



October 3, 2024

Welcome to this month's issue of ***Solar Newsbriefs***, 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

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Oregon News

Environment Oregon Joins the Save Oregon Solar Coalition

On Tuesday, the [Save Oregon Solar Coalition](#) officially launched. This new coalition, which includes Environment Oregon, is a group of community organizations, environmental and environmental justice groups, clean energy advocates and businesses that was formed to support the continued growth of solar in Oregon—Environmental Oregon, Aug 14, 2024: [Click here to read more.](#)

Solar Project Offers Low-Income Portland Residents Relief from High Energy Bills

Carlos Interian lives with his family on the lower level of an apartment complex in the Cully neighborhood of Northeast Portland. He's a father of two, a 7-year-old son and a 1-year-old daughter.... As a Pacific Power customer, Interian's bills have increased by more than 25% over the past two years. Right now, he pays about \$80 a month on his energy bills. In the winter, it's about \$100 a month. But Interian and other qualified Cully neighborhood residents could see relief on their energy bills starting in October.... Verde, an environmental justice nonprofit, and Bonneville Environmental Foundation have teamed up to [create one of Portland's first large scale community solar projects](#) aimed at helping lower energy bills between 30% to 45% for about 150 qualified low-income residents in the Cully neighborhood—Monica Samayoa, OPB, Sept 4, 2024: [Click here to read more.](#)

EPA Awards Climate Grants to Tribes in Oregon

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency will provide Climate Pollution Reduction Grants to eight Tribes in Alaska, Idaho, Oregon and Washington. The Tribes will receive \$78,441,385 in grants as part of the Biden-Harris Administration's Investing in America agenda... In Oregon and Idaho, the Nez Perce Tribe received \$8,707,461 to conduct energy audits and energy efficiency improvements at two tribal buildings, install 49 kW solar arrays, replace 68 fleet vehicles with EV / PHEV cars, install 72 Level II and Level III EV chargers and plant more than 400,000 trees over five years—DJC Staff, *Daily Journal of Commerce Oregon*, Sept 5, 2024: [Click here to read more.](#)

As Northwest Homes and Businesses get More Energy Efficient, that's Helping the Power Grid, Report Finds

Energy efficient heat pumps, electric water heaters, solar panels, home insulation, smart thermostats

and lighting are all helping Pacific Northwest electric utilities and power regulators better balance the grid, according to a study out this week—Monica Samayoa, OPB, Sept 16, 2024: [Click here to read more and access the report.](#)

150 Cully Neighborhood Families to see Reduced Power Bills through New Solar Project

A new solar project located near the Portland Airport is set to bring down energy costs for a local neighborhood. The 'PDX Community Solar Project', located off of NE Sunderland Ave., will contain one megawatt of electricity- enough to provide discounts for 150 households in the Cully neighborhood—Karli Olson, KPTV Portland, Sept 12, 2024: [Click here to read more.](#)

Transmission, Renewables to Cut Western US Emissions, Costs

If all the high-voltage transmission currently under construction and in advanced stages of permitting is built by 2030 in the Western United States-enabling the construction of new renewable energy projects-carbon dioxide emissions in the Western United States would drop by 73 percent compared to 200—*Mirage.News*, Sept 2024: [Click here to read more](#) and access the DOE's PNNL report it is based on titled [Western Interconnection Baseline Study](#), published Sept 13, 2024.

Plan Would Make 1 Million Acres of Federal Land in Oregon Available for Solar Energy Projects

More than 1 million acres of federal land in central and southern Oregon could soon be leased for solar energy projects... Officials at the federal Bureau of Land Management announced Aug. 29 they had finalized a [plan](#) to add Oregon, Idaho, Montana, Washington and Wyoming to its existing Western Solar Plan – an Obama-era project that expanded permitting for solar projects on federal land. When it was first implemented in 2012, it only included Arizona, California, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico and Utah... The expansion includes 1.1 million acres of land in Oregon that officials deem to be of low risk for any adverse environmental effects from solar installations, and the plots also are within 15 miles of existing or planned transmission lines—Alex Baumhardt, *Oregon Capital Chronicle*, Sept 20, 2024: [Click here to read more.](#)

