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Renewable Energy Update

an Allen Matkins
market intelligence
publicationAllen Matkins
attorneys at law

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[U.S. starts legal action against China over wind energy subsidies, rare earths issues](#)

Sustainable Business - Dec 30

The U.S. has taken the first steps toward filing a trade case against China with the World Trade Organization (WTO) over issues related to renewable energy. U.S. officials first accused China of illegally subsidizing its wind power industry and included a complaint about the country's export restrictions on rare earths soon after. In response to the accusations, Chinese officials say they are willing to discuss the wind energy situation, but have shown no willingness to increase export quotas on rare earths. **Related News:** [U.S. to file suit against China over wind subsidies](#) - Sustainable Business

RENEWABLE ENERGY FOCUS

[Credit crunch hurt renewable energy business in 2010, says BlackRock](#)

Bloomberg - Dec 29

The national credit crisis resulted in record outflow in the renewable energy industry in 2010, according to representatives of energy company BlackRock. The New York-based firm cites tight loan conditions for green-energy projects, competition from foreign manufacturers, and reduced European government subsidies as contributing causes of the industry's struggles in 2010. Investors yanked nearly \$2 billion from renewable energy projects in the first 10 months of 2010 while investments in fossil fuels remained steady.

[Renewable energy accounts for 11% of U.S. total, says DOE report](#)

Energy Priorities - Dec 27

The Department of Energy's monthly energy report shows that renewable energy accounted for 10.8% of all power produced in the U.S. in the first nine months of 2010, a 0.4% increase over the previous year. The increase brings renewable energy within a percentage point of matching the amount of nuclear power produced nationally in 2010 for the first time.

[California grid operator readies infrastructure for more solar, wind power](#)

Solar Home and Business Journal - Dec 26

The California Independent System Operator (Cal-ISO), a non-profit corporation that operates much of the state's high voltage electricity grid, says solar projects now put more energy into the grid than wind power and it is adjusting its infrastructure to accommodate the change. Among other changes, the organization plans to upgrade its power backup capabilities as solar and wind power are intermittent energy sources. Cal-ISO has released a five-year [plan](#) that outlines its plans to adapt the state's grid to accommodate electricity from renewable sources.

[Officials issue environmental review of proposed Mojave](#)

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Upcoming Events

[7th Annual Clean-tech Investor Summit](#)Palm Springs, CA
January 19-20, 2011[2011 VerdeExchange](#)Los Angeles, CA
January 23-25, 2011[RETECH 2011: The Renewable Energy Technology Conference & Exhibition](#)Washington, DC
September 20-22, 2011

[Desert solar high-voltage line](#)

Solar Home and Business Journal - Dec 29

The Federal Bureau of Land Management and the California Public Utilities Commission have released the final environmental review of a proposed high voltage line in the Ivanpah Valley. Southern California Edison has applied to build the line in order to transmit electricity from solar power plants in California and Nevada. The proposed 230KV transmission line would upgrade and partially replace an existing 115KV line, and would be partially constructed on federal lands. Pending final approval, the project would break ground in 2011.

[Imperial Irrigation District announces renewable energy transmission achievement](#)

KXO Radio - Dec 23

Imperial Irrigation District, a utility company serving southeastern California, announced it will reach a milestone in its transitional cluster generator interconnection process. The 15 generators in the transitional cluster are soon expected to notify the utility of their intention to proceed with their interconnection agreements. The system is designed to link the generators, which only carry energy from renewable sources, into a system carrying 1.4GW of electricity, enough power for almost one million homes.

[California authorities approve reverse auctions for renewable energy projects](#)

Independent Voter Network - Dec 23

The California Public Utilities Commission has approved legislation that will require California's three largest public utilities to hold biannual auctions for renewable energy projects. The Renewable Auction Mechanism (RAM) requires projects entered by participating renewable energy developers to be between 1MW and 20MW and be completed within 18 months. It is hoped the auctions will spur rapid, efficient development of small-to mid-sized renewable energy projects.

[California Energy Commission expects fewer solar deals in 2011 despite renewal of renewable energy grant bill](#)

Reuters - Dec 29

After approving a record number of solar power deals in 2010, the California Energy Commission (CEC) expects 2011 to be much slower. The rush to approve the projects came as companies scrambled to take advantage of federal incentives for renewable energy projects due to expire at the end of 2010. Congress has since extended the incentives through next year, leading CEC officials to speculate that the rush to approve the projects was excessive.

[San Joaquin Valley experiencing solar power boom](#)

Solar Home and Business Journal - Dec 29

The San Joaquin Valley is proving to be fertile ground for solar farm developers as eight large solar developers expect to receive final government construction permits for projects in the region during the closing days of 2010. The projects are planned to be built on a mix of private and public land in remote areas of the region; this is believed to have reduced legal interference from citizens and advocacy groups that have plagued renewable energy projects closer to populated areas.

