

The CONEG Connection - November 1, 2016

News and highlights from the Northeastern Governors and Washington, DC in the policy areas of energy, environment and transportation.

Wind Gusts in the Northeast

By the end of this year, the nation's first offshore wind farm is set to come online off the coast of Rhode Island. Deepwater Wind's Block Island Wind Farm consists of five 560-foot-tall turbines and is expected to produce 30 megawatts of energy – enough to power 17,000 homes.

Recent analysis from the Energy Information Administration (EIA) finds that in 2015, wind facilities produced 190,927 gigawatt-hours (GWh) of electricity, accounting for 4.7% of net U.S. electric power generation – more than double its share in 2010. Monthly data through July indicate that wind has provided 5.6% of U.S. electricity generation in 2016.

As recently as 2010, only three states generated at least 10% of their total electricity from wind. In 2015, 11 states have at least a 10% wind share. Two of those states are in the CONEG region: Vermont (15%) and Maine (10%). EIA notes that the increase in wind power in the U.S. is largely due to a combination of technology (improved wind technology and increased access to transmission capacity) and policy changes (state RPS and federal/state tax incentives).

The opportunities for offshore wind energy in the Northeast are substantial because the resource is abundant, predictable and clean. With the retirement of coal, oil and nuclear plants, coupled with climate change and renewable energy requirements across the states, harnessing the Northeast gales is logical.

State initiatives are gusting. Massachusetts' energy diversity law that requires utilities to purchase 1.6 gigawatts of offshore wind generation over the next decade. The New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) has been selected by the federal government to compete for the right to develop a new 79,000-acre wind energy site off the coast of Long Island.

Work still remains to be done. While the cost of wind energy has decreased significantly in recent years, the cost of building offshore wind facilities remains high.





NEWS FROM AROUND THE REGION:

CONNECTICUT

Governor Malloy has requested that residents, businesses and local governments voluntarily reduce their water consumption by 15 percent after the CT Interagency Drought Workgroup issued the state's first-ever Drought Watch which means that the state is experiencing "moderate to severe" drought conditions.

As part of Governor Malloy's 30-year, \$100 billion transportation vision known as "Let's Go CT," the Connecticut Department of Transportation is launching a study of safety, rail, bus and traffic improvements needed along the I-95 corridor from Greenwich to North Stonington, and the potential for economic development.

Governor Malloy has nominated current Deputy Commissioner of the CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) Katie Dykes to serve as Commissioner of the CT Public Utilities Regulatory Authority .

The Connecticut Department of Transportation announced that the state will become the first in New England to install automated horn systems, known as wayside horns , which will reduce the noise associated with railroad at-grade crossings compared to using train-mounted horns.



MAINE

U.S. Senators Susan Collins and Angus King announced that five Maine organizations have been awarded a total of \$3.7 million through the U.S. Treasury Department's Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFI) Program and the Native American CDFI Assistance (NACA) Program to provide affordable loans to low-income individuals and communities to help finance community businesses .



MASSACHUSETTS

Governor Baker signed an Executive Order to create a special working group on autonomous vehicles that will support the development of agreements and processes for the testing and deployment of self-driving vehicles in Massachusetts.

Governor Baker and Lt. Governor Polito announced the launch of energyCENTS, a web platform developed by the Department of Energy Resources that allows Massachusetts residents and businesses to search available energy savings opportunities such as energy rebates, incentives, loans, and tax credits.

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Governor Hassan issued an Executive Order establishing a New Hampshire Cybersecurity Integration Center to serve as a center for coordination of cybersecurity monitoring and information sharing, and the state's mitigation, response and recovery efforts.



The NH Drought Management Team finds that approximately 20% of New Hampshire is experiencing abnormally dry conditions and 80% of the state is experiencing moderate to extreme drought conditions with little improvement expected in the southern portion of the state.



NEW YORK

As part of a 10-year \$140 million investment to modernize New York's electric grid, NYSERDA announced the availability of \$3.5 million in funding for the private sector to develop solutions to make it easier, less costly and less time-consuming to connect renewable resources, such as solar and wind, to the electric grid. NYSERDA also announced the availability of \$10 million in funding to help New York improve the resiliency, reliability, efficiency, quality and performance of the electric grid, focusing on innovative smart grid technologies.

RHODE ISLAND

Governor Raimondo announced the launch of the Rhode Island Cyber Range Initiative to provide a unique, hands-on testing and training environment for future cyber security professionals.



U.S. Senator Jack Reed celebrated the success of the Weatherization Assistance Program and brought attention to high energy burden faced by residents of Providence.

The RI Department of Transportation has received proposals from four real estate development firms to construct a Providence Intermodal Transit Center that will integrate bus and train service with parking and economic development opportunities such as residential, retail, office and/or commercial development.

Québec moves forward with a zero-emission vehicle standard in 2018.



NEWS FROM WASHINGTON, DC:

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) released \$3.09 billion in FY2017 LIHEAP regular block grant funding under the current continuing resolution.

EIA has updated its State Energy Profiles with new monthly data on prices, supply, and consumption for electricity, petroleum, natural gas, and coal as well as new data for 2015 covering natural gas production and population.

The Federal Highway Administration has partnered with NOAA to become a “Weather Ready Nation” Ambassador to improve the nation’s preparedness and strengthen resiliency for extreme weather events.

The U.S. Bureau of Transportation Statistics released the August 2016 North American Freight Numbers which finds that from August 2015 to August 2016, three transportation modes – air, rail, and truck – carried a higher value of U.S.-Canada freight than a year earlier.

On October 25, a federal judge approved a \$14.7 billion settlement agreement in the Volkswagen emissions-cheating case. VW has agreed to spend up to \$10 billion compensating vehicle owners, \$2.7 billion for environmental mitigation, and \$2 billion to promote zero-emission vehicles. The National Association of State Energy Officials has posted the Settlement and will provide updated information for states, including a timeline for state action to take advantage of funds under the Environmental Mitigation Trust portion of the Settlement.

The Federal Railroad Administration and New Jersey Transit will hold two public meetings in November for the public and stakeholders to learn more about project developments for the Hudson Tunnel.

The Northeast in the News

The CONEG states have yet again received high marks for their energy efficiency – this time from Wallet Hub’s ranking of the efficiency of car- and home-energy consumption in 48 U.S. states.



Did You Know...

According to the Department of Energy, the U.S. has seen a 25 percent drop in carbon-dioxide emissions since 2008, a function of the rise of natural gas and smarter energy use.

Source: Bloomberg News



400 North Capitol Street, NW
Suite 382
Washington, DC 20001

202-624-8450

info@coneg.org