



ML Strategies Update

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Energy & Environment Update

ENERGY AND CLIMATE DEBATE

The House and Senate have a full schedule between now and Memorial Day that includes cybersecurity legislation, nominations, and bicameral budget nominations, as well as the Highway Trust Fund, trade promotion authority, immigration, tax bills, Iran sanctions, education policy overhaul, human trafficking, and appropriations. Committees in both chambers have several energy and environment hearings on the docket, including energy and water fiscal year 2016 appropriations, the America COMPETES Reauthorization Act, nuclear power, and broad energy legislation.

The House will consider April 22 a number of pieces of legislation on its suspension calendar, including the Energy Efficiency Improvement Act of 2015 (S. 535). The Senate approved the mini energy efficiency measure from Senators Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH) and Rob Portman (R-OH) in March.

House and Senate energy leadership are developing broad energy legislation, with the first in a series of hearings scheduled on the measures for this week. The House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Energy and Power will hold a hearing April 23 to review the 21st Century Workforce Title of what committee leadership hopes will become a broad, bipartisan energy, trade, manufacturing, and efficiency bill. The title directs the Secretary of Energy establish a comprehensive program to improve education and training for energy and manufacturing related jobs. Other parts of the House bill, which the committee plans to bring to the floor later this year, include infrastructure, energy diplomacy, and energy efficiency. In the meantime, the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee will hold a hearing April 30 on energy efficiency legislation, including the Weatherization Enhancement and Local Energy Efficiency Investment and Accountability Act (S. 703); the Energy Savings and Industrial Competitiveness Act of 2015 (S. 720), the long-awaited measure from Senators Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH) and Rob Portman (R-OH); and the Energy Savings Through Public-Private Partnerships Act of 2015 (S. 858). The Senate passed by voice vote a much smaller version of energy efficiency legislation (S. 545) in March.

Senator Rob Portman's (R-OH) office said April 14 that highway funding and tax reform could move in tandem. Senator Portman co-chairs the Finance Committee's international tax working group with Senator Chuck Schumer (D-NY). The committee has given itself until the end of May to identify a highway funding mechanism; authorization for federal highway and mass transit programs expires at the end of that month. In the meantime, the tax reform working groups plan to convene in the first half of May to present the groups' agreements, with a final report submitted to Committee Chair Orrin Hatch (R-UT) and Ranking Member Ron Wyden (D-OR) by May 25. If comprehensive tax reform does not happen this year, highway funding negotiations will need to be resolved before addressing tax extenders, which is likely to be an end of the year exercise.

CONGRESS

Energy and Water Approps

House Republicans unveiled April 14 draft fiscal year 2016 energy and water [appropriations legislation](#) that would provide \$35.4 billion for energy and water programs, \$1.2 billion above the fiscal year 2015 enacted level and \$633 million below President Obama's request. The package would provide \$28.9 billion for Department of Energy programs, including Yucca Mountain, but limiting or excluding funding for numerous renewable energy and climate programs in President Obama's budget request. The bill would reduce the Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy's budget by \$266 million, would fund most of the agency's clean energy research and development, at \$1.7 billion, would fund the Office of Fossil Energy Research and Development at \$605 million, a \$34 million increase over enacted levels, and \$936 million for nuclear energy research and development, a \$24 million increase over enacted levels. The House Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development marked up and approved the measure April 15, the full committee will mark it up beginning April 22, and floor consideration is expected by the end of the month.

Ratepayer Protection Act

During a House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Energy and Power hearing April 14, Environmental Protection Agency Acting Assistant Administrator for Air and Radiation Janet McCabe [said](#) that Representative Ed Whitfield's (R-KY) draft Ratepayer Protection [Act](#), which would allow states to avoid complying with the Environmental Protection Agency's Clean Power Plan, would be an "unprecedented interference" in the agency's work. She called the draft legislation premature since the agency has not yet finalized the existing power plant standards. The legislation allows states to opt out of the rule if it would increase their utility rates or jeopardize reliability and allows states to postpone submitting their compliance plans until after all legal challenges to the proposed rules are exhausted. House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Energy and Power Chair Ed Whitfield (R-KY) said the same day that the subcommittee will mark up the measure this week, and he anticipates that the full committee will approve the legislation before the agency finalizes the rules this summer.

