I list only nine predictions and they are not all the same as the ones IDC chose to highlight. [Read more](#). *Source: Smart Grid News, 12/26/11*

UWIG Co-Sponsors Distributed Wind/Solar Interconnection Workshop

In partnership with the American Public Power Association, Western Area Power Administration, U.S. Department of Energy Wind and Water Program, and U.S. Department of Energy Solar Energy Technologies Program, UWIG is putting on a Distributed Wind/Solar Interconnection Workshop to be held February 22-24, 2012 at Western's Electric Power Training Center in Golden, Colo. The workshop will prominently feature UWIG's online DG Evaluation Toolbox, which enables engineers to

analyze the impacts of these types of variable generation on utility distribution networks.

Four of the workshop's sessions will be made available for remote participation via webinar. The workshop will also offer tours of Western's Electric Power Training Center and an optional virtual tour of the National Renewable Energy Laboratory Energy Systems Integration Facility. [Read more](#) about the agenda, accommodations, and registration. *Source: UWIG, 12/26/11*

National GHP Market Analysis Seeks Industry Participation

If you are part of the geothermal heat pump (GHP) industry in the United States, the GHPsRUS Project is looking for you.

Do you manufacture or sell GHPs in the United States? Do you install ground loops? Do you design or install the mechanical equipment for GHP systems? Do you supply compressors, air or water coils, cabinets, controls, or other components to geothermal heat pump manufacturers? Are you a dealer, distributor, commercial representative, or supplier for the industry? Do you manufacture or supply pipe, fittings, fusion machines, drill rigs, bits, fluids, grout, flow centers, headers, vaults, antifreeze, etc. for the market? Do you develop GHP system design software? Are you involved with GHP systems in any other way, as a builder or developer, utility or electric cooperative or government official?

If you answered "yes" to any of these questions, and want to promote greater geothermal heat pump market penetration, the GHPsRUS Project needs your active participation. GHP industry members can participate in the GHPsRUS Project by completing project surveys, sharing borehole data, commenting on the final report, contributing industry expertise, and spreading the word.

For details on how you can participate in this first-ever nationwide GHP market survey and cost-benefit analysis, visit the [GHPsRUS Project](#). *Source: Geothermal Heat Pumps are U.S., 12/21/11*

EESI releases fall briefings

This fall, the Environmental and Energy Study Institute (EESI) brought information to Congress through several briefings on the economic impacts of energy efficiency investments, heating with biomass thermal energy, and Canada-U.S. hydropower partnerships. In addition, EESI published three fact sheets on shale gas and oil, and produced an issue brief on the many uses and benefits of solar thermal energy.

[Read the content](#) from our recent briefings and publications. *Source: Environmental and Energy Study Institute, 12/22/11*

DOE Highlights Report on Successful Strategies for Renewable Energy Grid Integration

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) today announced the release of a DOE-funded report to help better integrate wind energy into the electrical grid. The report, entitled *Strategies and Decision Support Systems for Integrating Variable Energy Resources in Control Centers for Reliable Grid Operations: Global Best Practices, Examples of Excellence and Lessons Learned* [http://www.eere.energy.gov/wind/pdfs/doe_wind_integration_report.pdf], provides first-hand perspectives on the effects of variable energy sources, including wind power plants on grid operations. It also supplies grid operators with practical tools and information to help them tackle the challenge of integrating more renewable energy resources into the nation's power grid.

Wind energy production has increased worldwide in the past two decades, growing from roughly 2 gigawatts in 1990 to almost 200 gigawatts in 2010—enough to serve about 50 million U.S. homes. Accelerating the use of renewables will help reduce our reliance on fossil fuels and support job creation. But for systems operators, integrating large proportions of variable energy sources like wind power—which can vary with weather and season—into electricity grids presents some technical challenges. [Read more](#).
Source: U.S. Department of Energy, 12/19/11

AWEA webinars focus on utility issues

For the latest information on topics that the American Wind Energy Association's Utility Working Group has identified as the most pressing and critical issues for electric utilities, access these ["on demand" webinars](#). *Source: American Wind Energy Association, 12/21/11*

US-China Quarterly Market Review Highlights New Opportunities for Investors and Developers in China and the U.S.

