

Mississippi Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Update

MPSC Regular Meeting and Docket Call – January 16

Next Meeting of the MPSC – The next regular meeting of the MPSC will take place on **January 16, 2018, at 10 am** in the MPSC Hearing Room to consider the Docket. We will continue to watch for the Commission to take action in relation to the Commission's [request for comments](#) regarding the proposal to amend the Rules for Energy Efficiency Programs under **Docket No. 2010-AD-2**. In the latest action under this docket, the Sierra Club filed a [request for discovery and rebuttal comments](#) in response to Entergy Mississippi's [motion to delay the establishment of energy savings targets and implementing comprehensive energy efficiency programs](#) and in response to MS Power Co.'s [comments supporting Entergy's motion](#). Since the Sierra Club's filing, [Entergy MS](#) and [MS Power Co.](#) have each filed motions opposing Sierra Club's request for discovery.

Lee Solar, LLC: Docket No. 2017-UA-175: In October 2017, Silicon Ranch Solar filed an [application](#) for a Certificate to Construct and Operate a Solar Electric Generating Facility in Lee County, Mississippi. The project, called Lee Solar, will be a 1.0 MW solar farm valued at \$2 million. Northern District Public Service Commissioner Brandon Presley [hosted a public hearing](#) at 2 p.m. on Dec. 20 at the Lee County Justice Center to get public feedback on the project. Silicon Ranch owns and operates more than 100 solar facilities across the U.S. in 14 states, generating a total of 450 MW.

Kemper Update – New Settlement Stipulation and Hearing Date

The Commission has issued a [new Order](#) setting **January 22, 2018** as the hearing date for full consideration of the [Second Amended and Restated Stipulation document](#). The Commission anticipates issuing its Final order on or before its February 6, 2018 open meeting. The order also contains deadlines for the filing of written comments. The Commission will establish hearing procedural matters at a later date. To view all the latest documents related case Docket 2017-AD-112, go to <http://www.psc.state.ms.us/trinityview/mppsc.html> and enter the case information.

Checkout Mississippi Energy Statistics with AEE PowerPortal

[PowerPortal](#) is a one-stop shop for high-value information about each state's energy policies and key players. With state public utility commissions regulating over \$100 billion in energy investments each year, it pays to know the who, what, when, where, and why of state energy policy.

For **Mississippi**, you can learn more about energy oversight functions of the [MPSC](#), [executive](#) and [legislative](#) branches, [energy policies](#) in the state, and [energy generation data](#). The most recent data available (Sept. 2017) indicates that the average retail price of electricity across all sectors is 9.34 cents/kwhr. National average is 10.89 cents/kwhr. The data also illustrates the growing dependence on natural gas as an electrical generation fuel source. According to the Sept. 2017 data, natural gas accounted for 90.3% of net electrical generation while coal (6.8%), biomass (2.6%) and solar (0.3%) provided the balance. No nuclear generation was recorded in September.

Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Funding Through USDA

The USDA offers Rural Energy for America Program (REAP) Grants and Loans for the purchase, installation and construction of a renewable energy system or energy efficiency upgrades. REAP creates opportunities for economic development for rural small businesses, farmers and ranchers by supporting

renewable energy and energy efficiency projects. REAP grants provide a 25% cash reimbursement of the total system costs, with a maximum grant of \$500,000 for renewable energy systems and \$250,000 for energy efficiency systems. Have you been considering renewable energy or energy efficient upgrades? The next round of REAP grants are due March 31, 2018. Eligible projects for the REAP Grant include: lighting, insulation, timers, switches, solar, geothermal, wind, methane digesters, and more! Contact your [State Rural Development Energy Coordinator](#) for more information on this program.

Financing Energy Efficiency Projects in Mississippi

On December 14, the Mississippi Development Authority's Energy and Natural Resources Division hosted a webinar focusing on financing options available in Mississippi, such as the Energy Efficiency Revolving Loan Fund and the Energy Efficiency Lease Program. Webinar speakers included Terrence Spears, Energy Efficiency Project Manager with MDA-ENRD, and MDA Energy Efficiency Lease Program financial advisors Barry Friedman, Art Brickey and Daniel Kimble with Friedman, Luzzatto & Co.

Mississippi Leads Southeast in CRP Acres

The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) is a voluntary program that pays farmers and ranchers to retire environmentally sensitive cropland to improve environmental health and land quality, as well as enhance wildlife habitat. Contracts for land enrolled in CRP are 10 to 15 years in length, although re-enrollment is possible as well. Mississippi has 699,502 acres of land enrolled in the CRP. Visit the [interactive Tableau Public dashboard](#) to learn about distribution of CRP acreage by state and length of enrollment.

MSU Powering Down for Holidays

Mississippi State University implemented its holiday energy-saving plan for the Christmas holiday. MSU put the plan in place at the end of the day on Wednesday, December 20. The school provided departments with instructions including turning off computers, lights, radios and other energy-consuming devices. Additional measure will also help to significantly reduce energy consumption.

