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Cleantech Policy Round-Up (10 Stories)

November 28, 2011 By [Zachary Shahan](#) [Leave a Comment](#)

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Time for another round-up. This one's on some of the top cleantech policy stories I've seen around in the past week or so.



1. Spain Now Allowing Net Metering for Small Power Plants!

“Spain’s government passed a decree [last] Friday designed to make it easier for small power plants to connect to the grid and pave the way for their operators to become self-sufficient,” Reuters [reports](#). “Government spokesman Jose Blanco told a weekly news conference the measure was aimed at renewable energy sources, particularly photovoltaic (PV) panels, which convert sunlight into electricity.”

2. U.S. Could Save Over \$80 Billion in Lower Energy Costs by Switching to Clean, Safe, Renewable Energy

“Titled ‘*Toward a Sustainable Future for the U.S. Power Sector: Beyond Business as Usual 2011*’ and available online at <http://www.CivilSocietyInstitute.org/synapsereport>, the new Synapse/CSI report outlines a realistic transition to a cleaner energy future that would result in a net savings of \$83 billion over the next 40 years,” a recent news release [reports](#). “The Synapse report also details other major benefits, including: the avoidance of tens of thousands of premature deaths due to pollution; the creation of hundreds of thousands of new jobs; sharp cuts in carbon pollution; and significant cuts in water consumption for power production.”

3. U.S. Puts \$112 Million in Energy-Efficient Transit

“The U.S. Transportation Department is sending \$112 million to projects across the country to help build energy-efficient transit vehicles and facilities,” Reuters [reports](#). “The money, intended to create environment-friendly transportation options as well as construction jobs, will be shared among 46 projects.”

4. Climate Change More Important than Financial Crisis to Europeans

“Europeans are more concerned about climate change today than in 2009 and they believe that fighting climate change can boost the economy and create jobs,” Vestas (a job-creating wind turbine company) [reports](#). “Between 2009 and 2011, the share of citizens who feel that climate change is the most serious problem has increased from 17% to 20%. Also, EU citizens believe that the seriousness of climate change has increased compared to two years ago.” (The only issue Europeans were more concerned about was “poverty, hunger and lack of drinking water,” which is quite clearly tied to climate change anyway.)

5. Regional Cap-&-Trade Creating Economic Growth in Northeastern U.S.

“A regional cap-and-trade program launched in the northeastern U.S. three years ago has saved customers nearly \$1.1 billion on electricity bills, helped create 16,000 jobs, and has retained more than \$765 million in local economies by reducing the demand for fossil fuels, [according to a new analysis](#),” Yale e360 nicely [summarizes](#). “While the future of the so-called Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) remains in jeopardy — [with New Jersey planning to drop out and other states also considering leaving](#) — the study by the Boston-based Analysis Group finds that the project has had real benefits for the ten participating states.”

6. EPA Clean Air Rules Boost Economy, Create Jobs

“A new study details the positive impacts on the economy and job creation resulting from companies’ investments in emission control technology in response to new air pollution rules from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA),” a news release last week [states](#). “The report, “*New Jobs – Cleaner Air Part II: An investment in American Businesses and American Jobs*,” released today by Ceres in collaboration with the Institute of Clean Air Companies (ICAC), highlights specific case studies of companies involved in building a fleet of modern power plants.”

“As Congress continues to debate how best to create jobs, we already know one area that is poised for more jobs – the utility sector. As companies invest in upgrades to their older, less efficient power plants to comply with EPA air pollution rules, jobs will be created at supplier’s manufacturing centers all the way down the supply chain to the actual construction sites,” said Ceres president, Mindy Lubber. “Hands down, clean air is a good thing and putting these air pollution rules into effect at a time when new jobs and economic growth are desperately needed is the right thing to do.”

7. Energy Efficiency Creates Jobs, and How

“For many years, ACEEE has done analyses and written reports on the role of energy efficiency in creating jobs,” [ACEEE reports](#). “[Our new] fact sheet seeks to de-mystify how net job impacts should be estimated, and demonstrate how investments in cost-effective energy efficiency improvements can yield a net positive benefit for the nation’s overall employment.”