The US-China Program (USCP) of the American Council On Renewable Energy (ACORE) and the Chinese Renewable Energy Industries Association (CREIA) are pleased to announce the release of the Fall 2011 edition of the US-China Quarterly Market Review (QMR). The Fall 2011 QMR provides analysis on the renewable energy market, finance and policy developments in Q3, 2011 as seen in both the U.S. and China. [Read more](#).
Source: American Council on Renewable Energy, 12/21/11

Learn more about [education and outreach activities](#).

News from Washington

Congress Commits \$59 Million to Hydropower Research and Development Social Media Tools Share

A bill that would significantly increase hydropower spending in the 2012 Fiscal Year has gained congressional and presidential approval.

The bill, which combines nine spending bills and has gained bipartisan support, provides US\$59 million for the Department of Energy's Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy (EERE) Water Power Research and Development Program. Of that, \$25 million would be earmarked for marine and hydrokinetic research, development and demonstration; \$25 million would go to conventional hydropower; and the remainder would be used to develop infrastructure projects. [Read more](#). *Source: Power Engineering, 12/28/11*

Interior Dept. approves solar, wind farms in West; pushes offshore wind in Atlantic Ocean

The Obama administration moved Tuesday to boost renewable energy on both coasts, approving onshore solar and wind farms in the West and pushing for offshore wind power in the Atlantic Ocean.

Interior Secretary Ken Salazar said his department has approved a 300-megawatt solar farm on public land in Arizona and a 200-megawatt wind farm in Southern California. The wind farm includes 186 megawatts that would be produced on Federal lands. [Read more](#). *Source: Washington Post, 12/20/11*

Wind Energy, Solar Power Industries in Limbo as Congress Set to Adjourn

America's first offshore wind farm is shelved, and sales of electric vehicles are missing targets. America's wind power and solar energy industries are stuck in limbo, waiting anxiously if Congress will extend subsidies.

America's wind power and solar energy industries are stuck in limbo, waiting anxiously to hear if Congress will extend a pair of key subsidies. But Washington, which is beginning to empty out for the holidays, is almost certain not to ease their worries soon. [Read more](#). *Source: REVE, 12/19/11*

Learn more about [national activities](#).

State Activities, Marketing & Market Research

Caney River Wind Farm Project Operational in Kansas (US)

By using wind energy for power generation, Enel Green Power has helped in bringing down the emission of CO2 into the atmosphere significantly.

200 MW Kansas wind farm begins operations. Enel Green Power North America Inc has announced that its Caney River wind power plant, located in Caney River, Kan., has entered operation with 111 wind turbines.

Enel's 200 MW Kansas Wind Farm Now Operational. Enel Green Power has announced that its Caney River wind energy farm, located in Caney River, Kan., has entered operation. The new wind power facility consists in 111 V-90 1.8 MW wind turbines.

[Read more.](#) Source: REVE, 12/29/11

Sempra's Mesquite Solar Plant Begins Producing Power in Arizona

Sempra Energy (SRE), California's third- largest utility, began producing power at a 150-megawatt solar project in Arizona that received a \$337 million U.S. Energy Department loan guarantee three months ago.

Workers at the Mesquite Solar 1 project connected 42 megawatts of Suntech Power Holdings Co. (STP) panels to the power grid, San Diego-based Sempra said today in a statement. [Read more.](#) Source: Bloomberg, 12/27/11

Gov. Mead pushes to reduce tax on wind energy projects despite lawmakers' opposition

Gov. Matt Mead said he won't stop pushing for change in how Wyoming taxes wind energy projects despite a chilly reception to his proposals from some state legislators.

Wyoming next month will begin imposing a \$1 per megawatt hour tax on wind energy production. The state sales and use tax exemption on equipment used on wind energy projects also expires in January. [Read more.](#) Source: The Columbus Republic, 12/27/11

For taller wind turbines, generating power is a breeze

The breezes are blowing stronger for the wind-power industry these days — so much so that the National Renewable Energy Laboratory in Golden had to redo its wind maps in Colorado and in states across the country.

The reason isn't meteorological, it's technological as wind-turbine towers get taller and blades get longer.

"The original maps were for 50-meter towers, but the industry standard is now 80 meters," said Dennis Elliot, a principal scientist at NREL. [Read more](#). *Source: The Denver Post, 12/25/11*

Crowder College in Missouri building renewable energy center

A new \$7 million-plus renewable energy center at Crowder College in southwestern Missouri is nearing completion.

The Joplin Globe reports that the Missouri Alternative Renewable Energy Technology Center is expected to be the only one of its kind on a college campus in the country.

