



**February 6, 2025**

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## Oregon News

### **Iberdrola and Portland General Electric Partner on 120 MW Tower Solar Project in Oregon**

Iberdrola, through its U.S. subsidiary Avangrid, has signed a power purchase agreement (PPA) with Portland General Electric (PGE) for the 120 MWac Tower Solar project in Morrow County, Oregon. Developed in partnership with QTS and Meta, the project will create over 200 jobs and become Avangrid's sixth solar facility in Oregon upon its completion in 2026. This marks the company's 17th power generation project in the state, where it already operates 1,600 MW of wind and solar capacity—Tina Dasgupta, *Solar Quarter*, Jan 7, 2025: [Click here to read more](#).

### **What Happens when Oregon Approves Massive Thousand-Acre Solar Farms**

Oregon has just approved the state's largest solar farm – and one of the country's largest – on about 10,000 acres of active farmland in Morrow County as it pushes to fulfill ambitious clean energy mandates... The mammoth project also takes a novel approach to offset the negative economic impacts to the local agricultural economy—Gosia Wozniacka, *The Oregonian/OregonLive*, Dec 6, 2024: [Click here to read more](#).

### **Oversized Solar Farm Keeps Lights on Until Midnight**

The nation's [largest approved solar and storage project](#) has a secret. Beneath its record-break headline-size announcement is a "hidden" second power plant. And it's driven by two of the most important clean energy trends: low cost [solar panels](#) and advancing [battery technology](#)—John Fitzgerald Weaver, *pV magazine*, Jan 8, 2025: [Click here to read more](#).

### **Energy Company Makes Power Move with America's Largest Solar and Storage Project: 'A Win-Win'**

The largest proposed solar and storage project to date in the U.S. just got the green light in Oregon, Electrek reported... This means that solar and storage developer Pine Gate Renewables can move forward with its plans to build its 2.4-gigawatt Sunstone Solar facility in eastern Oregon. The project consists of a 1,200-megawatt solar farm paired with 1,200 megawatts of energy storage, according to the publication... In addition to the solar infrastructure, Pine Gate Renewables is wooing

farmers by putting \$1,000 per project acre into a county-managed fund that will support local agriculture—Tina Deines, *The Cool Down*, Jan 11, 2025: [Click here to read more](#).

### **Biden Administration Offers Loan for Grid Updates Key to Oregon Green Energy Goals**

PacifiCorp was offered up to \$3.52 billion on Thursday to finance construction of 700 miles of transmission lines in Oregon, Idaho, Utah and California. PacifiCorp owns Pacific Power – Oregon’s second-largest electric company. It’s one of eight loans totaling almost \$23 billion offered by the U.S. Department of Energy as part of the Biden administration’s push to reshape the country’s power grids. The loan offers come at a time when power grids across the country face growing strain. Investment in renewable energy sources has been outpacing the Pacific Northwest’s ability to keep up with new transmission line construction. Utilities are also under growing scrutiny for power failures linked to downed lines—Courtney Sherwood, *Oregon Public Broadcasting*, Jan 16, 2025. [Click here to read more](#).

### **Oregon Farmland Opens Up for Massive Solar Projects**

The rapid expansion of solar energy projects in Oregon, particularly on agricultural land, has sparked significant debate due to a loophole in state regulations. This loophole effectively undermines the protections that were designed to safeguard productive farmland from being converted into large-scale solar farms. As a result, the state is witnessing an influx of extensive solar developments that could transform vast areas of farmland into energy-generating sites. In this article, we will explore the implications of this regulatory gap, the ongoing projects transforming Oregon’s agricultural landscape, and the broader environmental and economic context surrounding this shift—Oliver Townsend, *USA Solar Cell*, Jan 19, 2025: [Click here to read more](#).