CPP State Support Letter

Senators Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI), Elizabeth Warren (D-MA), Bernie Sanders (I-VT), Al Franken (D-MN), and Barbara Boxer (D-CA) sent a [letter](#) April 14 to the National Governors Association urging states to reject calls from Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) to ignore the Environmental Protection Agency's Clean Power Plan. Kentucky is already crafting its compliance plan, and states that fail to do so will face a forthcoming federal implementation plan. In the meantime, Senator Shelley Moore Capito (R-WV) said April 16 that she is working on legislation in response to the agency's proposed rule, but she offered no time frame for introducing a bill.

Crude Export Ban Hearing

During a House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Terrorism, Nonproliferation, and Trade hearing April 14, Oil Change International Executive Director Stephen Kretzmann testified that lifting the 40-year ban on the export of crude oil would exacerbate climate change, potentially increase domestic greenhouse gas emissions, and possibly double the number of trains transporting crude by rail. The hearing was scheduled to consider Representative Joe Barton's (R-TX) legislation (H.R. 702) to repeal the ban and prohibit the federal government from imposing or enforcing any similar restriction.

U.S. GHG Pledge Skepticism

Appearing before the House Science, Space, and Technology Committee April 15, U.S. Chamber of Commerce Institute for 21st Century Energy head Karen Harbert and Georgia Institute of Technology's School of Earth and Atmospheric Science Professor Judith Curry expressed skepticism that the United States can meet its commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions up to 28 percent by 2025. Natural Resources Defense Council International Program Director Jake Schmidt argued, however, that Obama Administration actions, including power plant standards and increased vehicle and appliance efficiency standards, are putting the country on a path to meet the 26-28 percent reduction level.

NRC Budget

During a Senate Environment and Public Works Committee hearing April 15, Committee Chair James Inhofe (R-OK) criticized the Nuclear Regulatory Commission and its fiscal year 2016 budget request, saying that it is too large. Nuclear Regulatory Commission Chair Stephen Burns defended the request, pointing out that, at \$1.032 billion, it is smaller than the fiscal year 2015 available \$1.049 billion funding.

Water Heater Energy Bill

The House Energy and Commerce Committee approved April 15 legislation (H.R. 906) to exempt grid-enabled water heaters from Department of Energy efficiency standards. The agency standards went into effect April 16, but efficiency advocates and water heater manufacturers both oppose them because some water heaters that will not

be able to meet the standards are necessary for utility demand response programs. Energy and Power Subcommittee Chair Ed Whitfield (R-KY) said after the voice vote that the House would fast track the measure. The Senate passed a similar measure as part of an energy efficiency package (S. 535) in March.

Coal Ash Legislation

The House Energy and Commerce Committee approved [legislation](#) (Coal Combustion Residuals Regulation Act, H.R. 1734) April 15 that would give states more flexibility over how to regulate coal ash and would permanently prohibit the Environmental Protection Agency from regulating the material as a hazardous waste. The full House is likely to vote on the measure before the August recess.

RE Growth Underestimated

During an April 16 Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee hearing on the Energy Information Administration's Annual Energy Outlook, Committee Ranking Member Maria Cantwell (D-WA) said that the agency has been underestimating renewable energy's contributions. Environmental groups and renewable energy supporters have long said that the agency's renewable energy assumptions lag behind real world data.

EPA Communications Sought

Senate Environment and Public Works Committee Chair James Inhofe (R-OK) sent a [letter](#) April 16 asking the Environmental Protection Agency to release by May 11 all communications between the agency and clean energy and environmental groups on the Clean Power Plan, as well as details about which contractors it has hired to work on the rules.

EE Legislation

The House will vote April 21 to pass a mini energy efficiency package (S. 535) from Senators Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH) and Rob Portman (R-OH) that the upper chamber approved in March.

Legislation Introduced

Representative Adrian Smith (R-NE) introduced legislation (H.R. 1736) April 13 to amend the Clean Air act with respect to the ethanol waiver for the Reid vapor pressure limitations under the act.