Oregon Department of Energy Grant Program Supports Renewable and Resilient Energy Development in Communities Across the State

The Oregon Department of Energy has selected 34 recipients to receive nearly \$18 million in [Community Renewable Energy Grant Program](#) funds. The program supports planning and construction of renewable energy or energy resilience projects for Tribes, public bodies, and consumer-owned utilities—Oregon Dept of Energy, [Press Release], Sept 24, 2024: [Click here to read more.](#)

Oregon Summers are Getting Hotter. This Farm is Using the Sun to Adapt

It's an early, drizzly September morning at Our Table Cooperative farm in Sherwood, just a short drive south from Portland... While the summer growing season is almost over, crews are busy at the farm planting a different kind of crop — solar. This doesn't look like what most people imagine when they think of solar panels. The crew hoists up a large solar array on a crane, while one worker fastens the panels on a 15-foot-high steel beam... It looks like a giant rectangular umbrella, and there are six of them. On one side, the panels will generate energy for the farm. But Narendra Varma, the co-op's executive director, says there's another key benefit — shade— Alejandro Figueroa, OPB, Sept 25, 2024: [Click here to read more.](#)

Washington News

Puget Sound Energy Adds Two New Clean Energy Projects in Washington

Puget Sound Energy (PSE) is proud to announce two large projects in Washington state that will help add more clean energy to its portfolio... The first is the development of a utility-scale solar facility known as Appaloosa Solar Project that PSE will own and operate. The second is a power purchase agreement signed with BrightNight for a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) known as the Greenwater project.... Together, the projects can generate up to 342 MW of energy to help PSE's commitment to diversify its renewable resource mix and meet the state's Clean Energy Transformation Act (CETA) targets—Puget Sound Energy, [Press Release], Sept 24, 2024: [Click here to read more.](#)

Former Washington Nuclear Site Gets New Life as Solar Farm

A former nuclear testing facility is poised to get new life as a massive solar farm. Originally part of the Manhattan Project in the 1940s, the Hanford facility in Washington state was home to the world's first full-scale plutonium production reactor, and plutonium made there was used in the Fat Man bomb dropped on Nagasaki, Japan. As part of the Cleanup to Clean Energy initiative, the U.S. Department of Energy now plans to repurpose the 8,000-acre site into a 1 GW solar farm that, if completed to plan, would be the largest solar project in the country—Editorial Staff, *Government Technology*, Sept/Oct 2024: [Click here to read more.](#)

Tri-Cities Wind/Solar Project Moves Forward after Vote

Washington Gov. Jay Inslee is getting his wish in a vote approving a large new wind and solar project in southeastern Washington... In a final vote Sept. 13, in a meeting with a duration of about 15 minutes, members of WA Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council voted 4-3 in favor of approving a revised project recommendation to allow construction of Horse Heaven Clean Energy Center, near Tri-Cities—Carleen Johnson, *The Center Square*, Sept 4, 2024: [Click here to read more.](#)

West Mason Fire District Solar Project

The inauguration of the West Mason Fire Solar Project was celebrated with a ribbon-cutting ceremony on August 14, 2024. This installation is set to lower the District's energy costs, projecting savings of over \$215,159 in the next forty years. It will also diminish West Mason Fire's carbon footprint by 32,000 pounds of CO2 emissions annually, which is comparable to planting 262 trees each year or refraining from driving 40,000 miles—Chantal Stevens, *Solar Washington*, Sept 4, 2024: [Click here to read more.](#)

EFSEC Reschedules Vote on Horse Heaven Wind and Solar Project

The Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council has rescheduled its vote on the Horse Heaven wind and solar project for 3:30 p.m. Sept. 13... The council was set to vote Wednesday, but canceled the meeting because not all seven members were able to attend, an EFSEC spokesman said. It was the second time EFSEC postponed a vote because of an absent member—Don Jenkins, *Capital Press*, Sept 5, 2024: [Click here to read more.](#)

