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# Renewable Energy Update

an Allen Matkins  
market intelligence  
publicationAllen Matkins  
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## [California Senate approves renewable energy legislation](#)

*Bloomberg - Feb 25*

The California Senate has voted 26-11 in favor of a law that requires the state to generate a third of its electricity from renewable sources within the next decade. The bill, authored by Sen. Joe Simitian (D-Palo Alto), places responsibility for implementing the law on the state rather than state air regulators, which is expected to result in tighter enforcement. It also eliminates a requirement that would require utilities to only obtain energy from California sources. The bill needs to be approved by Gov. Jerry Brown and the Assembly before going into effect.

### RENEWABLE ENERGY FOCUS

#### [Analysis: California solar lawsuits pit pro-environment interests against each other](#)

*New York Times - Feb 24*

Concerns over water usage, conservation of sacred native sites, and habitat for endangered species are among key issues spurring environmental and native groups to litigate against planned solar projects in California, according to the New York Times' Todd Woody. The current spate of lawsuits against five major solar projects in the state are not without precedent, says Woody, pointing to Solar Millennium's 2009 failed attempt to build a 250MW solar plant in the state and the demise of 13 renewable energy projects planned for the Mojave Desert under pressure from Sen. Dianne Feinstein and environmental advocacy groups the same year. The ongoing battles are exasperating for the business community and, Woody reports, analysts see no easy compromises.

**Related News:**[Native lawsuit alleges solar plants would destroy heritage sites](#)

#### [San Luis Obispo officials approve 250MW solar project](#)

*Reuters - Feb 24*

The San Luis Obispo County Planning Commission has formally approved construction of a SunPower solar facility on the Carrizo Plain. The panel made the decision after a lengthy process in which they conducted hearings on the potential environmental, economic, and regional benefits and risks of the project. The California Valley Solar Ranch will commence construction this summer and will take more than two years to build, pending final approval. The county planners will next consider approval of a 550MW FirstSolar project, also located on the Carrizo Plain.

**Related News:**[Opinion: California gov't must choose solar facility sites carefully](#)

#### [San Bernardino County plans solar project on disused landfill site](#)

*Redlands Daily Facts - Feb 19*

San Bernardino County has leased a disused landfill near Big Bear City to Project Navigator, a Los Angeles-based environmental project management and consulting group that plans to develop a solar energy facility on the site. The proposed 2MW project is part of a county initiative to use land at both closed and active landfills for renewable energy projects. The Big Bear City project is

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Dallas, TX

one of six landfill-sited renewable energy projects for which county officials are currently negotiating lease agreements. The largest of these is Costa Mesa-based Axio's proposed 20MW solar plant on 90 unused acres of land at a Victorville landfill. A county spokesman said solar projects are a logical solution to put closed or unused landfill acreage to practical use.

### [Proposed law would stop FERC from passing transmission line costs to consumers](#)

*Bloomberg - Feb 18*

A proposed law from a bipartisan group of senators would prevent FERC from distributing the cost of building interstate electricity transmission lines among customers of regional systems. The group spoke against the agency's proposed rule that, according to Sen. Bob Corker (R-Tenn.), would "shift transmission costs from states that benefit to those that don't." FERC is currently developing regulations for paying development costs for transmission lines that deliver power to urban areas from remote generation sites. The Coalition for Fair Transmission Policy, an advocacy group for utilities, has also publicly disapproved of the FERC regulation.

### [Investors funnel \\$38M into ultra-efficient power conversion tech](#)

*L.A. Times - Feb 23*

A Santa Barbara-based start-up has received \$38 million in investments from Google Ventures, Kleiner Perkins and others to aid development of technology whose makers claim they can stop much of the energy loss that occurs in products that involve energy conversion, such as solar panels and electric cars. Transphorm says its conversion modules can recover 90% of the energy lost when DC or AC power is converted into another form, presenting a possible solution to energy conversion waste that costs American businesses more than \$40 billion each year. Transphorm's conversion modules are due to be included in some products by the end of this year, say company representatives.

### [Sen. Feinstein criticizes House approval of legislation to cut DOE loan guarantees](#)

*L.A. Times - Feb 23*

Legislation passed by the House of Representatives that would rescind \$2 billion for DOE loan guarantees for renewable energy projects has jeopardized \$40 billion in private sector investment, writes Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) in the L.A. Times. Feinstein estimates the law would cost California \$16.2 billion and 76,000 jobs in lost renewable energy projects. The senator states her intention to fight the bill before Congress, saying the loan guarantees are necessary for job creation, generation of private sector investment, and for the U.S. to remain globally competitive in the renewable energy market.

### [California residents overcharged for renewable energy: study](#)

*Grist - Feb 22*

The three largest California utilities are preparing to charge state residents too much for renewable energy, according to a study by a CPUC ratepayer's advocacy group. The Division of Ratepayer Advocates study claims that nearly 60% of renewable energy contracts signed by PG&E, SCE, and SDG&E charge more for electricity than the market price referent (MPR). Analyst Todd Woody writes in Grist that although it may appear as though consumers will be gouged on renewable energy, the figures in the study do not accurately reflect what will happen when the projects backing the utilities' contracts go online. Woody speculates that project cancellations and SCE's recent submission of contracts for 250MW of solar power priced under the MPR indicate that consumers will not be forced to pay as much as the study suggests.

### [Analysis: California renewable policy making progress](#)

*Environmental Leader - Feb 21*

**October 17-20, 2011**

#### **Recent Opportunities**

[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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California's energy and environmental agencies are still sorting out renewable energy policy details but remain on track to achieve their goals, according to analysis in Environmental Leader. The state's much-vaunted goal of having 33% of its energy come from renewable sources has the support of recently-elected Gov. Jerry Brown, as well as numerous high-ranking state officials, and is likely to be signed into state law soon. Two of the state's regulatory bodies, the California Public Utilities Commission and the California Air Resources Board, are developing legislation and mechanisms to help codify the 33% goal and otherwise promote development of renewable energy projects. The analysis concludes that state legislators and regulatory entities should continue to fast-track renewable energy laws and projects.

**Related News:**

[Editorial: No renewable energy law yet for California](#)

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**NOTABLE RENEWABLE ENERGY PROJECTS AND DEALS**

[Greenleaf Power finalizes purchase of California biomass plant](#)

*Business Wire - Feb 22*

Greenleaf Power has announced it has brought its total biomass energy production in California to over 100MW with its recently-finalized acquisition of Colmac Energy's 47MW facility in Mecca, Calif. With backing from private equity firm Denham Capital, Greenleaf Power bought the Colmac facility to "maximize efficiencies", according to Greenleaf CEO Hugh Smith. Financial details of the deal were not disclosed.

[PG&E hires SOLON to build 15MW California solar farm](#)

*SOLON - Feb 25*

Solar manufacturer and developer SOLON has been hired by utility PG&E to build a 15MW solar power facility in California. The 15MW plant will be built on 160 acres of land near Fresno as part of PG&E's drive to build a 250MW solar power portfolio. Construction is due to start in spring and finish in October 2011. The facility will employ SOLON's Velocity MW cluster concept with fixed-tilt mounting and the company's SCASA remote control and monitoring system.

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