Senator Orrin Hatch (R-UT) introduced legislation (S. 913) April 14 to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide an investment tax credit for waste heat to power technology.

Senator Orrin Hatch (R-UT) introduced legislation (S. 919) April 14 to exclude from gross income certain clean coal power grants to non-corporate taxpayers.

Senators Jeff Flake (R-AZ) and Mike Crapo (R-ID) introduced legislation (S. 934) April 14 to amend the renewable fuel program under section 211(o) of the Clean Air Act to require the cellulosic biofuel requirement to be based on actual production.

Senator Barbara Boxer (D-CA) introduced legislation (S. 944) April 15 to amend the Atomic Energy Act of 1954 to prohibit certain waivers and exemptions from emergency preparedness and response security regulations.

Senator Ed Markey (D-MA) introduced legislation (S. 945) April 15 to amend the Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1982 to provide for the expansion of emergency planning zones and the development of plans for dry cask storage of spent nuclear fuel.

Senator Bernie Sanders (I-VT) introduced legislation (S. 964) April 15 to amend the Atomic Energy act of 1954 to provide for consultation with state and local governments, the consideration of state and local concerns, and the approval of post-shutdown decommissioning activities reports by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Representative Jim McDermott (D-WA) introduced legislation (H.R. 1804) April 15 to protect the public, communities across America, and the environment by increasing the safety of crude oil transportation by railroad.

Representative Raúl Grijalva (D-AZ) introduced legislation (H.R. 1814) April 15 to permanently reauthorize the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

Representative Ben Ray Lujan (D-NM) introduced legislation (H.R. 1820) April 15 to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to retire coal preference right lease applications for which the Secretary has made an affirmative commercial quantities determination.

Representative Lamar Smith (R-TX) introduced legislation April 15 to reauthorize the National Science Foundation.

The America COMPETES Reauthorization Act would increase foundation funding by more than four percent, and by more than five percent across the Energy Department's Science office, using \$715 million in Department of Energy Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy funding. The measure would block climate activities in the agency's Office of Science until it can first be determined that the work is not duplicated by other federal agencies. The House Science Committee will mark up the legislation April 22.

Representative Scott Rigell (R-VA) introduced legislation (H.R. 1840) April 16 to require the Secretary of the Interior to conduct offshore oil and gas Lease Sale 220 as soon as practicable.

Upcoming Hearings

The Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee will hold a hearing April 22 on the reauthorization of and potential reforms to the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

The House Appropriations Committee will markup April 22 the fiscal year 2016 energy and water appropriations measure.

The House Science Committee will markup April 22 the America COMPETES Reauthorization Act.

The House Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development will hold a hearing April 22 on the United States without nuclear power.

The House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Energy and Power will hold a hearing April 23 to review the 21st Century Workforce Title of what committee leadership hopes will become a broad, bipartisan energy, trade, manufacturing, and efficiency bill. The title directs the Secretary of Energy establish a comprehensive program to improve education and training for energy and manufacturing related jobs, and contains titles on infrastructure, energy diplomacy, and efficiency.

The Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee will hold a hearing April 28 on the Department of Energy's Quadrennial Energy Review. Energy Secretary Ernest Moniz will testify.

The Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee will hold a hearing April 30 on energy efficiency legislation, including the Weatherization Enhancement and Local Energy Efficiency Investment and Accountability Act (S. 703), the Energy Savings and Industrial Competitiveness Act of 2015 (S. 720), and the Energy Savings Through Public-Private Partnerships Act of 2015 (S. 858).

The Senate Energy and Natural Resources Subcommittee on Public Lands, Forests, and Mining will hold a hearing April 30 to receive testimony on the Bureau of Land Management's final fracking rule.

ADMINISTRATION

SEC Climate Change Risks

60 institutional investors representing almost \$2 trillion in assets sent a [letter](#) April 17 to the Securities and Exchange Commission asking the commission to require oil and gas companies to disclose the risks climate change could have on their business. The commission issued guidance in 2010 asking publicly traded companies to report on material climate risks and opportunities in regular financial filings, but they have not enforced the reporting. The New York State and New York City comptrollers, who manage more than \$330 billion public pension funds, sent a similar [letter](#) the same day. World Resources Institute Senior Adviser Paul Bodnar, a former White House National Security Council climate director, said April 15 that climate change financial regulation is one area where the U.S. government needs to do more.

