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Renewable Energy Update

an Allen Matkins
market intelligence
publicationAllen Matkins
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[California senator fights to keep DOE renewable energy loan guarantees](#)

MyDesert - Feb 16

Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) is fighting to protect a federal program that provides loan guarantees to renewable energy projects from being cut by provisions in a Republican spending bill. In a [letter](#) circulated to all Democratic senators, Feinstein said that elimination of the DOE's Loan Guarantee Program as called for by the GOP bill would "devastate" the nations renewable energy industry and waste millions of dollars already invested in such projects. The cuts would pull \$26 billion in loan guarantees from 23 renewable energy projects in California and other states, effectively pulling the plug on the projects.

Related News:[GOP attacks DOE loan guarantee for troubled California solar project](#)

RENEWABLE ENERGY FOCUS

[DOE gets \\$29.5B in Obama's 2012 budget proposal](#)

Department of Energy - Feb 14

Renewable energy figures high on DOE's agenda as the White House rolled out its \$29.5 billion 2012 budget proposal for the agency. The budget includes \$3.2 billion for energy efficiency and renewable energy programs, with an additional \$300 million in credit subsidies to support an additional \$3- to \$4 billion in renewable energy projects. Funding for various improvement, innovation, and clean-up programs for nuclear projects also featured heavily in the budget, with \$36 billion in loan guarantees set aside for such projects.

[Report: California cap-and-trade will spur innovation, reap billions for state](#)

Reuters - Feb 17

California officials are betting that the state's cap-and-trade system will push businesses to innovate in order to avoid the high cost of carbon credits, while critics of the system say the added expense will drive companies to do business elsewhere, according a Reuters special report. The program is under intense domestic scrutiny, as a similar system in the EU has proved to be problematic, providing a poor precedent for success, leaving other states to watch and see if California can provide a more viable model to emulate.

Related News:[Webinar on California carbon credit trading system set for March 1st](#)

[Federal, state agencies fine two California biomass plants for emissions violations](#)

Biomass Magazine - Feb 15

Two California biomass plants have been fined \$835,000 by the EPA and the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District for violations of the Clean Air Act and local regulations. Ampersand Chowchilla Biomass and Merced Power, 12.5MW biomass energy plants located within 13 miles of each other in the San Joaquin Valley, were ordered to pay \$343,000 and \$492,000 respectively

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September 20-22, 2011[Solar Power International 2011](#)

Dallas, TX

for excess emissions of air pollutants and fine particulates.

[Cal-ISO, utilities look to energy storage to help green energy onto the grid](#)

Grist - Feb 15

Cal-ISO's decision to incorporate more energy storage devices into the state's grid bodes well for renewable energy projects in the state, according to Todd Woody in Grist. The operator's decision to connect batteries and flywheels to the grid to store energy from intermittent sources such as wind and solar is expected to make renewable energy a more reliable, cost-effective addition to the state power supply.

Related News:

[Improved transmission lines needed for faster renewable energy growth](#)

[California solar developer sees record 4Q gains in 2010](#)

SunPower - Feb 17

San Jose-based solar energy company SunPower posted a 70% leap in revenue growth to \$937 million in the fourth quarter of fiscal 2010, with an overall strong showing for the entire year as well. The company's strong 4Q performance netted \$152 million of their total \$179 million income for 2010. Reasons for the fourth quarter business surge include SunPower's acquisition of SunRay Renewable Ventures and their sale of a planned 250MW California solar plant to NRG Energy.

[Permit issues stall residential wind projects in San Luis Obispo](#)

San Luis Obispo Tribune - Feb 17

California Energy Commission rebates on residential wind turbine installations in San Luis Obispo County are likely to expire before local authorities issue a planning policy on the matter, according to the San Luis Obispo Tribune. With no local policy on the installations, the county cannot issue permits to residential wind developers. Staff cutbacks have left the county planning commission without enough staff to author a wind energy policy, which effectively halts the permitting process, says local residential wind energy developer Bob Crizer. The rebates are set to decrease by 16% after the deadline this spring.

[PV crystalline margins, prices predicted to drop in 2011](#)

IMS Research - Feb 14

Cuts to solar incentives in key markets are expected to precipitate a plunge in the prices of PV crystalline products, according to a report from IMS Research. Falling prices are expected to hit smaller suppliers especially hard, as shortages suffered by large suppliers last year allowed their smaller competitors to profit from the gap in supply. Costs in the market are not falling at the same rate as prices, the report notes, which will likely squeeze polysilicon and wafer suppliers' margins to half of their peak in Q3 2010. In spite of the downward trend for margins, the overall picture for the PV market in 2011 is positive, with a 20% growth rate predicted for 2011.

[California company to launch high-efficiency solar cells](#)

CNET - Feb 16

A San Jose solar technology developer has designed a multi-layered solar cell designed to be twice as efficient as conventional silicon solar cells. [Solar Junction](#) has announced plans to begin producing the cells next year for use in concentrating photovoltaic (CPV) solar collectors. Referred to as multijunction cells, Solar Junction's design achieves high efficiency by using layers of different materials to draw energy from specific wavelengths of light. While multijunction cell technology is not new, it more complex and expensive to

October 17-20, 2011

Recent Opportunities

[City of San Mateo Main Library Photovoltaic Generating System Request for Proposals](#)

[Pacific Gas and Electric Company to Release 2011 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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produce than flat solar cells.

