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Renewable Energy Update

an Allen Matkins
market intelligence
publication

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February 16, 2010

[U.S. clean-tech investment falls 45% in fourth quarter](#)

L.A. Times - Feb 8

According to data from VentureSource, clean-tech companies raked in just \$564.5 million in the fourth quarter of 2009, a 45% plunge from the previous quarter, but the number of deals jumped 21% to 62 total. California dominated, with 32 deals over the course of the quarter, pulling in \$333.72 million. In all of 2009, investment in the clean-tech sector hit \$2.6 billion with 193 deals, a 50% plunge in dollar amount and a 16% slide in the number of deals compared to 2008. The San Francisco Bay Area led the charge, with \$1.2 billion in investments pouring in throughout the year. Southern California came in next, raising \$329.5 million in 2009. Energy efficiency was the top-performing category last year, with 61 deals attracting \$593.3 million, roughly a third of the total financing activity in the clean-tech sector.

Renewable Energy Focus

[Cleantech to benefit from jobs bill, not climate bill](#)

Renewable Energy World - Feb 10

Proposals attached to the jobs bill have a much better chance of becoming law than those in the climate bill. In retrospect, the climate bill died last August when the Senate acknowledged that the Health Care debate would stretch into the fall. As a consequence, the climate bill debate was pushed to an election year when controversial legislation is rarely passed. There are efforts for a compromise on climate legislation, but they may be too little too late. Meanwhile, the jobs bill, financial industry regulation, and a health care bill are all above climate on the majority party's list of priorities. Even a bill that has the Senate votes may not be able to pass due to the short and crowded calendar.

[Renewable energy trade associations call for federal action on RE](#)

Renewable Energy World - Feb 10

Executives from renewable energy trade associations are emphasizing the need for Congress to enact key policies to continue growth across the sector. Executives from the American Wind Energy Association, National Hydropower Association, Biomass Power Association, Geothermal Energy Association, and Solar Energy Industries Association stressed that if these policies are not enacted, the renewable energy sector could face a downturn in investment and jobs in 2010.

[Renewables industry promotes its potential](#)

Green Inc. - Feb 10

Funds from the \$787 billion stimulus package and other federal assistance kept growth in the renewable energy sector strong in 2009, a trend that will probably persist as federal investment continues to pay off over the coming year, industry leaders said. The picture was especially good for the solar industry, which created almost 20,000 new jobs in 2009 while adding 470 megawatts in generating capacity, a record, according to the Solar Energy Industries Association. The solar industry could create as many as 45,000 new jobs in 2010 if Congress extends several tax incentives and grant programs set to expire at the end of the year, the association said. Yet while the near-term outlook for renewables is mostly positive, the industry's long-term prospects will be shaped significantly by energy legislation under consideration by Congress, the executives said.

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Recent Events

Allen Matkins has attended numerous events addressing developments in the renewable energy field in 2009. [A summary can be found here.](#)

Allen Matkins hosted the successful panel discussion on

[Foreign energy firms getting windfall of U.S. stimulus funds: investigation](#)

San Diego Union-Tribune - Feb 9

Of the more than \$2 billion the federal government has given out to boost the economy and create green-energy jobs, more than three-quarters has gone to foreign-owned companies that dominate the global wind-power industry. This latest finding by the Investigative Reporting Workshop, a nonprofit at American University in Washington, D.C., is illustrated in San Diego County, where about a dozen commercial wind developers have offices. For example, La Jolla is the headquarters for Eurus Energy America, the subsidiary of a Japanese firm that received \$91 million in federal stimulus money for a wind farm in western Texas. It plans to apply for more money to fund a wind project in Oregon. The Reporting Workshop's initial analysis of wind-energy grants was released in October and outraged some lawmakers.

[NREL releases report on feed-in tariffs](#)

Sustainable Business - Feb 12

U.S. states can offer feed-in tariffs for renewable energy generation, but they must do so in a way that meets federal requirements. That's the general finding of a report released by the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL). Paul Gipe, who covers feed-in tariff issues world-wide, gives a breakdown on various elements of the report here.

[EPA creates office of sustainable communities](#)

Sustainable Business - Feb 11

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has created an Office of Sustainable Communities to encourage communities to take an integrated approach in making environmental, housing and transportation decisions. The initiative is one of three steps the EPA is taking to support community-level sustainability measures.

[California setting pace for federal climate goals](#)

Huffington Post - Feb 10

Between now and the next major international negotiation meeting in December in Cancún, many advocates are looking to Washington DC and gearing up for the battle to move a climate bill through Congress. But in 2010 the real play is even further west, in California where a strategic battle is brewing over clean energy and climate protection. The cards have already been dealt for federal climate policy making this year, and even the most optimistic acknowledge the U.S. won't be clearing the table on this go around (assuming that climate legislation even makes it to a vote, an outcome increasingly in doubt). Meanwhile, key cards for the next round of federal policy making are being laid out in California. This article outlines three strategic battles brewing in the state, each with the potential to define the course of federal politics.

