



July 6, 2023

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

<http://www.energy.wsu.edu/solarnewsbriefs.aspx>

Oregon

Oregon Department of Energy Grant Program Supports Renewable Energy and Energy Resilience Development Across the State

The Oregon Department of Energy has selected 39 recipients to receive a total of \$12 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 Department of Energy, Blog, June 1, 2023: To read more: [Click here](#).

Phoenix-Talent SD Receives \$1 Million for New Solar Energy Project

The Phoenix-Talent School District recently received a million-dollar grant for energy improvements. The district says it's been awarded the grant from the Oregon Department of Energy to install solar equipment and battery storage at Talent Middle School—FOX 26, June 2, 2023:

https://www.fox26medford.com/phoenix-talent-sd-receives-1-million-for-new-solar-energy-project/?utm_medium=email

New Canyonville Solar Project to Benefit Oregon Residents and Agriculture

SolRiver Capital, a leading renewable energy investment firm, is excited to unveil plans for the [Canyonville Solar Project](#), which will combine sustainable energy generation with agricultural practices. Canyonville will be the first [Oregon Community Solar Program](#) available in Douglas County, helping residents there and throughout Oregon save money every month—SolRiver Capital, Cision PR Newswire, June 8, 2023: <https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/new-canyonville-solar-project-to-benefit-oregon-residents-and-agriculture-301846606.html>

\$1 Million State Grant to Fund Solar Energy System for Stevens Ranch Library

The Oregon Department of Energy recently awarded Deschutes Public Library a \$1 million grant for construction of a powerful solar photovoltaic system at the planned Stevens Ranch Library in southeast Bend... The ODOE grant will fund the construction of an 828kW net-metered solar PV system on the building's roof and above portions of the parking area—ktvz.com, June 7, 2023:

<https://ktvz.com/news/2023/06/07/1-million-state-grant-to-fund-solar-energy-system-for-stevens->

[ranch-library/](#)

LUBA: Developer Lacks 'Vested Right' to Proceed with Solar Facility

A solar facility approved before Oregon restricted such developments on high-quality soils has no vested right to now proceed with construction, according to a land use ruling. [Manchester Solar](#) of Dayton, Ore., originally applied for a conditional use permit to build a 10-acre solar array on Yamhill County farmland in 2018—Mateusz Perkowski, *Capital Press*, June 23, 2023:

https://www.capitalpress.com/state/oregon/luba-developer-lacks-vested-right-to-proceed-with-solar-facility/article_e94970ea-11f7-11ee-ab65-ffa55fe5ad5f.html

Climate Victory in Oregon's legislature!

Breaking news! The Climate Resilience Package has passed the legislature and is on its way to the Governor's desk for signature, bringing us one critical step closer to protecting our climate and communities... The Climate Resilience Package offers real hope and meaningful action. Heat pumps powered by renewable energy will be more accessible—Merdith Connolly, Climate Solutions, June 26, 2023: <https://www.climatesolutions.org/article/2023-06/climate-victory-oregons-legislature>

Affordable Housing Community Saves and Serves with Solar

How can affordable multifamily housing construction projects keep costs in check and still include solar? The Housing Authority of Jackson County discovered a way to make it happen... After HAJC successfully installed a small solar array at a property in 2019, they were enthusiastic about including something slightly bigger at their new development, the Freedom Square II multifamily complex in White City—Blog, Energy Trust of Oregon, June 29, 2023: <https://blog.energytrust.org/affordable-housing-community-saves-and-serves-with-solar/?category=renewable-energy>

Beef Cattle Agrivoltaics on an Oregon Family Ranch

An Oregon State University [study](#) found that most of the prime, flat land near grid load is already in use as farmland, growing food or ranching livestock. In many markets including the Pacific Northwest, agrivoltaics, which is the pairing of farming with solar, is a solution for the food versus energy transition dilemma... [Agrivoltaics](#) provides benefits for the farmer or landowner, the project developer and local communities. Ranching holds particular promise in the agrivoltaics community, as photovoltaic shade has been shown to benefit forage, especially in arid regions. This creates better soil composition for cows, sheep and other farm animals to graze, while creating a more natural soil composition around the panels, according to the Oregon State study—Michael Schoeck, *pv magazine*, June 30, 2023: <https://pv-magazine-usa.com/2023/06/30/beef-cattle-agrivoltaics-on-an-oregon-family-ranch/>

