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Welcome to the last issue of ***Solar Newsbriefs*** for 2017 brought to you by the Washington State University Energy Program. Please feel free to forward this issue to those of your colleagues interested in solar energy. For archives of past ***Solar Newsbriefs***, visit <http://www.energy.wsu.edu/EnergyLibrary/Newsbriefs.aspx/solarnewsbriefsarchive.aspx>.

Oregon News

What is the Resource Value of Solar?

Utilities typically think solar is a cost to them because solar customers aren't paying as much as traditional customers for grid maintenance. Solar customers think it should be seen as a benefit to utilities because they're using less of the grid's power and even feeding energy into the grid in some cases. So who's right? One way states have tried to answer that question is by finding a resource value of solar, or RVOS. The resource value of solar, or RVOS, is a number value that can help states determine the net cost or benefit of solar on a utility-by-utility basis. They can use that number to see if the net metering policies in place accurately reflect the value of solar they've found, or create a new value of solar tariff. Oregon just completed Phase 1 of the RVOS process, where it defined the parameters of the RVOS equation. In the next step, the state's IOUs plug their unique numbers into the equation and then present their findings back to the PUC and stakeholders. For more information please read – *Solar Power World*, November 30, 2107: <https://www.solarpowerworldonline.com/2017/11/what-is-resource-value-of-solar/>

National News

Final Version of Tax Bill Keeps ITC Intact

Following aggressive advocacy efforts by the Solar Energy Industries Association (SEIA) to ensure the continued growth of the U.S. solar industry, Congress reached an agreement on comprehensive tax reform legislation. Following is a statement from Abigail Ross Hopper, SEIA's president and CEO: "After weeks of negotiations, the final tax legislation released today maintains the solar Investment Tax Credits (ITC) for both commercial developers and for homeowners in its current form. This is a

great victory for the solar industry and its 260,000 American workers and we commend our bipartisan solar champions in Congress for their diligent efforts to maintain solar's critical role in America's economy — *Solar Novus Today*, December 18, 2017.

http://solarnovus.com/final-version-of-tax-bill-keeps-itc-intact_N11329.html

Dozens of U.S. Mayors Declare Support for Solar

Dozens of U.S. mayors from across the country have signaled their public support for solar energy to power their communities. A statement released Tuesday by advocacy group Environment America includes signatures from city mayors and local officials ranging from South Miami, Fla., to Traverse City, Mich., who agree on the need to tap into clean energy from the sun — See *Solar Industry*, December 13, 2017.

https://solarindustrymag.com/dozens-u-s-mayors-declare-support-solar?utm_term=0_5eaa0aab62-263a61ef2f-

Technological Innovations

Dramatic Breakthroughs in Solar

Recently, there have been advances in solar energy that will help further the public use of photovoltaic (PV) solar reconciliation at cost parity with fossil fuels as a viable source of energy to power the door. A key development that will allow the widespread use of solar energy is the production of cells using cheaper and readily available materials. Silicon has always been the preferred PV material, but cadmium telluride, copper and selenium (including materials) is now also used to produce solar cells. These materials are used to produce cells highly cost effective, easy. Read the full article at *Latest Solar News*, December 20, 2017:

<https://latestsolarnews.com/dramatic-breakthroughs-in-solar-energy/>

Solar Industry Workforce

New Research: Study Provides Baseline Insights on solar Industry Workforce

Diversity

New research released by The Solar Foundation in partnership with the Solar Energy Industries Association's Women's Empowerment Committee reveals that the 260,000-worker-strong U.S. solar energy workforce is more diverse than similar American industries, but still needs to make progress in order to ensure fairness and equality for its employees. The 2017 U.S. Solar Industry Diversity Study provides statistically significant evidence for what has long been casually observed, proving that women and people of color face significant hurdles to accessing the equal pay and senior positions of their white male counterparts, with women of color being affected the most — Read article and access the full report on the Solar Foundation's website at:

<https://www.thesolarfoundation.org/new-research-study-provides-baseline-insights-solar-industry-workforce-diversity/>

Reports

Access for All: Pathways to Expand Solar Options to Renters and Multifamily Households in Seattle

Developed in partnership with Spark Northwest and the Center for Sustainable Energy, IREC's guide outlines two potential pathways to enable greater solar access for renters and multifamily residents and LMI communities in Seattle: (1) on-site shared solar, via an arrangement that allows energy generation credits from a single solar system to be shared virtually among multiple tenant accounts; and (2) off-site/remote shared solar, which allows multiple dispersed customers to share the economic benefits of a single renewable energy system and receive credits on their utility bills for the electricity generated by that common system. The guide highlights the necessary elements and key stakeholders for each. Check the guide on the IREC's website:

<http://www.irecusa.org/publications/access-for-all-pathways-to-expand-solar-options-to-renters-and-multifamily-households-in-seattle/>

Consumer Protection for Community Solar: A Guide for States

This guide discusses consumer protection issues that may arise in community solar projects for residential consumers, and the role states can play in ensuring appropriate consumer protections. Download the report available at the Clean Energy States Alliance website:

<https://www.cesa.org/assets/2017-Files/Consumer-Protection-for-Community-Solar.pdf>

Environmental Justice

Just Energy Policies and Practices Action Toolkit

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) released a Just Energy Policies and Practices Action Toolkit. The toolkit contains modules to help guide individuals and communities move towards an energy economy that is sustainable, equitable, and just for all its members. It includes a section on how to pass net metering, distributed generation and community shared renewable energy policies, a fact sheet on advancing equity, inclusion, and leadership in the solar industry, and a fact sheet on solar consumer protection. See the Action Toolkit:

<http://www.naacp.org/climate-justice-resources/just-energy/>

Just Energy Policies: Model Energy Policies Guide

The above toolkit is designed to operate in conjunction with the NAACP's Just Energy Policies: Model Energy Policies Guide, which contains specific information for people wanting to change policy, published last March and available at:

http://www.naacp.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/Just-Energy-Policies_Model-Energy-Policies-Guide_NAACP.pdf

Technological Innovations

Less Guesswork with New Analysis Tool for PV + Storage

Using NREL's new REopt Lite web tool, commercial building owners can evaluate the economic feasibility of grid-connected solar photovoltaics (PV) on their buildings. The web tool identifies both the optimal PV and battery system sizes as well as the dispatch strategy to minimize the life-cycle cost of energy. REopt Lite also estimates the amount of time that a PV and battery system can sustain the site's critical load during a grid outage. REopt Lite is based on the more comprehensive (and complicated) REopt model that NREL uses to conduct project feasibility analysis for federal agencies, military installations, businesses, and communities. In 2018, NREL plans to expand REopt Lite, adding additional capabilities for resiliency analysis and providing access to the model via an application programming interface. See NREL at:

<https://reopt.nrel.gov/tool>

Webinars

Using Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP) Funds for Low-Income Solar

Thursday, January 11, 1-2 pm ET

Traditionally, the Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP) focused on increasing energy efficiency for low-income households. As solar costs have declined, interest in using WAP funds for low-income solar deployment has increased. On this webinar, Joshua Olsen from the U.S. Department of Energy will discuss the federal approval process for a state to integrate solar into WAP. This approval process includes demonstrating the effectiveness of solar in generating savings. Monisha Shah, an Energy Analyst at the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL), will present a state-specific tool NREL developed to demonstrate the effectiveness of solar in generating savings. For more information and to register:

<https://www.cesa.org/webinars/using-wap-funds-for-low-income-solar/?date=2018-01-11>

Using Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) Funds for Low-Income Solar

Tuesday, January 16, 1-2 pm ET

The Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) assists low-income families with their home energy bills. LIHEAP serves as an emergency bill assistance service, but state LIHEAP administrators have flexibility to use some program funds to reduce long-term dependence on energy assistance. Some argue that these LIHEAP funds should be used for low-income solar. This webinar will feature Jason Edens, the Director of the Rural Renewable Energy Alliance, which is exploring models for using LIHEAP funds for low-income participation in community solar projects. It will also feature the Maryland Office of Home Energy Programs Director Bill Freeman, who has extensive experience with solar and energy assistance programs. For more information and to register:

<https://www.cesa.org/webinars/using-liheap-funds-for-low-income-solar/?date=2018-01-16>

Follow-Up Discussion: Using Federal Low-Income Energy Assistance Programs for Solar

Thursday, January 25, 1-2 pm ET

This interactive webinar discussion is a follow-up to two webinars: CESA's 1/11 webinar, "Using Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP) Funds for Low-Income Solar" and CESA's 1/16 webinar, "Using Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) Funds for Low-Income Solar." Guest speakers from both webinars will participate in this follow-up discussion. Participants will be invited to respond to the earlier webinars, share their ideas and experiences, and ask questions. This webinar is open to state and municipal officials only. Participants are strongly encouraged to either have attended the earlier webinars or watched the webinar recording before attending this follow-up discussion. For more information and to register:

<https://www.cesa.org/webinars/follow-up-discussion-using-federal-low-income-energy-assistance-programs-for-solar/?date=2018-01-25>

Want to Contribute? If you have information on events, publications or other solar topics that you would like mentioned in an upcoming issue of *Solar Newsbriefs*, please contact Anne Whitney at whitneya@energy.wsu.edu

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