QER Release

Vice President Joe Biden and Energy Secretary Ernest Moniz will visit Philadelphia April 21, where the vice president will deliver remarks about energy at the PECO building in City Center and unveil the first Quadrennial Energy Review.

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

Energy Incentive Programs

The Department of Energy Office of Inspector General released a report April 13 finding that the majority of seven sites reviewed within the agency are taking advantage of its energy incentive funding programs, but that two are not fully using them. The 2005 energy law requires agencies to take full advantage of the programs, which are designed to offset energy costs and are offered for new, energy efficient construction and energy conservation at existing buildings.

Wildlife Wind Plant Protection

The Department of Energy [announced](#) April 14 more than \$1.75 million for five projects to develop and demonstrate technologies to reduce the potential impacts of wind farms on sensitive bat species. The funding supports projects that focus on innovative early-stage technology development and technology demonstration and validation by testing the effectiveness of existing near-commercial technologies at operational wind facilities.

Annual Energy Outlook

The Energy Information Administration released its Annual Energy Outlook April 14 in which it projected that domestic energy imports and exports will come into balance by 2028 due to the growth of crude oil and natural gas and will reduce energy demand. In the case of higher American crude oil and dry natural gas production and lower imports, the United States will become a net exporter of energy in 2019, but in a scenario with low oil prices, the U.S. will remain a net energy importer through 2040. The report also found that the country will become a net natural gas exporter by 2017, and predicted that the U.S. will become a net petroleum exporter after 2020.

EIA CPP Report Forthcoming

Energy Information Administration Administrator Adam Sieminski told a Center for Strategic and International Studies event April 14 that the agency would issue a report on the Environmental Protection Agency's Clean Power Plan in May.

HI Rooftop Solar

The Energy Information Administration announced last week that rooftop solar systems top about 12 percent of Hawaii's homes, the highest proportion in the country. For almost two years, the Hawaiian Electric Company prevented thousands of customers from securing rooftop systems, saying that its system could not absorb any more unused energy from home solar arrays. Under strict orders from state energy officials, and following a study run by SolarCity, the utility, and the U.S. National Renewable Energy Laboratory that measured how much solar the grid could handle, the utility rushed over the past month to approve a lengthy backlog of solar applications.

DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR

Offshore Well Standards

The Department of Interior's Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement proposed April 13 long-awaited [rules](#) to strengthen safeguards for offshore wells. The rules incorporate seven oil industry standards, including guidelines for blowout preventers, and seeks comment on whether drillers should have to install technology that shears all elements of a drill string in an emergency. The proposed rules are set to become final later this year after a 60-day comment period.

Onshore Land Leasing

The Department of Interior's Bureau of Land Management [released](#) April 17 a advance notice of proposed rulemaking on whether the rates, rents, penalties, bids, and bonding for oil and gas leases on federal lands should be raised and is seeking public comment. The proposed changes would apply to royalties on competitively issued leases, with rates on non-competitive leases fixed at 12.5 percent.

DEPARTMENT OF TREASURY

Energy Credit Factors Released

The Internal Revenue Service released April 15 the inflation adjustment factor and reference prices to determine the availability of Section 45 tax credits for renewable electricity production and refined coal production.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

RCRA Exclusions Deleted

The Environmental Protection Agency [deleted](#) April 8 two hazardous waste exclusions vacated by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit in June 2014 from the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act. The final rule, effective immediately, removes the 1998 comparable fuels exclusion and the 2008 gasification exclusion. The court ruled that the agency lacked statutory discretion to exempt the fuel products from hazardous waste regulations and that they violated the unambiguous language of the waste statute.

Tailoring Rule

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit partially vacated and remanded April 10 the tailoring rule to the Environmental Protection Agency, implementing a 2014 Supreme Court decision. The agency will need

to set a de minimis level for GHG permitting, which is likely to occur through a public notice and comment period.