Commerce Invests \$37 Million in 46 Clean Energy Projects Across Washington State

The Washington State Department of Commerce today announced 46 grants funded by the Washington Climate Commitment Act with additional state funding to boost clean energy technology innovation and

support clean energy planning, design and construction projects throughout the state. A total of \$37 million awarded through two clean energy programs furthers the goals of Washington's [2021 State Energy Strategy](#)... "Communities all over Washington will benefit now and in the future from these strategic investments in clean energy," said Commerce Director Mike Fong—WA State Dept. of Commerce, [Press Release], Sept 12, 2024: [Click here to read more](#).

EFSEC Approves Horse Heaven Wind and Solar Project

The Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council voted 4-3 on Sept. 13 to recommend Gov. Jay Inslee approve the Horse Heaven wind and solar project in southeast Washington... A majority of the council supported a plan that could allow Scout Clean Energy of Boulder, Colo., to put up as many as 222 windmills and cover more than 5,000 acres with solar panels on rolling hills near the Tri-Cities—Don Jenkins, Capital Press, Sept 13, 2024: [Click here to read more](#).

Commerce Invests \$37 Million in Clean Energy Projects in South King County and State

The Washington State Department of Commerce (DOC) announced a \$37 million investment into 46 clean energy projects throughout the state, including projects in Renton and Kent... The two programs will be funded by the Washington Climate Commitment Act (and additional state funding), with \$14 million going towards the "Research, Development and Demonstration" program, which awards "projects fund multiple new and developing technologies, ranging from low-head turbines to create hydropower, to several different carbon capture technologies, to low-carbon concrete products."—Bailey Josie, *Kent Reporter*, Sept 18, 2024: [Click here to read more](#).

Climate Commitment Act Dollars at Work: \$10-Million Investment Supports New Clean Energy Projects in Tribal Communities

The Washington State Department of Commerce today announced more than \$10 million in grants for 13 clean energy projects proposed by tribal communities across the state. These clean energy grant awards are part of a new [Tribal Clean Energy](#) opportunity funded by Washington's [Climate Commitment Act](#). Commerce has now awarded a total of \$17.5 million to support the planning, design and construction of 18 tribal clean energy projects that promote tribal sovereignty, advance community resiliency and contribute to Washington's decarbonization goals... Funding still available – applications close Oct. 15—WA State Dept. of Commerce, *News Release*, Sept 19, 2024: [Click here to read more](#).

[City of Seattle] Photovoltaic Parks

Seattle is a national leader in clean energy thanks to our ample hydropower and local investments in solar and wind power. Yet as our population grows, and electricity demands increase, we need to think creatively about how to provide more power while still maintaining our goals for being carbon neutral by 2050. Seattle Parks and Recreation (SPR) isn't sitting on the side-lines for this transition—Todd Burley, *City of Seattle, Parkways*, Sept 17, 2024: [Click here to read more](#).

The Department of Energy Promised This Tribal Nation a \$32 Million Solar Grant. It's Nearly Impossible to Access.

The Department of Energy gave the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation what seemed like very good news earlier this year: It had won a \$32 million grant for a novel solar energy project in Washington state. Built over a series of old irrigation canals, the proposed solar panels would generate

electricity for tribal members without removing farm acreage from cultivation. The location would preserve the kinds of [culturally sensitive land that have prompted concerns about other renewables projects](#)—Tony Schick, ICT News/High County News, Sept 20, 2024: [Click here to read more](#).

Washington State Launches Site to Find Climate Friendly Grants, Rebates and Tax Incentives

Washington state leaders on Monday shared a new website that corrals the federal and state grants, tax incentives and rebates that are available to help businesses, individuals, tribal groups, nonprofits and government agencies seeking support in implementing and developing climate friendly technologies... The [FundHubWA](#) site pulls together the opportunities available through three federal laws — the Inflation Reduction Act, the CHIPS and Science Act, and the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law — as well as Washington’s Climate Commitment Act, a measure that charges the state’s largest polluters for their emissions and allocates the money to climate programs—Lisa Stiffler, *GeekWire*, Sept 23, 2024: [Click here to read more and explore FundHub WA](#).