### **Solar Boom in Oregon could Reshape Rural Landscapes, Agriculture**

In November, fifth-generation Klamath County farmer Dave Noble got a letter in the mail, crumpled it up and threw it into the trash can. Noble, like other landowners in the high desert community of Bonanza known for its cattle, dairy cows and year-round sunshine, has for years been inundated with offers from solar developers.... That same month, Oregon approved its largest solar farm to date – and likely the nation’s largest – [on nearly 10,000 acres of farmland](#) on the opposite end of the state in Morrow County. Big solar projects also have been approved or are under review in other counties—Gosia Wozniacka, *Oregonlive/The Oregonian*, Jan 19, 2025: [Click here to read more](#).

### **Oregon to Host Nation’s Largest Solar-Plus-Storage Installation**

In northeastern Oregon, nearly 9,500 acres of farmland will soon be transformed into a 1,200-megawatt solar project. State regulators approved [Sunstone Solar](#), the nation’s [largest proposed solar-plus-storage facility](#), last fall. Once up and running, the project will include up to 7,200 megawatt-hours of storage, and its nearly four million solar panels will produce enough clean electricity to power around 800,000 homes each year. [Pine Gate Renewables](#), the North Carolina-based developer behind the project, touted a first-of-a-kind initiative to invest [up to \\$11 million](#) in local wheat farms to offset economic impacts on the region’s agriculture. Construction will begin in 2026—Akielly Hu, *Canary Media*, Jan 21, 2025: [Click here to read more](#).

## **Solar Farms Exploit Oregon Law to Claim High-Value Farmland**

34 Solar Projects Granted Exceptions... To date, every single one of the 34 solar projects have sought exceptions and won approval, according to a recent report by the Land Conservation and Development Commission. In theory, solar development is restricted to a maximum of 12 acres on high-value farmland, 20 acres on lower-level crop growing soil, and 320 acres on non-arable land. However, farmers can apply for exceptions from the state or county—Lucille McNamara, *Daily Tidings*, Jan 21, 2025. [Click here to read more.](#)

## **SolRiver Capital Completes Auburn Community Solar Project in Oregon**

SolRiver Capital, a Denver-based renewable energy investment firm, proudly announces the successful completion of the Auburn Community Solar Project. The 3 MW solar facility commenced commercial operations, delivering affordable clean energy to hundreds of subscribers in the Portland metropolitan area and I-5 corridor. The Auburn project was one of the first projects to come online under Tier 2 of the Oregon Community Solar Program—PR Newswire, [Press Release], Jan 30, 2025. [Click here to read more.](#)

## **Washington State News**

### **New Study Reveals Community Solar Could Generate \$1.76 Billion in Economic Benefits for Washington State**

A newly released [study](#) by the [University of Washington](#) reveals that expanding community solar access in Washington State could deliver substantial economic benefits, including nearly \$2 billion in economic output and thousands of new jobs, just as state legislators prepare to consider new broadly supported community solar legislation in the 2025 session... Within the report, the study authors analyzed the economic impact of developing 500 megawatts (MW) of community solar projects over 10 years—CCSA, [Press Release], Jan 7, 2025: [Click here to read more.](#)

### **Washington State Economic Impact from Community Solar could Reach \$1.7 Billion over Next Decade**

Under a community solar program, a third-party, neither the utility company nor the homeowner, owns a solar asset, and a homeowner or business is given access to subscribe to the solar energy output of the asset through their utility... A report from the Washington Urban Infrastructure Lab assessed the potential economic impact of establishing a more robust community solar program in Washington state... The report said corporate-owned community solar systems increasingly fill a neglected niche in the market for systems sized between 100 kW and 5 MW. It also enables dual uses of land, such as the co-location of agriculture and solar production, or the development of solar on a reclaimed brownfield site—Ryan Kennedy, *pv magazine*, Jan 8, 2025: [Click here to read more.](#)

### **Yakima County's Two-Year Ban on Solar May Continue**

It's been more than two years since Yakima County commissioners first approved a moratorium on solar development, and they want more time on the issue. An initial six-month moratorium on new, moderate- to large-scale solar facilities was enacted in July 2022. Commissioners have continued to

extend the moratorium since, and are planning on extending the moratorium another six months. Commissioners on Tuesday set a hearing about the moratorium at 10 a.m. Jan. 28... Commissioners have raised concerns about large solar facilities, including fire response, impacts to wildlife, and the loss of agricultural land—Questen Inghram, *Yakima Herald-Republic*, Jan 8, 2025: [Click here to read more](#).