Regional Issues

Georgia PSC Votes to Continue Vogtle Nuclear Construction

The GPSC [voted unanimously to allow](#) Georgia Power to continue construction of two nuclear reactors at the Plant Vogtle project. GA Power now expects reactors 3 and 4 to be [online in 2021 and 2022](#), respectively, and generate enough emission-free electricity to power ~500K homes and businesses. However, the GPSC conditioned their approval of the project on a major caveat: that Congress approves roughly \$800 million worth of tax credits. As part of its decision allowing Georgia Power and its partners to pass more project costs onto ratepayers, the GPSC unanimously approved language that would allow them to reconsider the decision if federal lawmakers do not greenlight the tax credits. The project is now estimated to cost approximately \$23 billion to complete. Recently, the GPSC staff blamed GA Power for [failing to manage the project and its contractor in a reasonable manner](#). Staffers argued ratepayers should not be held responsible for additional costs resulting from Georgia Power's mismanagement of the project.

Power Goes Out at World's Busiest Airport

On Sunday, December 17, a transformer fire led to a massive power failure at the Atlanta airport and put terminals in the dark, shut down communications and impacted flights around the world. Even the airport's "backup power systems" failed. Power was restored about 10 hours after the initial outage. Approximately 1500 flights were grounded, cancelled, diverted or delayed. Authorities are still trying to determine the cause. This event continues to demonstrate just how unpredictable and costly electrical infrastructure system failures can be, as well as the economy's dependence on reliable power.

Youth Push NC County to Adopt Total Renewable Energy Goal

The [Buncombe County Board of Commissioners](#) voted 4-3 at its Dec. 5 meeting in support of a resolution committing to only using clean and renewable energy for all county operations (electricity and transportation fuel) by 2030 and to all county homes and businesses by 2042. Students with the Youth for Environmental Stewardship group gathered more than 1,800 signatures on a petition asking the county to commit to transitioning to 100 percent renewable energy.

Virginia Energy Laws and Regulations Demystified

The GreeneHurlocker law firm has just published [Principles of Electric Utility Regulation in Virginia](#), a guidebook designed to provide a plain-English explanation of some of the state laws regulating Virginia's two largest monopoly electric utilities. The guidebook and its glossary of key terms is intended to be a reference tool for those who want to gain a better understanding of utility regulation and energy policy in Virginia.

Solar-Power Telephone Company. In Arkansas? Yep!

South Arkansas Telephone Co. (SATCO) has partnered with Ouachita Electric Cooperative and Today's Power to install a 120-kW solar array in Hampton, AR. With the completion of this solar array, SATCO has officially become the [nation's first completely solar-powered telephone company](#). SATCO has been family owned since 1916 and offers multiple digital communications and entertainment options to 11 cities and towns in southern Arkansas.

Kentucky Lawmakers Consider Changes to the State's Net Metering Rules

Kentucky is the latest state to come under pressure by utilities to reduce the compensation that solar households and other small distributed generation systems receive for putting energy back onto the power grid. There are about 1,000 net metering households in Kentucky, or about 0.1% of the energy market. According to one lawmaker who opposes the change, "It almost sounds like a sledgehammer attacking an ant here."

Harnessing Markets to Scale Energy Efficiency

ACEEE examines market transformation successes and looks at ways to harness market forces for increased energy efficiency across a broad spectrum of products and services. For example, popular products include holiday lights, once made only with incandescent bulbs but now mostly with LEDs. Regulatory-driven energy efficiency programs are the primary pathway for energy and bill savings. Market transformation can be another force to guide markets toward higher energy efficiency. See the ACEEE report: [Transforming Energy Efficiency Markets: Lessons Learned and Next Steps](#).

Also, take a look at ACEEE's newest report, [Smart Buildings: a Deeper Dive into Market Segments](#). This report documents how many types of buildings---office, retail, hotels, and hospitals---can benefit from the latest smart technologies.

National Issues

Congress Passes Tax Bill; Clean Energy Spared for the Most Part

On Tuesday, December 19, the U.S. House passed the 708-page "[Tax Cuts and Jobs Act](#)" (HR 1) conference report by a vote of 227-203. The Senate later passed the bill after 11 hours of debate by a vote of 51-48. However, because the bill had provisions that violated Senate budget rules, those provisions were removed and the bill returned to the House for reconsideration. The House then re-approved the bill on a vote of 224-201 and sending it to the President for signature. While the bill includes major changes to corporate tax rates, changes personal tax rates and amends the functions of other tax programs, major clean energy provisions previously under threat were spared. There will be no changes to the production tax credit (Sec. 45), investment tax credit (Sec. 48), residential energy tax credit (Sec. 25D) and electric vehicle tax credits. However, the tax credit equity market can only be monetized up to 80%. Proposals to repeal tax credits for enhanced oil recovery and oil and gas production from marginal wells was removed from the final bill while a provision to open acres to drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge was included. Also, the final bill failed to extend a tax credit for new nuclear facilities. [Learn more how utilities, oil and gas and clean energy fared.](#)