National News

BLM Releases Plan to Develop Solar on 31 Million Acres of Western Land

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) announced its [proposed roadmap](#) for solar energy development on public lands, designed to expand solar projects on public lands.

This release is the proposed updated Western Solar Plan, which was first published in 2012 and designed to guide responsible solar development on public lands in Arizona, California, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico and Utah. More recently it was expanded to include Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Washington and Wyoming—Anne Fischer, *pv magazine*, Sept 3, 2024: [Click here to read more](#).

Biden-Harris Administration Invests Nearly \$20 Million to Improve Siting of Renewable Energy and Co-Locate Solar with Cattle Grazing

As part of the Biden-Harris Administration’s Investing in America agenda, the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) today announced the selection of six projects totaling \$11.6 million funded by the Inflation Reduction Act in the second round of a program that will improve planning, siting, and permitting processes for large-scale renewable energy facilities. Six state-based collaborative teams will develop statewide and Tribal initiatives to support communities in evaluating and planning for large-scale renewable energy and energy storage projects. [Among them:

- **Washington: Led by the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians (Award amount: \$1.96 million)**

DOE, EERE, Sept 10, 2024: [Click here to read more](#).

IREC: US Adds 15,564 Solar Jobs in 2023, up 5.9% YoY

The US added 15,564 solar jobs in 2023, up 5.9% from 2022, and reached a total of 279,447 workers, according to a report from the Interstate Renewable Energy Council (IREC)... In its 14th annual ‘Solar Jobs Census’ report, IREC adds that including part-time workers—people who spend less than half of their time on solar-related work—the total number of solar employees increases to 364,544 workers—Jonathan Touriño Jacobo, *PV-Tech*, Sept 19, 2024: [Click here to read more and access report](#).

“Energy Ready” Suite of Programs Announced to Support Local Governments in Accessing and Managing Clean Energy Economic Growth

The Interstate Renewable Energy Council (IREC) and the International City/County Management Association (ICMA) today announced the launch of [Energy Ready](#), a suite of U.S. Department of Energy-funded programs providing free technical assistance to support local governments in navigating the expansion of clean energy technologies in their areas. Energy Ready includes programs for solar energy, electric vehicles (EVs) and EV charging infrastructure, and distributed wind energy— Gwendolyn Brown, *IREC News & Press Releases*, Sept 23, 2024: [Click here to read more](#).

22 States Want to Employ 1 Million People in Climate Apprenticeships by 2035

Governors of 22 states and two U.S. territories say they want to get 1 million people to complete apprenticeships related to low-carbon energy or other climate-friendly jobs by 2035... The U.S. Climate Alliance, the coalition of mostly Democrat governors, announced this week the launch of the Governors’ Climate-Ready Workforce Initiative—Rachel Frazin, *The Hill*, Sept 24, 2024: [Click here to read more](#).

Solar-Plus-Storage Dominating Future U.S. Power Grid

A report from Berkeley Lab reveals a significant expansion of solar-plus-storage facilities in the U.S. power plant market, highlighting an evolution from frequency to arbitrage and curtailment mitigation markets. The best is yet to come, as ongoing price decreases are still being absorbed by the market and are already being used to fill the interconnection queues with terrawatts of capacity—John Fitzgerald Weaver, *pv magazine*, Sept 25, 2024: [Click here to read more](#).

Recommendations for Solar with Justice: Connecting States and Communities

For the past three years, the Solar with Justice Project, managed by the Clean Energy States Alliance, has helped state energy agencies (SEAs) and community-based organizations (CBOs) work collaboratively to advance the equitable development of solar to benefit underserved communities. The project has produced numerous reports, case studies, and video interviews, all of which are available on a [dedicated webpage](#) on the CESA website. This paper summarizes the project’s main recommendations for SEAs and CBOs interested in expanding solar in low- and moderate-income and disadvantaged communities—Warren Leon, *Clean Energy States Alliance*, Sept 26, 2024: [Click here](#) to read more, view PDF and view webinar.