[Molten salt technology could give solar plants added production, flexibility](#)

Recent Opportunities

[Southern California Public Power Authority Request for Proposals for Renewable Energy Projects](#)

[Pacific Gas and Electric's 2010 Solar Photovoltaic Program Power Purchase Agreement Request for Offers](#)

[San Francisco Public Utilities Commission Request for Qualifications for Design-Build Solar Photovoltaic Projects](#)



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Wall Street Journal - Dec 31

The proposed Solana solar power plant in Gila Bend, Arizona will use molten salt heat storage technology that is expected to give the 250MW facility six extra hours of production per day. The Abengoa-owned facility will have two 122 foot-wide salt tanks capable of storing 40% of the heat generated by the plant. The stored heat will be used to power the plant's steam turbines at night. SolarReserve LLC is planning two solar projects in California that will use molten salt storage technology as well.

[Lake County geothermal plant receives EIR approval](#)

Lake County News - Dec 23

Geothermal developer Bottle Rock Power has received approval of its environmental impact report (EIR) for the expansion of its Cobb Mountain generation facility from Lake County officials. The planned upgrade is expected to quintuple the plant's output from 11MW to 55MW, and will include the installation of pipeline, wells, and an access road. The EIR for the project faced opposition from people in the community for perceived inconsistencies, but was ultimately judged to be adequate by area officials.

Related News:

[Geothermal faces challenges as viable renewable energy source in California](#) - National Geographic

[FERC releases EIS draft for proposed 1.3GW Riverside County hydroelectric facility](#)

Federal Energy Regulatory Commission - Dec 23

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) has released a draft environmental impact statement (EIS) for the licensing of Eagle Crest Energy's proposed 1.3GW Eagle Mountain Pumped Storage Hydroelectric Project near Desert City, California. The draft EIS includes environmental protection measures suggested by Eagle Crest in their original 2009 licensing application, as well as additions by FERC and other government agencies. The deadline to comment on the draft is February 28, 2011.

[Clean tech startup launches GHG-capture product in California](#)

Climate Biz - Dec 23

[Global Thermostat](#), a New Jersey-based clean tech firm, has launched a pilot version of what company representatives call "a carbon negative solution" at SRI International's facilities in Menlo Park, California. The technology is designed to capture waste CO2 from industrial activity and process it into a marketable product. Representatives say the captured gas could be used to accelerate plant growth in greenhouses and enhance oil production among other applications. Global Thermostat is funded by Warner Music CEO, Edgar Bronfman, who serves as the company's executive director.

NOTABLE RENEWABLE ENERGY PROJECTS AND DEALS

[Tessera sells 850MW Calico Solar Power Project, loses Edison power purchase deal, faces further litigation against Imperial Valley project](#)

GigaOM - Dec 29

Tessera Solar (Tessera) has sold a planned Mojave Desert solar project expected to cost as much as \$3 billion to K Road Solar, a subsidiary of K Road Power. Financial details of the deal were not disclosed. The deal comes just weeks after Tessera [secured](#) the necessary permits for the project, and only days after Edison International opted not to buy power from another proposed

Tessera solar project in the Mojave Desert. Tessera's troubles have been further compounded by litigation directed at their planned Imperial Valley solar farm by native and environmental advocacy groups. A federal judge recently ruled to halt development of the site in response to a suit filed by the Quechen tribe, and a second tribe advocacy group has since filed suit against the government over issues related to the project.

Related News:

[Tessera's troubles ongoing](#) - GreenTech Solar

[Edison abandons Tessera solar project power-purchase deal](#) - Bloomberg

[Judge halts development of Tessera solar project](#) - Reuters

[Second native group sues over Imperial Valley solar project](#) - Solar Home and Business Journal

[California solar company gets \\$28M for Wisconsin relocation](#)

Biz Times - Dec 30

W Solar Group, Inc., formerly of Chatsworth, CA, has received \$28 million in tax credits from the Wisconsin government to move its headquarters and manufacturing facilities to Wisconsin. The company expects to create 620 jobs in the state. The Enterprise Zone tax credits will come from the Department of Commerce.

[California Gold aims for solar rare-earth profits with \\$1.5B Mexico tellurium mine purchase](#)

NewNet - Dec 29

California Gold has purchased an 80% stake in AutoTellurio, a Mexican silver, gold, and tellurium mining project. The firm raised the \$1.46 billion for the purchase with proceeds from a recent share offering. Demand for tellurium has risen sharply as its application in the solar energy industry has increased. The mine is adjacent to a tellurium project under development by solar energy company, First Solar. "The fact that First Solar is now developing a directly adjacent tellurium mining project next to this property holds great promise for significant discovery by California Gold," said California Gold CEO, James Davidson.

Related News:

[California rare earth mine to reopen](#) - Clean Technica

[China rare earth crackdown may stir U.S. production](#) - New York Times

[Unpredictable rare earth market spells trouble for renewable energy industry](#) - Solar Home and Business Journal

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