Although the tax reform legislation does not include an extension of any expired clean energy tax credits, Congressional leaders are contemplating taking up a separate tax extenders package to reinstate a range of credits (energy and otherwise) that expired at the end of 2016. This could potentially come in the form of a two-year retroactive extension (applying to 2017 through the end of 2018). Action on this tax extenders package is expected in January 2018. Among other things, the recently introduced Senate bill would provide:

- The credit for alternative fuel vehicle refueling property;
- The 2nd generation biofuel producer credit;
- The biodiesel and renewable diesel tax incentive;
- The Section 45 production tax credit (PTC) for non-wind renewable energy technologies, including landfill gas; and
- Alternative fuel excise tax credits.
- Modify the tax credit for advanced nuclear power facilities.
- Provide a credit for carbon sequestration technology.

10th Anniversary of Expanded Renewable Fuel Standard Recognized

On December 19, 2007, President George W. Bush signed the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007, which among other things, expanded the 2005 Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS). The new program became known as the RFS2. In the decade since passage, significant progress has been made towards greater energy security, cleaner air and boosting local economies, according to a new analysis by the Renewable Fuels Association, "[The RFS2: Then and Now.](#)" Consumer benefits include greater fuel choices, lower fuel prices and reduced tailpipe emissions.

Natural Gas, Renewable Generation Will Offset Coal, Nuclear Closures

According to the North American Electric Reliability Corp. [2017 Long-Term Reliability Assessment](#) for the U.S. power grid, power generation from natural gas-fired units and renewable sources such as solar and wind will provide enough electricity to offset the closures of U.S. coal-fired and nuclear power plants in the next decade. The findings are at odds with a proposal from DOE head Rick Perry, who says grid resilience is at risk from the closure of nuclear and coal-fired plants. Perry has asked FERC to adopt a

plan for electricity pricing that would provide market incentives for coal and nuclear facilities. The report also said that growth in demand for electricity is at its “lowest rates on record.”

US solar output increases 47% in 2017

The latest monthly report from the DOE’s Energy Information Agency shows that U.S. PV output in the first nine months of 2017 grew 47% over the same period in 2016. Solar represented 1.9% of total generation during this period. Of the top 10 solar generation states, three are in the South: North Carolina, Georgia and Texas. Other states that made impressive percentage and quantity growth gains in the same time period are Virginia, Alabama, South Carolina and [Mississippi](#).

5,500 U.S. Schools Use Solar Power

About 5% of all K-12 U.S. schools are now powered by the sun according to a [new study](#) by the Solar Energy Industries Association, The Solar Foundation and Generation 180. The schools using solar power have a total of 910 megawatts of solar capacity, enough to power 190,000 homes. According to the [national map](#) and [project spread sheet](#), **Mississippi** has only one location (Northwest Ranking Middle School) with solar. Best of all, these schools are saving money on electric bills, educating students about clean energy, and ensuring a brighter future for the next generation.

SEIA Offers a Plan to 'Make America First'

In an effort to deter President Trump from imposing tariffs on imported solar cells and panels, the Solar Energy Industries Association (SEIA) this week released a blueprint it says will "put America First on economic growth, jobs, manufacturing and national security." SEIA's [America First Plan for Solar Energy](#) recommends six steps Trump can take to maintain the solar industry's booming growth. The president is expected to make a decision next month on a petition to impose tariffs and levies on imported solar panels.

Tools to Build the Modern Grid: *New Guide for State Regulators*

[Optimizing the Grid: A Regulator's Guide to Hosting Capacity Analyses for Distributed Energy Resources](#) helps guide state regulators as they oversee utilities developing hosting capacity analyses to integrate distributed energy resources on their distribution systems. Hosting capacity analyses are a new analytical tool that can help states and utilities plan for and build a modern grid that allows for the benefits of renewable energy to be fully realized by more individuals, businesses and institutions.

Companies Continue to Set 100% Renewable Energy Goals in 2017

The [RE100](#) global initiative say that 118 companies have joined the initiative, committing publicly to source all of their electricity from renewables by a set year. Schneider Electric is the latest company to [announce](#) that the company is committed to using 100% renewable energy for electricity by 2030. In addition, they plan to double energy productivity by 2030 against a 2005 baseline.

How Utilities are Coping with 100% Renewable Energy Goals

On November 29, Truckee, California, became the 50th city to make the pledge of getting 100% of its power from renewable energy. More commitments are in the works as more than 150 mayors across the nation have endorsed the goal. The Ready for 100 Program has released a [2017 Case Study Report](#) showing how cities are moving to meet their goals and how utilities are working with municipalities to deliver the power mix their customers want. See the [Utility Dive article](#) on this issue.