\$44 Million for Clean Energy Planning & Deployment on Tribal Lands

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) announced today nearly \$44 million for Tribal communities to deploy clean energy solutions that will bring energy security and resilience and help lower energy costs. Six American Indian and Alaska Native communities located in five states will receive \$18.8 million in funding to install solar and wind energy infrastructure which will provide 5.6-megawatts (MW) of clean energy generation and battery storage for over 100 Tribal buildings. An additional \$25 million in funding will be made available through a new funding opportunity announcement for Tribal communities to plan, assess, and develop clean energy projects—U.S. DOE, [Press Release], Sept 27, 2024: [Click here to read more](#).

Conferences, Webinars and other Upcoming Events

2024 Washington State Solar Summit: Shoreline Community College: October 4, 2024

Hosted by Solar Washington since 2015 the Washington State Solar Summit is an important annual information gathering and networking event for solar industry stakeholders including manufacturers, distributors, engineers, consultants and installers, representatives from utilities, municipalities and tribes, legislators/policy makers, educators, students, advocacy organizations/nonprofits, financial lenders, and more. [Click here for more information and to register.](#)

ASES National Solar Tour: Oct 4-6, 2024

Hosted by the [American Solar Energy Society \(ASES\)](#) for over 29 years, the purpose of the National Solar Tour is to promote renewable energy awareness and increase the adoption of solar energy. The National Solar Tour centers around neighborhood discussions about solar. In person and virtually throughout the year. [Click here for more information.](#)

The Go Zero! Energy Home Tour! Oct. 5, 2024

Premier, statewide tour of zero energy and “path to zero” home in Oregon.

[Click here for more information and to register.](#)

Dept. of Energy Solar Energy Technology Office. Equitable Solar Communities of Practice Program Webinars

The [Equitable Solar Communities of Practice \[Program\]](#) is hosting a [series of webinars](#) this fall. These webinars will explore the best practices and lessons learned from the each of the five communities of practice. Members of the lead organizations will share their insights on the challenges and opportunities associated with scaling equitable solar across the United States. Click on the session titles below for times and to register.

- [Resilience, Storage, and Grid Benefits](#) – Oct 8
- [Equitable Access and Consumer Protections](#) – Oct 17
- [Community-led Economic Development](#) – Oct 23
- [Meaningful Household Savings](#) – Oct 30

Making Energy Work Q3 Webinar – Advancing Equitable Solar Access Across Oregon: Oct 9, 2024

Webinar spotlighting statewide programs paving the way for equitable solar access across Oregon.

[Click here for more information and to register.](#)

Spark Northwest Annual Mix & Mingle Fundraiser: Oct 17

Annual Mix & Mingle fundraiser event to make connections and raise support for building a fairer, more inclusive green economy. October 17 at Ravenna Brewing in Seattle. [Click here for more information.](#)

Oregon Solar + Storage Conference: Portland Crowne Plaza, Oct 22-24, 2024

Registration is now open for the 2024 Oregon Solar + Storage Conference! OSSIA members can receive an extra 5% discount - on top of the OSSIA member 30% discount! Early bird discount ends August 15th so register now! [Click here for more information and to register.](#)

NW Energy Coalition Clean & Affordable Energy Conference: UW Campus, Seattle, Nov 13, 2024

Hear the latest on energy issues in our region and learn from peers' experiences within the clean energy transition in a tabletop discussion—[Click here for more information and to register](#).

InterSolar & Energy Storage North America (IESNA): San Diego, CA, Feb 25-27 2025

Intersolar & Energy Storage North America offers clean energy professionals an unmatched opportunity to gain critical insights, make impactful connections, source quality products—and have fun. This Flagship Expo & Conference will deliver a nationwide look into solar, storage, EV charging infrastructure, and manufacturing at federal and state levels. Early Bird registration pricing through Oct 31, 2025. [Click here for more information and to register](#).

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