[Report: Solar developers should look past product hype to choose best electronic applications](#)

Sustainable Business - Feb 17

While recently developed electronic applications do have the potential to increase the amount of power generated by solar energy operations, the hype surrounding them can disguise inefficiency and high cost, according to a [study](#) conducted by Lux Research. Titled Shorting Out the Myths of Solar Power Electronics: What Fits and What Fails, the report finds that the actual value of many solar electronics is obscured by "expansive" manufacturer claims as to their energy harvesting capabilities. However, the study also shows that all solar power electronics have a market, as demonstrated through cost-of-electricity analysis.

NOTABLE RENEWABLE ENERGY PROJECTS AND DEALS

[Arizona utility contracts First Solar to build 17MW solar farm](#)

Wall Street Journal / Dow Jones Newswires - Feb 16

Pinnacle West subsidiary and utility Arizona Public Service (APS) has hired solar project developer First Solar to build a 17MW solar farm near Gila Bend, Arizona. The plant will use 300,000 solar PV panels provided by First Solar, and construction is expected to be completed in mid-late 2011. The plant is one of five solar projects that APS currently has in development in the area that are expected to produce 83MW combined.

[Tessera sells 709MW California solar project](#)

Reuters - Feb 16

Soon after its sale of an 850MW California solar project in late 2010, Tessera Solar has sold its planned 709MW Imperial Valley Solar Project to AES Solar for an undisclosed sum. AES announced it will continue a power purchase contract with SDG&E originally signed by Tessera for the Imperial Valley project, but declined to discuss details on the project's purchase or development. Tessera sold the planned 850MW Calico solar project after encountering financing difficulties for the \$2 billion project. The project also faced litigation from tribal groups who claimed they were not adequately consulted in the project's planning stages.

[GE purchases next-generation wind turbine technology](#)

General Electric - Feb 11

General Electric has announced its acquisition of wind turbine technology from Wind Tower Systems (WTS) that allows construction of taller towers that allow for more cost-effective harvesting of windpower via larger blades. WTS' space frame tower technology is designed for wind turbines that require a hub height of 100 meters and above. The space frame tower system factors in component transportation and lifting technology that GE claims eliminated the need for heavy cranes in the installation process. GE is planning construction of a prototype and plans to make the technology commercially available in 2012.

[SoloPower gets \\$197M DOE loan guarantee for Oregon PV plant](#)

Department of Energy - Feb 17

San Jose-based SoloPower has been given a \$197 million loan guarantee from the DOE to establish a thin-film solar panel manufacturing plant in Wilsonville, Oregon. The plant is expected to produce 400MW of flexible PV panels for residential solar installations each year, and generate more than 700 jobs in the Wilsonville area. The panels produced at the plant are designed to be more lightweight, flexible, and easier to mount than previous models. The loan guarantee is the latest in \$18 billion DOE has recently granted to support 19 clean energy projects.

[BrightSource Energy approaches \\$100M solar farm financing goal](#)

Reuters - Feb 14

Oakland-based solar project developer BrightSource Energy has raised \$90 million and is seeking \$10 million more to close a \$100 million funding drive. The company has raised a total of \$420 million in corporate equity to date, in addition to having secured a \$1.37 billion loan guarantee from the U.S. Department of Energy to build its 392MW Ivanpah solar project in the Mojave Desert. The latest \$100 million funding drive will most likely be used to ensure rapid progression of permitting and financing processes for the company's roster of solar energy projects. Draper Fisher Jurvetson, Morgan Stanley, and VantagePoint Venture Partners are among the backers of the \$100 million financing round.

[SolarCity buys Vermont residential PV company](#)

SolarCity - Feb 17

San Mateo-based residential PV installer SolarCity has announced plans to purchase groSolar of Vermont as part of its expansion to the eastern U.S. SolarCity plans to roll out its SolarLease PV installation product to consumers in Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania through groSolar's established commercial channels on the east coast. The move expands SolarCity's operations to 21 local operations in 10 states.

Related News:

[SolarCity tops of list of fast-growing U.S. tech companies](#)

[DOE finalizes \\$343M financing for Nevada transmission line](#)

Department of Energy - Feb 15

U.S. Energy Secretary Steven Chu has announced that the DOE has issued a \$343 million loan guarantee to develop a 500kV AC transmission line in Nevada. The 225-mile One Nevada (ON) Transmission Line is planned to carry 600MW of energy, much of it from renewable sources, in northern Nevada with the broader goal of better integrating power transmission in the state's north and south, and improving overall grid efficiency and reliability. The ARRA-funded initiative will be the first phase in the Southwest Intertie Project (SWIP) that is planned to carry more than 2,000MW of electricity Wyoming, Idaho, and Nevada into California.

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