

Climate Policy Update

May 1, 2024

Good afternoon!

This is Akin's newsletter on climate change policy and regulatory developments, providing information on major climate policy headlines from the past week and forthcoming climate-related events and hearings:

National

- [Five Things to Know About Biden's New Power Plant Rules](#) (*New York Times*)

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued "four major regulations designed to slash multiple forms of toxic and planet-warming pollution from coal-fired power plants, the nation's dirtiest source of electricity." This includes rules intending to virtually eliminate carbon emissions from coal plants; reduce mercury emissions; limit toxic ash from coal plants from making its way into water supplies, and decrease wastewater discharge from the plants.

- [Energy Department Aims to Speed Up Permits for Power Lines](#) (*New York Times*)

Late last week, the Biden administration "finalized a rule meant to speed up federal permits for major transmission lines, part of a broader push to expand America's electric grids."

- [Biden Admin Backs New England Offshore Wind Project in Court](#) (*E&E News*)

The Department of Justice (DOJ) filed a brief in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia to "allow work to proceed on an offshore wind farm off the coast of Rhode Island."

State and Local

- [New York in Limping Toward Its Climate Goals. The State Budget Didn't Help Much](#) (*E&E News*)

Despite the state's lofty goals, "Gov. Kathy Hochul [(D-NY)] and lawmakers failed to take major steps that the state's climate plan called for in this year's budget passed last week – dashing the best hope this year for action on thorny issues like the future of natural gas in New York."

- [The First Big-Rig Hydrogen Fuel Station in the US Opens in California](#) (*Los Angeles Times*)

The Port of Oakland is home to the “first commercial fuel station for big-rig trucks in the U.S. [...] a baby step toward what hydrogen proponents see as a clean new future for long-haul trucking.”

- **Key Solar Panel Ingredient Is made in the USA Again** (*New York Times*)

A factory in Washington state—owned by REC Silicon—that previously shut down “will resume shipping a critical ingredient used in most solar panels that for years have been made almost exclusively in China.” This could “help achieve a longstanding goal of many American lawmakers and energy executives to re-establish a complete domestic supply chain for solar panels.”

- **Maryland Battery Plant Tried to Upend Rivals – and Lithium Ion** (*E&E News*)

Ion Storage Systems “began operating one of the largest U.S. factories for solid-state batteries” and the plant comes as “demand for battery power is expected to grow elevenfold between 2020 and 2030, as electric vehicles and other low-emissions technologies continue to roll out.”

International

- **US, China to Hold Climate Meetings in Washington in May** (*Reuters*)

Special Presidential Envoy for Climate John Podesta noted that “he will meet his Chinese counterpart Liu Zhenmin in Washington in early May, resuming bilateral talks on climate cooperation amid simmering tensions over trade and security.”

- **Azerbaijan President: COP29 Won’t Stop Us Investing in “God-Given” Gas** (*E&E News*)

Azerbaijan President Ilham Aliyev underscored that—despite hosting the Conference of Parties 29 (COP29)—the country would continue “its plans to massively expand natural gas extraction” to support Europe’s energy needs.

- **G7 Reaches Deal to Exit from Coal by 2035** (*Reuters*)

The Group of Seven’s (G7) energy ministers “reached a deal to shut down their coal-fired power plants in the first half of the 2030s, in a significant step toward the transition away from fossil fuels.”

- **Plastic Talks Gather Steam Amid Impasse Over Production Limits** (*Reuters*)

The High-Ambition Coalition—including the European Union, Norway, Ghana, Rwanda and Peru—continues its work on a plastic treaty, although the “countries still need to decide on whether the treaty should call for reducing the amount of plastics produced.”

- **Hydrogen Offers Germany a Chance to Take a Lead in Green Energy** (*New York Times*)

The Duisburg, Germany-based Nucera project seeks to leverage a device that “produces hydrogen, a carbon-free gas, that could help power mills.” This project “was backed by a German government fund worth 700 million euros, or \$746 million.”

Check out below for key quotes, federal agency news, and a look at the week ahead in congressional hearings and think tank events:

Quote of the Week

"[The New York state budget] was bad for climate [...] we have more work to do on climate." – *New York State Sen. Liz Krueger (D-NY)* (*E&E News* – [April 29](#))

Congressional Hearings (April 29 - May 3, 2024)

Senate

No relevant Senate hearings.

House of Representatives

[**It's Electric: A Review of Fleet Electrification Efforts**](#)

House Transportation and Infrastructure

Tuesday, April 30, 10:00 AM ET

[**Examining the Influence of Extreme Environmental Activist Groups in the Department of the Interior**](#)

House Natural Resources Oversight Subcommittee

Tuesday, April 30, 10:15 AM ET

Federal Agency Climate News

Department of Energy

[**Biden-Harris Administration Announces New National Security Memorandum to Strengthen U.S. Department of Energy's Role in Ensuring Security and Resilience Across America's Energy Sector**](#) (April 30)

[**Biden-Harris Administration Announces \\$78 Million to Further Drive Down Energy Costs and Enhance Energy Security in Rural and Remote Communities Across America**](#) (April 30)

[**Biden-Harris Administration Announces Final Transmission Permitting Rule and Latest Investments To Accelerate the Build Out of a Resilient, Reliable, Modernized Electric Grid**](#) (April 25)

[**DOE Reduces Regulatory Hurdles For Energy Storage, Transmission, and Solar Projects**](#) (April 25)

Environmental Protection Agency

[**Biden-Harris Administration Finalizes Suite of Standards to Reduce Pollution from Fossil Fuel-Fired Power Plants**](#) (April 25)

Department of Interior

[**Interior Department Proposes Offshore Wind Sales in Oregon, Gulf of Maine**](#) (April 30)

White House

[**Biden-Harris Administration Delivers on Permitting Progress to Build America's Infrastructure and Clean Energy Future Faster, Safer, and Cleaner**](#) (April 30)

Funding and Comment Opportunities

Solar and Wind Interconnection for Future Transmission

Department of Energy

Close Date: June 28, 2024

Advanced Manufacturing and Recycling Program

Department of Energy

Close Date: June 24, 2024

D.C. Climate Events

Strengthening U.S. Critical Minerals Security

Center for Strategic and International Studies

Tuesday, April 30, 10:00 AM ET

Carbon Dioxide Removal: The Need, the Now, and the Next

Bipartisan Policy Center

Wednesday, May 1, 10:00 AM ET

What Climate and Energy Tech Innovations are in the Works at the National Laboratories

United States Energy Association

Wednesday, May 1, 11:00 AM ET

Reducing Emissions in the Natural Gas Supply Chain

Center for Strategic and International Studies

Wednesday, May 1, 3:00 PM ET

For more information, please contact your regular Akin lawyer or advisor, or:

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