### **Gov. Inslee Approves Largest Solar Project to Date in WA Near Sunnyside**

In one of his last official acts before Gov. Jay Inslee retires from state leadership, he approved the Wautoma Solar Project proposed for a remote corner of Benton County. It is one of nine planned or already operating solar projects in the county. The project is proposed at a 9-square-mile site in the northwest part of Benton County, about 12 miles northeast of Sunnyside—Annette Cary, *Tri-City Herald*, Jan 12, 2025: [Click here to read more](#).

### **Institute for Northwest Energy Futures to Demonstrate Dual-Use Capability of Solar Panels in Apple Production**

Washington State University's [Institute for Northwest Energy Futures](#) (INEF) has received a \$2.4 million grant from the Washington State Department of Commerce to demonstrate the economic and agricultural feasibility of using solar panels concurrent with apple production in Washington... The grant will fund a 1-acre 610 kW dynamic agrivoltaic (DAV) demonstration system at the WSU Sunrise Research Orchard near Wenatchee, Washington in partnership with Sun'Agri, a European company that constructs solar panel systems and the software that controls them—Communications staff, Washington State University, *WSU Insider*, Jan 13, 2025: [Click here to read more](#).

### **Grants to Help Local Governments Adopt Automated Solar Permit Software**

Commerce is now accepting applications to assist local governments in implementing automated permit processing software for residential solar projects. Grants of \$20,000 or more will help building departments save time and money on permit processing and accelerate local solar installation... Commerce plans to award 28 grants totaling \$570,000 to local governments to aid in adopting SolarAPP+, free software developed by the National Renewable Energy Laboratory that automatically processes and issues permits for simple solar-related projects. This software allows building department staff to clear permit backlogs and free up time to work on complex projects. Applications due: Feb 11, 2025—Washington State Department of Commerce, [News Release], Jan 21, 2025. [Click here for more information and to and access application documents](#).

### **Bill Requiring More Local Say for Large Wind, Solar Projects Faces Gloomy Future**

A bill to give local communities more say in large renewable energy projects got a public hearing this week, but Washington Rep. Mary Dye, R-Pomeroy, isn't holding her breath that her sponsored legislation will get a vote out of committee this session... House Bill 1188 would prohibit the governor from approving recommendations by the Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council if county commissioners for affected counties or tribes do not support it—Carleen Johnson, *The Center Square*, Jan 22, 2025: [Click here to read more](#).

## **Washington Tribes, Communities Could Have More Say in Wind, Solar Development**

More wind and solar projects need to be built to meet Washington's carbon-free energy goals. A new state bill could give local residents and tribes more say in where projects are built... Washington state Rep. Mary Dye, R-Pomeroy, said the governor has too much say in large-scale energy projects... "Developers of wind and solar can ignore concerns of local residents, both tribal and nontribal, by seeking approval through the development through (the Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council)," Dye said at a [public hearing for the House Environment & Energy Committee](#) on Monday—Courtney Flatt, Northwest Public Broadcasting, Jan 26, 2025: [Click here to read more.](#)

## **Fair Access to Community Solar Bill Would Expand Affordable Energy Access Across Washington State**

Today, Sen. Sharon Shewmake, D-Bellingham, and Rep. Adam Bernbaum, D-Port Townsend, announce the introduction of SB 5515/HB 1598, the [Fair Access to Community Solar Act](#), a bill enabling the establishment of a comprehensive community solar program in Washington State. The legislation would provide equitable access to affordable, reliable, locally sited clean energy for electric utility ratepayers, particularly income-qualified households, renters, and others who are not able to install solar panels on their homes. Senator Shewmake chairs the Senate Environment, Energy & Technology Committee—Coalition for Community Solar Access, [Press Release], Jan 29, 2025: [Click here to read more.](#)