Final touches on the 27,000-square-foot MARET Center are under way. Once the center is up and running sometime during the upcoming spring semester, the only similar center in the U.S. will be the U.S. Department of Energy's Renewable Energy Lab in Golden, Colo., said Russell Hopper, executive director. [Read more](#). *Source: St. Louis Today, 12/26/11*

Eastern Interconnection Planning Collaborative Wraps Up First Phase Of Transmission Study

The Eastern Interconnection Planning Collaborative (EIPC) has completed the first phase of a study of "resource expansion futures" as part of an electric system transmission planning effort funded by the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE).

"The EIPC has reached a major milestone in completing the macroeconomic analyses of stakeholder-defined resource futures in Phase 1 of the project and in finalizing a comprehensive report on this work," says Stephen G. Whitley, president and CEO of the New York Independent System Operator and chairman of the EIPC executive committee. [Read more](#). *Source: Renew Grid, 12/23/11*

China's first wind-solar power storage demonstration project comes on stream

China's first integrated wind-solar power demonstration project has been completed and put into operation on December 25 in Zhangbei county of north China's Hebei province, according to a source at North China Grid Co., Ltd, constructor of the project.

The project is the largest new energy project in the world that integrates wind power generation, solar PV power generation, power storage and intelligent power transmission, said Zhao Yuzhu, deputy general manager of North China Grid. [Read more](#). *Source: ElectroIQ, 12/26/11*

Calif. Takes Big Step Toward Greenhouse Gas Limits

First of a two-part series on California's climate policies

California is about to try a radical experiment. A little over a year from now, the state will limit the greenhouse gas emissions from factories and power plants, and, eventually, emissions from vehicles.

The U.S. Congress tried to pass a similar plan for the whole country but dropped the idea last year.

Paying a price for emissions has many Californians worried about what they'll have to pay for electricity and fuel and everything that takes energy to make. But the state's argument is that this will be good for the economy. [Read more](#). *Source: National Public Radio, 12/6/11*

Governor Brown Highlights Clean Energy Manufacturing Jobs in San Diego

Gov. Edmund G. "Jerry" Brown Jr., D-Calif., issued the following news release:

Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr. today joined business leaders and elected officials for the dedication of Soitec's North American headquarters in San Diego.

Soitec's San Diego headquarters will produce concentrator photovoltaic (CPV) modules for the U.S. renewable-energy market and employ 450 people, while supporting an additional 1,000 indirect jobs in the region.

"I'm glad to be here for the dedication of Soitec's manufacturing plant," said Governor Brown. "The expansion of clean energy businesses is a direct result of a law I signed that requires one third of our electricity to come from renewable sources by 2020. That's a goal and we're going to meet it." [Read more](#). *Source: ElectroIQ, 12/15/11*

Offshore Wind Debate Set to Continue

Lawmakers will resume talks about building up to 200 wind turbines off the coast of Ocean City.

Maryland lawmakers are preparing to resume debate on one of Gov. Martin O'Malley's major green initiatives, an offshore wind energy bill that stalled during the last legislative session amid concerns about the cost to utility companies and their customers.

The bill would have subsidized the construction of between 80 and 200 wind turbines 12 miles off the coast of Ocean City by obligating the state's four investor-owned utilities—Baltimore Gas and Electric Co., Allegheny Power, Delmarva Power and Pepco—to buy offshore wind energy for 25 years. [Read more](#). *Source: Reisterstown Patch, 12/18/11*

Utilities in Power Squeeze as States Tie Mergers to Clean Energy

The surging pace of power-industry consolidation, with more than \$31 billion in transactions pending in the U.S., is giving state officials such as Maryland Governor Martin O'Malley leverage to wrest more clean-energy investments from merging companies.

Exelon Corp. (EXC) said yesterday it will invest \$1 billion in Maryland, almost doubling its previous offer, to gain O'Malley's support for the company's \$8.05 billion takeover of Baltimore-based Constellation Energy Group Inc. (CEG) Chicago-based Exelon agreed to develop as much as 180 megawatts of new electric generation from wind, solar and poultry litter, more than seven times its initial pledge of a 25-megawatt project. [Read more](#). *Source: Bloomberg, 12/16/11*

Analysis: China's renewable energy industry to move from scale expansion to quality promotion in 2011-15

China will work to build a competitive industrial system for renewable energy and aims to develop non-fossil energy including wind power, solar power, biomass energy, solar energy thermal and nuclear power equivalent to 480 million metric tons (tonnes) of standard coal by the end of 2015, according to the national plan for the renewable energy industry development in 2011-15 period released by the National Energy Administration on Thursday. [Read more](#). *Source: ElectroIQ, 12/17/11*

Wisconsin court accepts wind farm challenge

The state Supreme Court has agreed to decide whether Wisconsin regulators properly approved a huge wind farm in southern Minnesota.