Washington News

50 States of Solar Incentives: Washington

Washington, home to Seattle and plenty of rainy days, is proving that solar can be cost-effective even in cloudy conditions. While it had lagged other states with similar sized economies in the past, in 2022 Washington ranked 15 among the states in terms of solar capacity, nearly doubling its cumulative installed capacity to 585 MW—Ryan Kennedy, *pv magazine*, June 2, 2023: <https://pv-magazine-usa.com/2023/06/02/50-states-of-solar-incentives-washington/>

Net Energy Metering in Washington

Net energy metering (NEM) is largely being used in Washington for behind the meter or customer-sited solar energy generation, but it can compensate various types of distributed, energy generation... This article summarizes the presentations made by Washington Department of Commerce's Nora Hawkins and Shane Frye, with SnoPUD, both Solar Washington Board Members, at a May 10 Solar Washington Webinar. The full webinar, titled Net Energy Metering in Washington, is available online—Chantal Stevens, Solar Washington, June 6, 2023: https://www.solarwa.org/net_metering_in_washington

This Western WA Tribe is Becoming a Leader in Clean Energy Sustainability. Here's How

The Nisqually Tribe has a very limited amount of land in Thurston County. Covering an area of less than three square miles along the Nisqually River and surrounded by a military base, Wayne Lloyd said the tribe really needs to protect what little it has... Lloyd, the tribe's Building Department director, has been on a mission since he started four years ago to make the tribe more energy efficient so it can reduce what it spends on gas and electricity every year—Ty Vinson, *The Olympian*, June 11, 2023: <https://www.theolympian.com/news/local/article276053961.html>

Council Poised to Override Washington County's Pause on Solar Projects

The Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council signaled June 20 it will disregard a Central Washington county's moratorium on solar projects and fast-track a 2,000-acre installation of panels on farmland near Goldendale. The council told staff members to prepare an order declaring the proposed Carriger Solar project consistent with land-use regulations. The council plans to formally vote on the order in August—Don Jenkins, *Capital Press*, June 22, 2023: To read more: [Click here](#).

Four Projects Under Way

The Washington State University (WSU) Energy Program has approved four community solar projects thus far, under the direction of House Bill 1814. The Energy Team reviewed and pre-certified projects that meet the legislative goals of the Low-Income Community Solar Expansion Program. The incentive funds will be awarded upon the satisfactory completion of each project—WSU Energy Program, Community Solar Expansion Program, June 26, 2023: <https://energy.wsu.edu/RenewableEnergy/CommunitySolarProgram.aspx>

Inslee Can Cement Climate Legacy by Making Room for Community Solar

As far as state governors go, Washington Gov. Jay Inslee is a clean energy and climate champion beyond compare... Under his decade of leadership, the Evergreen State has enacted policies mandating the rapid decarbonization of Washington's high-emitting electric power, transportation and buildings sectors and established one of the country's first [state-level emissions trading systems](#). He has even led on [energy justice](#), an issue where so many policymakers come up short—Derek Chernow and Mason Rolph, *The Seattle Times*, June 28, 2023: <https://www.seattletimes.com/opinion/inslee-can-cement-climate-legacy-by-making-room-for-community-solar/>

Least-Conflict Solar Siting

Exploring pathways to protect Washington's unique and diverse habitat and agricultural lands while producing the solar energy needed to help the state's utilities reach 100% clean electricity. The Least-Conflict Solar Siting Project poses the question: Where can utility-scale solar be developed in the

Columbia Plateau region while also ensuring that important natural habitat, productive farmlands and ranchlands, and tribal rights and cultural resources are protected?—WSU Energy Program, June 2023. To read the report: [Click here](#).

National News

Grid Locked: How Land Use Battles Are Hindering the Clean Energy Transition

One emerging consensus to combat climate change is increasingly clear: electrify everything, and make that power come from renewable sources, like wind, solar, and hydro power. Removing fossil fuels from electricity generation can be surprisingly smooth, as clean power facilities have rapidly become more cost-efficient. Renewables are currently 20 percent of US power generation and steadily growing... But there's a sprawling and daunting land use task that is necessary to make that clean energy transition happen: not only the siting of solar arrays and wind farms, but the construction and improvement of transmission lines and substations and pipelines, across thousands of acres of land—Anthony Flint, Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, June 12, 2023. To read more: [Click here](#).