## **Yakima County Commissioners Extend Solar Moratorium**

Yakima County Commissioners have voted unanimously to keep a moratorium on solar projects in place as county staff work on zoning regulations for new projects. Commissioners first approved the moratorium on moderate- to large-scale solar projects in unincorporated parts of the county midway through 2022 and have kept in place due to concerns about water rights, the usage of agricultural land and fire safety. That did not change Tuesday as commissioners extended the ban another six months. "We need to continue the extension of the moratorium while we work to create zoning policy," said County Commissioner LaDon Linde, who represents much of the Lower Yakima Valley—Jasper Kenzo Sundeen, *Yakima Herald-Republic*, Jan 29, 2025. [Click here to read more.](#)

## **\$156M Solar Power Grant for Washington in Limbo after Trump Order**

Washington was locked out of about \$150 million in federal funding for solar projects focused on low-income communities last week as the Trump administration paused clean energy grants. Last April, the federal Environmental Protection Agency [awarded \\$7 billion](#) to 60 recipients, including \$156 million for the Washington state Department of Commerce. The money under the [Solar for All program](#) was expected to help over 900,000 homes in low-income communities nationwide access solar power—Jake Goldstein-Street, *Washington State Standard*, Feb 4, 2025: [Click here to read more.](#)

## **Greater Pacific Northwest and National News**

### **Community Solar Still a Bright Spot Amid Trump Turmoil**

President Trump sailed into office with big ideas for tilting federal energy policy in favor of fossil fuels, but gaping holes are already beginning to appear in the plans. One of those holes is the community

solar movement, which is still gathering steam with the nation's #1 fast food chain among its growing legion of fans—Tina Casey, *Clean Technica*, Jan 23, 2025: [Click here to read more.](#)

### **Solar for All Likely Protected from Trump's Rollback of Biden's IRA**

It may be too late for Donald Trump to follow through on threats to repeal outgoing President Joe Biden's Inflation Reduction Act — at least that appears to be the case for the \$7 billion Solar For All Program... Officials with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency say program funds have already been "obligated," meaning the 60 initiatives are on track to begin implementation early next year. The program is geared at lowering utility bills for more than 900,000 low-income households over the next five years—Terry L. Jones, *Renewable Energy World*, Dec 30, 2024: [Click here to read more.](#)

### **Predictions for the Solar Energy Landscape in 2025**

Today, with the evolving political landscape under the Trump administration, it's more critical than ever for solar companies to navigate the challenges and opportunities ahead with clarity and purpose... The solar industry is no stranger to overcoming obstacles. Now, with discussions about repealing portions of the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) and the potential dismantling of the Department of Energy's Loan Programs Office, we face another test of our resilience—Mel Bergsneider, *pv magazine*, Jan 2, 2025: [Click here to read more.](#)

### **Solar Panels are Powering Through US West Wildfire Smoke: Study**

Wildfire smoke has "minimal" impact on U.S. solar power generation outside of active fire zones, according to a new study from Colorado State University...The study, [published Monday in Nature Communications](#), comes as wildfires rage across Los Angeles, forcing the evacuation of tens of thousands of people. Climate change is creating a longer and more severe wildfire season across the U.S., motivating researchers to examine the impact of wildfire smoke on solar photovoltaic systems, said Kimberley Corwin, the lead author of the study—Mika Travis, *E&E News*, Jan 9, 2025: [Click here to read more.](#)

### **The Wendy's Microgrid: Beefing up Fast Food with On-Site Solar and Battery Storage**

A Wendy's restaurant location in Wasco, Calif. will soon be pouring Frosty Treats and slinging its classic burgers and fries with electricity generated by a solar-enabled microgrid... SolMicroGrid will deploy, own and operate the solar PV and on-site battery energy storage system under an energy-as-a-service (EaaS) agreement with franchise operator Dependable Foods—Kathy Hitchens, *Microgrid Knowledge*, Jan 8, 2025: [Click here to read more.](#)