Regulators in Wisconsin and Minnesota gave Wisconsin Power & Light permission in 2009 to build the \$450 million farm just north of Albert Lea.

Two Wisconsin groups representing energy consumers contend the Wisconsin Public Service Commission should have applied stiffer approval criteria to the project. The commission has countered that such standards don't apply to out-of-state facilities.

The 4th District Court of Appeals asked the Supreme Court to take the case directly. Online court records indicate the high court has accepted the case, with the first briefs due in mid-January. *Source: Bloomberg Business Week, 12/15/11*

Report: Biomass tax credit created \$12M in economic activity

An Oregon Department of Energy-run biomass tax credit program that started in 2010 created some \$12 million of economic activity in Oregon in its first year, according to an analysis from University of Oregon.

The effects of the tax credits, which are given to biomass collectors and producers, included stabilization of wood-based fuel prices and the creation of direct and indirect jobs.

According to the report, the biomass tax credit created "an average of about five jobs, nearly \$250,000 in wages and benefits, and over \$850,000 in total economic activity per 10,000 (bone-dry ton)." [Read more](#). *Source: Sustainable Business Oregon, 12/18/11*

Independent Transmission Company Becomes Newest Member of California ISO Grid

The California Independent System Operator Corporation (ISO) Board of Governors gave approval yesterday, December 15, 2011, for Citizens Sunrise Transmission, LLC to become an ISO participating transmission owner. Citizens Sunrise is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Citizens Energy Corporation, a Boston, Massachusetts based non-profit energy company founded in 1979 by Joseph P. Kennedy II. [Read more](#). *Source: MarketWatch via Business Wire, 12/16/11*

Learn more about [energy analysis](#).

Grants, RFPs & Other Funding News

PIER program solicits research on energy, environmental issues

The Public Interest Energy Research (PIER) Program's Environmental Research Group has released a [Public Opportunity Notice \(PON\)](#) for private entities. This solicitation will cover multiple environmental-related issues involving the energy system. An archived workshop gives an overview of the PON, answers questions related to the PON and provides a venue for potential applicants to collaborate.

The PON is soliciting research on the following topics:

- Removing environmental barriers to the timely permitting and deployment of clean energy facilities
- Improving water conserving cooling technology performance in power plants
- Control options to reduce fugitive methane emissions from the California natural gas system
- Carbon Dioxide utilization technologies

Proposals are due Jan. 31, 2012, by 3 p.m. PST. The PIER program is administered by the [California Energy Commission](#). *Source: Public Renewables Partnership, 12/29/11*

USDA 2012 Hazardous Fuels Woody Biomass Utilization Grant – \$3 million

Applications due: March 1, 2012

Eligible entities: State and local governments, Federally-recognized tribes, businesses, companies, corporations, school districts, communities, nonprofit organizations and special purpose districts

The U.S. Forest Service requests proposals for wood energy projects that require engineering services. These projects will use woody biomass, such as material removed from forest restoration activities, wildfire hazardous fuel treatments, insect and disease mitigation, and/or forest management due to catastrophic weather events. The woody biomass shall be used in a bioenergy facility that uses commercially proven technologies to produce thermal, electrical, or liquid/gaseous bioenergy. The funds from grant program must be used to further the planning of such facilities by funding the engineering services necessary for final design and cost analysis.

For more information, contact [Susan LeVan-Green](#), program manager; 608-231-9518 or visit [Grants.gov](#). *Source: U.S. Forest Service, 11/21/11*

SMUD seeks solar power offers

The Sacramento Municipal Utility District (SMUD) is soliciting statements of interest to develop an approximately 1.5 megawatt (MW) community-scale solar project, to be called Simply Solar, as part of its Community Renewable Energy Deployment program. The project would replace the Solar Highways project which was cancelled because it was deemed not economically feasible. [Read more](#). *Source: Sacramento Municipal Utility District, 12/16/11*

Learn more about [funding solicitations](#).

This news item comes to you as a service of Western's [Renewable Resources Program](#).