Solid Waste Rule Challenged

Environmental and industry groups, as well as Freeport-McMoRan Inc., filed suits April 13 in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit challenging the Environmental Protection Agency's final definition of solid waste rule under the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act.

Upwind Pollution

During a public hearing April 14, state regulators from Maryland, New Jersey, and Connecticut said that the Environmental Protection Agency needs to do more to curb ozone emissions that pollute the air in neighboring states, like Pennsylvania. The New Jersey Clean Air Council will submit recommendations to state regulators this summer, and the Environmental Protection Agency will release, also this summer, new modeling on transport. The upcoming October standards will be harder for states to meet if neighboring states do not reduce emissions.

CPP ETS

Speaking at a Center for Climate and Energy Solutions event April 15, state environmental regulators from Colorado, Rhode Island, and Virginia said that the tight deadlines for states to submit compliance plans and meet interim GHG reduction targets under the Environmental Protection Agency's proposed Clean Power Plan make it difficult for states to use interstate emissions trading programs to comply with the rule. Under the proposed rule, states are required to submit implementation plans by next summer and comply with interim goals in 2020 and final emissions targets in 2030. The agency has indicated that it will make one-year extensions available for individual plans and two-year extensions available for multistate compliance plans. The agency is expected to finalize the rule this summer, and the agency is considering loosening these initial target timeframes in the final rule.

GHG Inventory

The Environmental Protection Agency released its 20th annual [greenhouse gas inventory](#) April 15, finding that the oil and gas industry's CO₂ and CH₄ emissions rose nine and three percent, respectively, from 2012 to 2013. Total 2013 domestic emissions were 6,673 MMT CO₂e, two percent greater than 2012, but nine percent less than 2005 levels. Power plants provided 31 percent of the emissions, the transportation sector contributed 27 percent, and industry and manufacturing accounted for 21 percent of domestic emissions.

EJ 2020

The Environmental Protection Agency released April 15 its draft Environmental Justice 2020 [framework](#). The framework is intended to facilitate the integration of environmental justice into agency processes, programs, and actions, and includes building tools, developing guidance, and more.

CPP Litigation

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit heard oral arguments April 16 in a trio of cases challenging the Environmental Protection Agency's proposed Clean Power Plan. The central question in the case is whether the agency can regulate power plants under both Section 111 and Section 112 of the Clean Air Act. Rule opponents contend that the court should stop the agency from issuing a final rule; the court does not usually review regulations until they are final and appeared wary of blocking the rule prior to its finalization, and therefore setting a precedent for challenging proposed rules, but did not indicate how it might view future legal challenges once the rule is final.

MATS Compliance

The Environmental Protection Agency's Mercury and Air Toxics Standards compliance deadline was April 16, but the U.S. Supreme Court will not make a decision until June over whether the agency unreasonably decided not to consider costs in determining it was appropriate and necessary to regulate the power plant emissions. As a result, judicial review of the standards is not expected to significantly impact power companies' substantial investments in pollution controls or decisions to retire plants.

Lead Standard Comments

The National Association of Clean Air Agencies, the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, and the Association of Battery Recyclers, as well as other organizations, submitted [comments](#) April 16 in support of the Environmental Protection Agency's proposed December 2014 decision that the current national ambient air quality standards for lead of 0.15 micrograms per cubic meter should not be revised, following review of available data. The agency revised the lead standards in 2008 for the first time since their 1978 establishment. RSR Corporation, meanwhile, contended that the current standards do not adequately protect children's health and urged the agency to finalize a more stringent standard.

VI Programs Deficient

The Environmental Protection Agency Office of Inspector General released a [report](#) April 17 finding that the U.S.

Virgin Islands' water and air quality programs do not meet federal requirements for environmental programs, including delayed processing of Clean Air Act operating permits, inadequate Clean Water Act permits, and a lack of enforcements against violators. The agency has committed to taking steps to address the deficiencies.

Coal Ash Rule Published

The Environmental Protection Agency [published](#) April 17 its first national standards for coal ash management and disposal after a four month delay. The December final rule announcement and the April Federal Register publication allowed the agency to eliminate potentially confusing or contradictory language in the regulation. Challenges to the final rule are due July 16, and the rule is scheduled to go into effect October 14.

FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION

Pipeline, Electricity Coordination

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission met April 16 for its monthly meeting and finalized a March 2014 rule to better coordinate the interstate natural gas pipelines and public utilities scheduling process. The commission also addressed several reliability standards and five standards that interstate natural gas pipeline would have to meet in order to charge customers for upgrade spending. The meeting was Norman Bay's first as chairman; he began his tenure in the post April 15.

Order No. 745

The Supreme Court will decide April 24 whether to take up the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission's appeal over its demand response rule, Order No. 745, with an order to follow April 27. Should the court agree to hear the case, oral arguments would take place in the fall. The U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit vacated the rule last year.

INTERNATIONAL

RE Growth

The United Nations Environment Programme reported recently that global investment in renewable energy increased in 2014 for the first time in three years to \$270 billion, a 17 percent increase from 2013.

Chinese Emissions Reductions

China's National Bureau of Statistics released a statement recently finding that the nation's recent small coal plant closures, about 3.3 GW of facilities, will avoid the release of as much as 11.4 MMT CO₂ a year, helping the country reduce emissions for the first time in more than a decade.

African Climate Adaptation Funds

During the Africa Carbon Forum in Morocco last week, leaders from African nations [called](#) for stronger action from developed and wealthy countries to address climate change, including an increase in adaptation funding. Forum participants said that they are prepared to encourage low carbon development in Africa, but that developed nations need to do their part as well, underscoring what is likely to be a sticky issue during the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change summit in Paris at the end of the year. Little progress has been made on either of the finance sections of the document, including the Green Climate Fund and the loss and damage initiative.

Ontario Joins WCI

Ontario's Premier Kathleen Wynne [announced](#) April 13 that the province will join the Western Climate Initiative cap and trade system, including Quebec, California, and other North American jurisdictions, in order to limit greenhouse gas emissions. The Ontario Ministry of Environment will work closely to align its market with the market already in place between Quebec and California. British Columbia and Alberta have taxes on fossil fuel carbon.

Vehicular Biofuel Cap

The European Parliament environment committee approved April 14 compromise biofuel legislation that would cap crop-based biofuels at seven percent in contributing to the European Union target of having renewable energy provide ten percent of transportation fuels by 2020. Biofuels already contribute about five percent of the target.

Indian HFCs

India proposed an [amendment](#) to the Montreal Protocol April 16 to phase out hydrofluorocarbons, signaling that the country, a significant global greenhouse gas emitter, would cooperate in the internal effort to reach a global climate change agreement later this year in Paris.

EU Vehicular Emissions Reduction

The European Environment Agency published provisional [figures](#) April 16 finding that average CO₂ emissions from

new cars sold in the European Union last year were 2.6 percent lower than 2013, bringing average CO2 emissions to 123.4 g/km. Under 2009 law, automakers in the bloc were required to reduce CO2 emissions from their vehicles to 130 grams per kilometer by the end of 2015, so the latest reduction means the obligation was met ahead of schedule, principally due to the sale of higher fuel economy, electric, and diesel vehicles.

Routine Flaring End

Under the United Nations and World Bank Zero Routine Flaring by 2030 [initiative](#), nine nations and ten companies pledged April 17 to end the routine flaring of natural gas by 2030.

Fragile State Climate Risks

An April 17 [report](#) from the Group of Seven industrialized nations found that even if developed and developing nations succeed in Paris at the end of the year in coming to a global agreement to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, it will not be enough to stop climate impacts that already threaten nations already weakened by drought, civil war, security issues, and other climate impact concerns. The report, released ahead of the next G-7 summit June 7-8 in Bavaria, Germany, concluded that finalizing a global agreement is crucial for ameliorating the harm and helps the world to prepare for the need to assist those nations most at risk from climate impacts.

STATES

CA Solar Gas

Southern California Gas Company announced recently that it has begun two pilot projects that will test the feasibility of using solar energy produced when power demand is low to divide hydrogen from water and store the gas in pipelines. Germany already uses the technology with wind energy as an alternative to battery storage. The projects will convert about 200 KW of solar power initially, growing to a megawatt within a year.