### **Meaningful Household Savings: Best Practices for Achieving Equitable Solar Development**

CESA has published a [new report](#) compiling research on best practices for designing solar programs that provide meaningful benefits to low-and-moderate income households. The report examines different types of solar projects, including residential-serving community solar, rooftop solar, and installations serving multifamily affordable housing—Clean Energy States Alliance, *The Solar Equity Digest*, Jan 2025: [Click here to read more and access report.](#)

## **Solar Farms are Booming in the US and Putting Thousands of Hungry Sheep to Work**

On rural Texas farmland, beneath hundreds of rows of solar panels, a troop of stocky sheep rummage through pasture, casually bumping into one another as they remain committed to a single task: chewing grass... The booming solar industry has found an unlikely mascot in sheep as large-scale solar farms crop up across the U.S. and in the plain fields of Texas. In Milam County, outside Austin, SB Energy operates the fifth-largest solar project in the country, capable of generating 900 megawatts of power across 4,000 acres (1,618 hectares)...How do they manage all that grass? With the help of about 3,000 sheep, which are better suited than lawnmowers to fit between small crevices and chew away rain or shine—Nadia Lathan, *AP News*, Jan 18, 2025: [Click here to read more.](#)

## **Sheep To Defend US Solar Industry with Agrivoltaic Projects**

The US kicked itself off the Paris Agreement on climate change again, but that doesn't necessarily mean a wet blanket has been cast over the entire domestic solar industry. One development of particular interest is a new solar-plus-farming collaboration aimed at establishing standards for agrivoltaic projects here in the US, with a knock-on impact aimed at accelerating the global agrivoltaic movement—Tina Casey, *Clean Technica*, Jan 21, 2025: [Click here to read more.](#)

## **Trump Freezes Inflation Reduction Act and Infrastructure-Law Funding**

The Trump administration has ordered federal agencies to “immediately pause the disbursement of funds” under the landmark federal climate and energy laws passed during the Biden administration, a move that will throw tens of billions of dollars of lawfully designated federal funding into limbo — and one that is likely to be challenged in court... The pause on disbursing funds appropriated through the Inflation Reduction Act and the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law is laid out in a section of a broader executive order on “[Unleashing American Energy](#),” entitled “Terminating the Green New Deal.”—Jeff St. John, *Canary Media*, Jan 21, 2025: [Click here to read more.](#)

## **Reports**

### **Consolidated Billing Makes Community Solar Easier for Consumers**

As community solar grows nationwide, customers sometimes face a confusing situation – getting a bill from their community solar provider and a separate bill from their utility. Customers have to do their own math to calculate the savings from their subscription... In other cases, utilities and community solar companies have joined forces to provide a single bill, with all charges and credits consolidated. Single bills provide increased transparency, improved customer experience, and, ultimately, increased retention rates and decreased subscriber acquisition costs—Energy Markets & Policy, Berkeley Lab, Report, [Abstract], Jan 10, 2025: [Click here to read more and access report.](#)

### **Equitable Resilience: Opportunities to Advance Solar Paired with Battery Storage in Historically Marginalized Communities**

A new report by Clean Energy Group (CEG) evaluates the barriers and opportunities to advance solar photovoltaics paired with battery storage (solar+storage) in historically marginalized communities. This report was developed through the [Equitable Solar Communities of Practice](#) program initiated by



the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Solar Energy Technologies Office (SETO)—Clean Energy Group, Jan 15, 2025: [Click here to read more, access full report, and view associated webinar.](#)

### **News Release: Floating Solar Panels Could Support US Energy Goals**

Federal reservoirs could help meet the country's solar energy needs, according to a [new study](#) published in *Solar Energy*... For the study, Evan Rosenlieb and Marie Rivers, geospatial scientists at the U.S. Department of Energy National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL), as well as Aaron Levine, a senior legal and regulatory analyst at NREL, quantified for the first time exactly how much energy could be generated from floating solar panel projects installed on federally owned or regulated reservoirs—NREL [Press Release], Jan 14, 2025: [Click here to read more and access full report.](#)