[Effort underway to suspend California's global-warming law](#)

L.A. Times - Feb 6

Republican politicians and conservative activists are launching a ballot campaign to suspend California's global-warming law, in what they hope will serve as a showcase for a national backlash against climate regulations. Supporters say they have "solid commitments" of nearly \$600,000 to pay signature gatherers for a November initiative aimed at delaying curbs on the greenhouse gas emissions of power plants and factories until the state's unemployment rate drops. GOP gubernatorial candidates and Tea Party organizers paint the 2006 law, considered a model for other state and federal efforts, as a job-killing interference in the economy.

[UCSD testing wind turbines' ability to handle earthquakes](#)

[Renewable Energy Project Finance](#). For a copy of the program materials, [click here](#).

[Upcoming Events](#)

[Renewable Energy World Conference & Expo POWER SHIFT](#)

Austin, TX

February 23-25, 2010

[AWEA Windpower 2010 Conference and Expo](#)

Dallas, TX

May 23-26, 2010

[Recent Opportunities](#)

[*Extended RFP deadline*](#)

[Inland Empire Utility](#)

[Agency's Request for](#)

[Proposals for Wind Turbine](#)

[Power Plant](#).

[California Public Utilities](#)

[Commission's Grant](#)

[Proposal Solicitation for](#)

[Improved PV Production](#)

[Technologies and](#)

[Innovative Business Models](#)

[San Francisco Public](#)

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[Photovoltaic Projects](#)

[City of Willows Opportunity](#)

[Los Angeles Department of](#)

[Water and Power](#)

[Renewable Energy Supply](#)

[Rolling Request for](#)

[Proposals](#)

San Diego Union-Tribune - Feb 7

University of California San Diego researchers are subjecting an 80-foot, 23,400-pound working wind turbine to a series of simulated earthquakes escalating to more than 7.0 in magnitude. The ability of wind turbines to withstand earthquakes and remain functional is a question of growing relevance: Three years ago, 2,439 wind-farm turbines produced about 2.3% of the state's overall system power, according to the California Energy Commission. That percentage will rise because state law requires California's large, investor-owned utilities to generate 20% of their power from renewable sources by the end of this year. The UCSD project will be only the second known test of a full-sized wind turbine on a shake table.

California turbines frozen in Minnesota wind

Star-Tribune - Feb 11

Wind turbines from California are having a hard time adjusting to the Minnesota winter. Erected last fall, the 11 turbines were expected to be spinning before Christmas, but so far their blades have been largely motionless, apparently paralyzed by frigid weather. The turbines sit idly in Anoka, North St. Paul, Chaska, Shakopee, Buffalo and six other cities, all members of the Minnesota Municipal Power Agency (MMPA). The refurbished, 115-foot towers had operated on a California wind farm, where they didn't have to worry about cold hydraulic fluid turning to gel and oil lubricants getting too sluggish. Avant Energy of Minneapolis, which operates the turbines for MMPA, says it is bringing in a company that will get the windmills running within two months.

Los Angeles eyes Owens Lake for huge solar project

Reuters - Feb 10

An old battleground of California's water wars could turn into one of the largest solar farms in the world, with thousands of panels mounted across the desiccated, salty white crust of Owens Lake. That's the plan by the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power, the largest public utility in the U.S. The project may eventually generate 3 to 5 gigawatts of power -- enough for 10% of California's power supply -- and include other utilities like PG&E and Southern California Edison and independent power producers.

Oakland's Renewable Funding eases solar financing problem

Greentech Media - Feb 10

Oakland's Renewable Funding is creating programs that allow residents and small businesses to borrow money to finance solar, energy efficiency or water saving improvements and pay the money back over 20 years via their property taxes. Called PACE -- property-assessed clean energy -- the program is essentially a voluntary special property tax. The program comes at a time when the cost of solar panels has plummeted dramatically and talk of "grid parity" in solar pricing is becoming realistic in certain regions -- but solar's upfront costs remain prohibitively expensive for most homeowners.

Notable Renewable Energy Projects and Deals

BrightSource alters solar plant plan to address concerns over desert tortoise

GreenInc. - Feb 11

The developer of California's first new solar power plant in 20 years has proposed revamping the project in an attempt to defuse concern over its effect on the imperiled desert tortoise. BrightSource Energy plans to submit a new design to regulators that shrinks the size of the 4,000-acre Ivanpah Solar Energy Generating Station by 12%, reducing the number of desert tortoises that must be relocated and avoiding an area of rare plants. The portion of the project that would most affect wildlife will be cut by 23%. The power plant's electricity generation would fall from 440 megawatts to 392 megawatts.

[Startup 1BOG gets funding for a new way to sell solar](#)

Mercury News - Feb 11

San Francisco-based startup called One Block Off the Grid (1BOG) is a new option for homeowners to shop for the best solar rates. Frustrated by his own experience in making solar panel sales with at-home presentations, the founder teamed up with two partners in 2008 to recruit homeowners into a collective to negotiate group discounts. The innovation is in the business model, which leverages the Web to promote sales and drive down consumer costs. 1BOG brought solar to 600 homes in 2009. 1BOG runs three "campaigns" each year to round up customers and engage installation companies in a competitive bidding process. The net result, the firm says, provides better prices for consumers and cuts down customer-acquisition costs for installers such as Solar City, Real Good Solar, and groSolar.

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