ND ITC

North Dakota Governor Jack Dalrymple (R) signed legislation (H.R. 1228) early this month to extend the carryforward period for wind energy income tax credits for wind energy devices that were installed after September 30, 2008, and before January 1, 2012, allowing an additional ten years to claim excess credits. The state offers tax credits for people who install wind, geothermal, solar, or biomass energy devices a 15 percent income tax credit that applies to tax liability.

VT Climate Resolution

Vermont's Senate approved April 14 a climate change resolution acknowledging the existence of human-caused climate change and recommitting the state to reducing its CO2 emissions.

TX RE Program

Texas' Senate voted April 14 to end the state's 1999 renewable energy program. The program called for 10,000 MW of wind and solar power by 2025, but the state passed the goal five years ago, and now has 12,800 MW of wind energy capacity alone.

CA Hydro

California Independent System Operator Inc., California's state grid manager, said April 14 that as hydropower capacity will likely drop to the extreme low of 4,628 MW during the peak summer season, down 40 percent from 2014 levels, it will lean on solar and natural gas-fired power to provide sufficient energy to the state. The 10 year hydropower average is 8,180 MW, but the state is entering its fourth year of an unprecedented drought that has dried hydropower supplies, killed farmland, and led Governor Jerry Brown (D) earlier this month to order a 25 percent mandatory water consumption reduction, and the April 1 snowpack measurement showed that water content was five percent of normal for this time of year, the driest in recorded history.

NY Demand Response

Con Edison asked New York's permission April 15 to expand demand management programs in parts of Brooklyn that it anticipates will overload in coming years. In a Public Service Commission petition, Con Ed requested to spend \$60 million on customer-side measures to reduce peak hour demand, especially during the summer, such as smart meter and advanced thermostat use, and paying people to use less power.

FL Solar

Florida's Public Service Commission approved [plans](#) April 16 for Gulf Power to develop 120 MW in solar power installations on three U.S. Army and Navy bases in northwestern Florida, representing Florida's largest solar project to date. HelioSage Energy will construct the installations, 30 MW at Eglin Air Force Base, 40 MW at Holley Field, and 50 MW at Saufley Field, beginning next February, with facilities online and generating power by December

2016.

Detroit Zoo Biodigester

The Detroit Zoo announced last week a \$1.1 million plan to convert the 400-500 tons of manure and other organic waste produced each year at the zoo into methane-rich gas to power the 18,00 square foot Ruth Roby Glancy Animal Health Complex. Additionally, the biodigester will produce compost for animal habitats, gardens, and public spaces, saving \$70,000-\$80,000 in energy costs and \$30,000-\$40,000 in waste disposal fees. Construction is scheduled to begin in June and the biodigester should be fully operational by October. Anticipating a return on investment in about ten years, the zoo has established a goal to be zero-waste by 2020, and the biodigester will help to generate seven to eight percent of the zoo's annual electricity needs.

SUSTAINABILITY

SolarCity-Google Partnership

SolarCity Corp. announced April 13 that it will join Google to install smart thermostats and monitoring software that increases energy efficiency in solar panel powered homes. SolarCity will deploy Nest thermostats for 10,000 new rooftop-power customers in California.

BP Climate Risk Reporting

Ninety eight percent of BP's shareholders voted April 16 to pass a [resolution](#) asking for regular climate risk reporting. The vote may encourage other companies to think seriously about climate risks, and Shell will vote on a similar resolution in May.

Corporate Sustainability

The Business Roundtable released April 20 its 2015 sustainability [report](#), *Create, Grow, Sustain: Leading by Example*. The report includes narratives from 148 CEOs on how their companies are promoting sustainable business practices and improving the quality of community life around the world.

MISCELLANEOUS

Congressional Energy Votes

The Center for American Progress released an [analysis](#) April 15 showing that more than 30 percent of the first 279 roll call votes of the 114th Congress were on energy and environment related topics, with a fossil-fuel friendly bent, and the House focused much of its time on preventing efforts to address climate change.

Wind Market Growth

The American Wind Energy Association released its annual market [report](#) April 15, announcing that 23,000 jobs added last year brought the industry to 73,000 total workers. Wind capacity grew fourfold between 2013-2014.

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