### **Vast Federal Lands Have Potential for Renewable Energy—But Only a Small Fraction Is Needed**

Federal lands are used for many different purposes including recreation, conservation, livestock grazing, and energy development. Traditionally, energy development on these lands has focused on fossil production. About 12% of oil drilling in the contiguous United States is on federal lands, and the share of total natural gas production on federal lands is similar. In contrast, only 4% of operating utility-scale land-based renewable energy capacity—solar photovoltaic (PV), land-based wind, and geothermal—is currently located on federal lands... In a [new study](#), the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) quantified how much solar PV, wind, and geothermal energy could be developed on federal lands in the contiguous United States. NREL finds there is great potential for these technologies going forward, while still leaving substantial area for other uses—Madeline Geocaris, NREL [Press Release], Jan 15, 2025: [Click here to read more and access full report.](#)

### **Citizen-Financed Solar Projects**

Many groups, including lower-income households and tenants, are often excluded from purchasing solar photovoltaics for their homes. Citizen-financed photovoltaic (CiFi PV) projects are an emerging solution for more inclusive citizen engagement in the energy transition, through the financing of larger-scale solar PV installations. Now, Fabienne Sierro and Yann Blumer from ZHAW School of Management and Law and ETH Zürich present insights from interviews with both project developers of, and participants in, citizen-financed solar PV projects in Switzerland, shedding light on motivations behind participation—Silvana Lakeman, *Nature Energy*, Jan 28, 2025: [Click here to read more and access full report.](#)

## **Upcoming Conferences and Webinars**

### **State of the U.S. Energy Storage Industry: 2024 in Review and a Look Ahead to 2025 : Clean Energy Group Webinar : Feb 5**

Clean Energy's annual lookback at the past year in energy storage covers advances in the U.S. market including policy and regulatory updates, market rules and FERC compliance, and developments in technology and markets. This year, they are also looking ahead to 2025, as presenters share their thoughts on what the charging landscape might bring. [Click here for more information and to register.](#)



**C-PACE Funding for Construction & Energy Related Projects : Solar Washington Webinar: Feb 7**  
Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy (C-PACE) is a state-legislated financing mechanism that allows building owners and developers to access the private capital they need to make energy related upgrades in their existing buildings, support new construction costs, and make renewable energy more accessible and cost-effective. Don Schulz who runs the Pacific NW for PACE Equity will describe how C-PACE works and how it can help enable your renewable energy projects. [Click here for more information and to register.](#)

**Intersolar & Energy Storage North America (IESNA) : San Diego, CA, Feb 25-27**  
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. [Click here for more information and to register.](#)

**Microgrid Knowledge 2025, Dallas, TX Apr 15-17**  
Explore the latest trends, technologies, and strategies shaping the future of resilient and sustainable power. From expert insights to hands-on case studies, this is the must-attend event for professionals driving the energy transition. [Click here for more information.](#)

**Oregon Solar + Storage Conference: May 13-15**  
A conference promoting, clean, renewable solar and storage technologies in the state of Oregon. [Click here for more information.](#)

**Northwest: Tacoma, WA, Jun 11-12**  
Meet with regional and national companies, understand cutting-edge policy, trends, and know-how, and connect with colleagues from your region. [Click here for more information.](#)

**2025 Community Solar Innovation Summit: Denver, CO, June 26-27**  
The only national conference put on by the community solar industry for the community solar industry. [Click here for more information and to register.](#)

**ASES Solar 2025: Innovation for Universal Renewable Energy Access: University of Colorado, Boulder, Aug 4-6**  
This year's conference, themed "Innovation for Universal Renewable Energy Access," will explore the latest, most impactful, cutting-edge practices, policies, and technologies driving the just and equitable transformation in the U.S. and worldwide to a carbon-free global energy economy. Click here for more information. [Click here for more information.](#)

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