DOE Selects 12 Programs to Grow Solar Workforce in Underserved Communities

The U.S. Dept. of Energy has selected 12 projects, whose work will span more than 13 states, to launch training partnerships that expand the solar energy workforce in underserved and underrepresented communities... [Included in] the project selectees are:

- **Emerald Cities Collaborative** (Seattle, WA): In partnership with union-led training centers, this project will create one of the first dedicated solar installer trainings and union-based electrical pre-apprenticeship programs in the state of Washington for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color. (Award: \$725,000)
- **Worksystems** (Portland, OR): In partnership with NECA/IBEW, this project will create training and placement resources for diverse jobseekers to enter quality jobs in solar installation and related occupations, including union electrical careers across the Portland metro region. (Award: \$1,000,000)

Renewable Energy World, June 14, 2023. To read more: [Click here](#).

DOE Announces Inclusive Energy Innovation Prize Winners

This week, the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) announced six grand prize winners of the Inclusive Energy Innovation Prize. The prize seeks to foster a just and equitable clean energy future by investing in community-led innovation and entrepreneurship programs in areas historically underserved by federal funding. This prize is part of the Biden-Harris Administration's Justice40 initiative to deliver at least 40% of the overall benefits from certain federal investments in clean energy to disadvantaged communities. Two included:

- **Empowering the Future Energy Workforce** (Richland, Washington) Washington State University's Tri-Cities team developed the Clean Energy Ambassadors Network, which aims to empower the future energy workforce by engaging and retaining students, particularly Hispanic/LatinX students.
- **Xcelerating Black Climate Startups in Portland** (Portland, Oregon) The Northwest Xcelerator (NWX) Team collaborated with VertueLab and the Port of Portland to develop and build a

culturally specific, non-extractive acceleration support ecosystem for climate innovators from Black and underserved communities.

For more information—DOE, Office of Energy Efficiency & Renewable Energy, June 15, 2023:

<https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/USEERE/bulletins/360342b>

Proposed BLM Rules Reduce Fees, Speed Deployment for Renewable Energy Projects on Public Lands

This week, the U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) formally published new proposed rules governing leasing and rental rates for renewable energy projects on public lands. The new leasing rules adopt many of the Solar Energy Industries Association's (SEIA's) suggestions and will help to speed renewable energy deployment on public lands and put BLM's renewable energy goals in reach—SEIA, [Press Release], June 16, 2023: <https://www.seia.org/news/proposed-blm-rules-reduce-fees-speed-deployment-renewable-energy-projects-public-lands>

The Feds Move to Speed Up Development of Wind and Solar on Public Land

Last week, the federal Bureau of Land Management, or BLM, proposed a new rule that would reduce fees for wind and solar development on public lands by 80 percent. Regulators at the BLM say the move could accelerate renewable power production on federal lands and help achieve President Joe Biden's goal of a carbon-free power sector by 2035. Solar and wind [developers](#) and advocates lauded [the proposed rule](#) as an important step toward a clean energy transition on U.S. public lands—Akielly Hu, Grist, June 21, 2023: <https://grist.org/climate-energy/the-feds-move-to-speed-up-development-of-wind-and-solar-on-public-land/>

EPA Launches \$7 Billion Grant Fund for Solar Power

The Environmental Protection Agency has launched a new \$7 billion grant competition to increase solar power for low-income households... The initiative, known as the Solar for All competition, was created by the Inflation Reduction Act's Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund. The fund enables participants to vie for up to 60 grants to states, territories, Tribal governments, municipalities, and eligible nonprofits to create and expand low-income solar programs with financing and technical assistance to enable low-income and disadvantaged communities to deploy and benefit from residential solar. Applications for the competitive grant competition are open until September 26, 2023—Amy Baxter, *Environment+Energy Leader*, June 29, 2023. To read more: [Click here](#).