8. U.S. Supports Revenue-Neutral Carbon Tax!

“A majority of Americans across the political spectrum support policies that reduce carbon emissions, [including a revenue-neutral carbon tax](#), according to a new survey by the Yale Project on Climate Change Communication,” Yale e360 reports.

In a survey conducted between Oct. 20 and Nov. 6, 65 percent of respondents said they would support a revenue-neutral carbon tax to help “create jobs and decrease pollution” — including 51 percent of those identifying themselves as Republicans, 69 percent of independents, and 77 percent of Democrats. Sixty percent said they would support a \$10-per-ton carbon tax if the money was spent reducing federal income taxes. That support continued even when respondents were told the carbon tax would “slightly increase the cost of many things you buy, including food, clothing, and electricity.” Support for the tax dipped to 49 percent if the revenue was instead returned to each family as an annual check, and to just 44 percent if it was spent paying down the national debt. Sixty-nine percent said they oppose federal subsidies for the fossil fuel industry, while 54 percent opposed ethanol subsidies.

9. Bill Gates Urges U.S. to Triple Its Investment in Cleantech

Bill Gates wants the U.S. to triple its cleantech investments to \$16 billion a year, noting that we're lagging behind China, France, and Canada in this arena. Writing in the journal [Science](#) last Friday he mentioned a report by the American Energy Innovation Council and said the extra money could come from cuts in investments and subsidies to well-established energy industries. Sounds good to me (and the majority of the U.S.)!

10. China Probing U.S. Renewable Energy Support

The potential solar trade war heated up on Friday as China announced that it was investigating government policy and subsidy support for renewable energy in the U.S. "The announcement by the Commerce Ministry also comes after China's solar industry association said on Tuesday that Chinese solar companies may ask Beijing to launch an anti-dumping and subsidy probe into imports of U.S. polysilicon, the raw material used to make solar cells," [Reuters reports](#).

[Renewable energy](#) image via shutterstock

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[About Zachary Shahan](#)

If you couldn't guess, I spend most of my time on [CleanTechnica](#) and [Planetsave](#). I'm the director/editor of both sites and am a little obsessed with them. I'm also Publishing Services Manager at [Important Media](#), which means that I do everything I can to support other Important Media writers, editors, and directors (as well as the network as a whole) in the good work they are engaged in. You can also find my work on Scientific American, Reuters, Change.org, most of the sites in the Important Media network, & many other places. For more, or to connect, go to zacharyshahan.com

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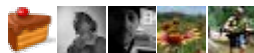
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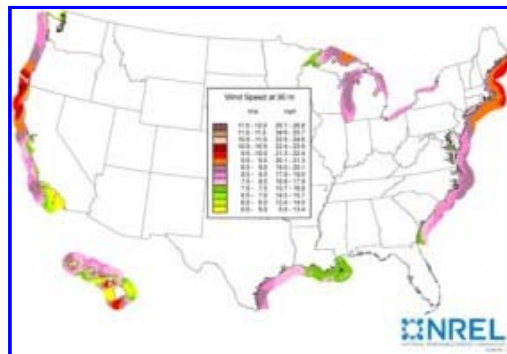


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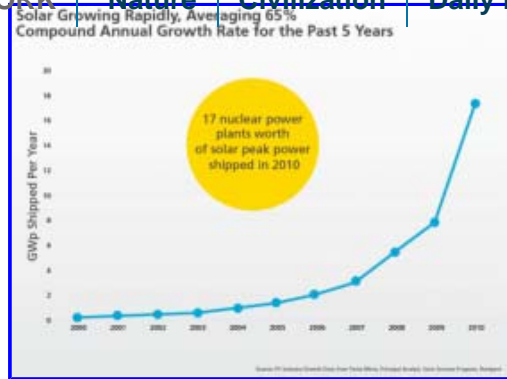
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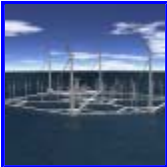
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