

The CONEG Connection - November 17, 2016

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

Governor Baker Named Public Official of the Year by *Governing* Magazine

Governing Magazine has selected Governor Charlie Baker as a 2016 Public Official of the Year. The magazine honors eight individuals who have found a way – in what can be considered a “brutal” time to be a public official – to work together to find “real solutions to real problems.”

Governing recognizes Governor Baker’s ability to reach across the aisle to find common ground on tough issues. ***“We have a political climate these days where people seek differences because that’s where the bite is,” Baker said. “I spend most of my time doing just the opposite. I’m looking for places where we can find agreement.”***



Connecticut DOT Wins Top Prize for Pearl Harbor Memorial Bridge Project

The Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT) has earned the Grand Prize in the 2016 America's Transportation Awards competition sponsored by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), AAA and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. The \$554 million Pearl Harbor Memorial Bridge project was selected from 84 project nominees from 39 state transportation departments and the District of Columbia that competed in four regional competitions.

The Pearl Harbor Memorial Bridge – informally known as the “Q Bridge” to locals – carries I-95 more than 4,200 feet across the Quinnipiac River and is among the most heavily traveled segments of the northeast corridor between New York and Boston, connecting more than 140,000 vehicles per day to several major Interstates and the Gateway Terminal. It is the first “extradosed” cable-stay bridge in the United States. The distinctive design allows the bridge towers to be shorter, which accommodates air traffic in and out of nearby Tweed New Haven Regional Airport.

The bridge was completed in September 2015 under budget and eight months ahead of schedule. Governor Malloy congratulated CTDOT for the “truly remarkable accomplishment” and thanked “all of the workers whose service on the corridor over the last several years helped deliver one of the biggest infrastructure projects in our state’s history efficiently and effectively.”



NEWS FROM AROUND THE REGION:

CONNECTICUT

Governor Malloy announced the award of \$4.7 million to preserve 1,170 acres of open space and to develop urban community gardens.

Governor Malloy makes an announcement at the CT International Car Show about a popular state initiative that offers rebates to consumers for purchasing electric vehicles.

Governor Malloy announces funding for microgrid program to increase the storm resiliency of the electric grid. See this related New Haven Register article on approval of funding.



MAINE

Rain was helpful, but drought conditions continue.

Maine DOT Commissioner Bernhardt is elected President of the American Association of State Highway and Transportaton Officials (AASHTO).

Governor LePage announces Director Patrick Woodcock’s departure from Energy Office.

MASSACHUSETTS

In spite of recent rainfall, drought conditions continue in much of the Commonwealth.

Massachusetts agencies partner to modernize clean energy projects at recreation facilities.

Governor Baker and Lt. Governor Polito announced the launch of a new website that provides information to residential and small business customers shopping for electricity supply plans in a competitive market.

Massachusetts takes top honors in the 2016 edition of the Milken Institute’s annual State Technology and Science Index.

Governor Baker announces \$8.8 million in MassWorks Infrastructure Program grants to support nine rural infrastructure projects.



The transition to All Electronic Tolling along Massachusetts Turnpike (I-90) is proceeding on or ahead of schedule.

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Governor Hassan announces November 14 opening of NH Fuel Assistance Program.

Governor Hassan announced that NH Department of Environmental Services Commissioner Tom Burack will step down in the next few months; Assistant Commissioner Clark Freise will serve as acting commissioner.

NEW YORK

The New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) announced the availability of locally based Clean Energy Communities Coordinators to provide technical support and guidance to communities to accelerate energy-saving and renewable energy projects throughout the state.

Governor Cuomo announced that \$325 million in funding is available for the Home Energy Assistance Program which began accepting applications on November 14.

Governor Cuomo announced the completion of a \$4.8 million infrared over-height vehicle detection system on two New York City parkways that will prevent vehicles from striking low-clearance bridges.

New York State has adopted new regulations that limit emissions from existing diesel generators and natural gas-fired engines.

The Governor's Traffic Safety Committee will distribute \$28.3 million in federal funding to state, local and not-for-profit agencies to support training, education and enforcement initiatives to improve highway safety and reduce traffic fatalities.

The NYS Department of Transportation completed another round of rail tank car and track inspections intended to reduce potential dangers associated with the rail transport of crude oil across the state.



RHODE ISLAND

The Rhode Island Commerce Corporation announced a new Small Business Assistance Program to help eligible small businesses obtain the credit required to move their business forward.

VERMONT

The Vermont Department of Public Service released the final energy planning determination standards and recommendations required by the state's new energy siting law.

Governor Shumlin, AHS Secretary Cohen, and DCF Commissioner Schatz announced that the average Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program benefit for most Vermont households will increase by \$166 this year to \$865.

Burlington is recognized as the country's first city to draw 100% of its power from renewable resources.



NEWS FROM WASHINGTON, DC:

The Energy Information Administration finds that residential heating oil and propane prices are similar to last winter's prices which were the lowest in at least ten years. Inventories for both fuels are near five-year highs for this time of year.

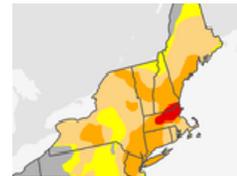
The U.S. Department of Energy has announced a new target for its SunShot Initiative to cut the cost of solar energy generated electricity by 50 percent between 2020 and 2030.

A new Georgetown Climate Center report focuses on 19 states – including many CONEG states - that are leading the shift to clean energy.

FHWA announced 55 routes spanning 35 states that will serve as the basis for an 85,000-mile-long national alternative fuel and electric charging network.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency released two reports that find passenger vehicles achieved record-high fuel economy while outperforming greenhouse gas emission standards for the fourth consecutive year.

NOAA predicts little relief for CONEG states experiencing severe drought conditions.



Did You Know...

According to the International Energy Agency, 60% of all new power generation by 2040 will be from renewables.

Source: International Energy Agency



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