Agrivoltaics

Agrivoltaics Finds New Fans in US Senate

U.S. senators on both sides of the aisle have recently proposed two bills to boost [agrivoltaics](#), the double-duty climate solution that pairs solar panels (photovoltaics) with agriculture — or closely related land uses that benefit farmers and ecosystems... In May, senators Jeff Merkley (D-Oregon) and Cory Booker (D-New Jersey) introduced the [Pollinator Power Act](#). Its passage would direct the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture to prioritize solar projects funded by the [Rural Energy for America Program](#) that create habitat for pollinators underneath the panels—Alison F. Takemura, *Canary Media*, June 20, 2023: <https://www.canarymedia.com/articles/solar/agrivoltaics-finds-new-fans-in-us-senate>

How Sheep Keep Solar Farms Out of the Shade

Stung by high fuel costs and a labor squeeze, some clean energy companies are turning to an unlikely ally — flocks of sheep — to keep their solar panels out of the shade... Visual media produced in partnership with Outrider Foundation. The nascent practice, known as solar grazing, is so far used on only a tiny sliver of the expansive arrays of panels that are increasingly dotting rural America. But with significant financial benefits to both the renewable energy industry and the struggling mutton sector, more solar sites in the US are expected to start swapping lawnmowers for lambs—Michael Hirtzer, Bloomberg, June 24, 2023: <https://www.bloomberg.com/features/2023-solar-grazing-sheep/>

Reports

Increasing Restrictions on Siting Solar in the U.S.

Columbia Law School of New York has released its third annual round up of anti-renewable energy legislation filed across the U.S. The report, [Opposition to Renewable Energy in the United States – May 2023 Edition](#), aims to document local and state restrictions on, and opposition to, the siting of renewable energy projects from 1995 to May 2023—John Fitzgerald Weaver, *pV magazine*, June 26, 2023: <https://pv-magazine-usa.com/2023/06/26/increasing-restrictions-on-siting-solar-in-the-u-s/>

Conferences and Events

Solar and GreenStar Homes Certification – What you Need to Know July, 12 (Webinar)

Solar power is a great technology, but how does it fit into GreenStar Homes Certification and ensure your home is energy efficient, healthy, and comfortable? While we all need to go solar, these are green benefits that solar cannot help us achieve but can aid. Attend this ASES July Webinar and learn about the GreenStar Homes Certification and how solar fits in—[For more information and to register click here.](#)

Transforming the Energy Landscape for All, University of Colorado Boulder, August 8-11

The American Solar Energy Society's cutting-edge conference series introduces attendees to the leaders, innovators, and entrepreneurs moving the industry forward. With the solar energy and energy efficiency sectors changing at an unprecedented pace, this conference helps participants understand the changes and uncover the billion-dollar opportunities. For more information and to register: <https://ases.org/conference/>

Here Comes the Sun: Innovative Community Solar Systems – August 15 (Webinar)

Community solar makes the benefits of solar energy accessible and creates a renewable energy pathway for those unable to install traditional rooftop solar systems. By utilizing this strategy, communities can enhance resilience, workforce development, and cost savings while increasing solar energy accessibility for low- to moderate-income households. Join this webinar to learn more about the benefits of community solar, get resources from the Department of Energy's Solar Energy Technologies Office (SETO), and find out how Better Buildings partners are planning and implementing best practices to encourage equitable community solar systems—US Dept. of Energy, Better Buildings: For more information and to register: <https://betterbuildingssolutioncenter.energy.gov/webinars/here-comes-sun-innovative-community-solar-systems>

RE+ Tech, Las Vegas, September 11-14

RE+ Tech is the event for the technical and scientific communities to present and share innovative research in solar, storage, and smart energy industries at North America's largest clean energy event. (formerly called SPI, ESI, and Smart Energy Week). This event-within-an-event showcases scientific content from industry leaders and provides a hub for science and tech trailblazers to come together, share research, and innovate tomorrow's clean energy solution. For more information and to register: <https://www.re-plus.com/re-plus-tech/>

2023 Washington State Solar Summit, October 20

Hosted by the Solar Washington, the Washington State Solar Summit is an important annual information gathering and networking event for industry stakeholders including manufacturers, installers, utilities, municipalities, legislators/policy makers, educators, students, tribal members, advocacy organizations/nonprofits, distributors, engineers, financial lenders, consultants and more. For more information and to register: <https://www.solarwa.org/2023solsummit>

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