



# EESI UPDATE

*A periodic update to friends of the Environmental and Energy Study Institute on our work in policymaker education, coalition building, and policy development.*

## EESI Turns 30!

### A Word From Exec. Dir. Carol Werner

EESI TURNED 30 THIS YEAR, and what an eventful year it has been! We've had some policy successes, embarked on major resilience and "on-bill" financing initiatives, launched a new website, unveiled a new logo... And we have lots more in store.

What EESI has achieved in energy and climate policy in the past 30 years would not have been possible without *you*—our donors, partners, supporters, friends, and collaborators in the policy community! Working collaboratively, we have achieved so much over the past three decades. And now I look forward to continuing our work together to advance sustainable energy solutions in our nation's capital and around the country!

Let's take a look at some important recent developments. A new farm bill—an area where EESI has a long history—passed. Over the past year, EESI and its partners in sustainable agriculture and energy efficiency played a key role in the inclusion of a strong Energy Title and Rural Energy Savings Program in the Farm Bill. This



was a great victory for clean energy. A strong Energy Title in the Farm Bill, with mandatory funding, spurs local economic development, fosters a more diverse energy portfolio, and leads to a healthier environment. You can learn more by reading the article on page 5.

EESI's efforts promoting sustainable energy in rural areas include our extensive work with the South Carolina "Help My House" on-bill financing pilot program, in which energy efficiency loans are repaid through electric bills (a win-win for everyone). The pilot program cut energy use

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## Policymakers Flock to Congressional Clean Energy Expo



More than 500 people attended the 17th Annual Congressional Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Expo and Policy Forum this year.

THIS YEAR'S RENEWABLE ENERGY AND ENERGY EFFICIENCY EXPO, the 17th, was once again a roaring success. Held on July 31, it featured 41 exhibitors and 34 speakers, including two Members of Congress (Rep. Chris Van Hollen of Maryland and Rep. Paul Tonko of New York) and five senior Administration officials.

EESI Executive Director Carol Werner chaired seven panels throughout the day, covering general policy issues; defense; renewables (fuel cells, geothermal, solar, energy from waste); hydropower and water technologies; bioenergy; finance, grid, and storage issues; and, last but not least, energy efficiency.

The Expo was organized by the Sustainable Energy Coalition, of which EESI is a founding member. □

## RECENT BRIEFINGS

### MARCH

- The Supreme Court and EPA Carbon Rules
- Electric Transmission 201
- The 2015 Budget: Impacts on Energy Efficiency & Renewables

### APRIL

- Converting Vehicle Fleets to Alternative Fuels
- Drier and Hotter: Managing Climate Risks in the Southwest
- How Better Recycling Can Minimize Waste and Boost the Economy

### MAY

- The National Climate Assessment: Measuring Domestic Climate Impacts
- The Economic Impact of Public Transportation Investment: Stories from Around the Country
- National Landmarks at Risk: How Rising Seas, Floods, and Wildfires Are Threatening The United States' Most Cherished Historic Sites
- Losing Ground: Managing Climate Risks in the Southeast

### JUNE

- Electric Transmission 301
- Innovative Technologies to Strengthen the Grid

### JULY

- Climate Impacts in the Midwest: Becoming More Resilient
- Evolving Resiliency: Managing Climate Risks in the Northeast
- 17th Annual Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency EXPO

### SEPTEMBER

- Carbon Accounting and Vehicle Fuels: A Research Update

### OCTOBER

- Cellulosic Ethanol: A Tech. Update
- The Economic and Climate Implications of Methane Emissions from the Oil & Gas Sector

**Materials and videos from our briefings are available at: [www.eesi.org/briefings](http://www.eesi.org/briefings)**

## U.S. Facing Climate Change Impacts

**THE RELEASE OF** the third National Climate Assessment (NCA) on May 6 made one thing very clear: climate change is here and it is affecting the United States right now. The federal report highlighted the climate risks that are facing the nation as a whole, as well as the particular threats facing various regions in the United States. To help the nation's policymakers understand the significant regional risks and impacts involved, EESI launched a briefing series to showcase the NCA's findings to policymakers and strengthen the case for strong, urgent federal and local action.

The conclusions drawn in the domestic NCA are in line with those of the global United Nations International Panel on Climate Change: "observations unequivocally show that climate is changing and that the warming of the past 50 years is primarily due to human-induced emissions of heat-trapping gases" (NCA). However, instead of focusing on the world-wide implications of climate change, the NCA takes a detailed look at how rising sea levels, increasing temperatures, and more frequent severe weather (among other climate change effects) will impact specific regions of the United States.

The assessment highlights how some regions, like the Northeast, face increased threats of flooding from more severe storms, while areas like the Southwest are at a greater danger for droughts and wildfires. Alaska is particularly vulnerable: it is facing the largest temperature increases, causing the melting of glaciers and the thawing of permafrost which threaten the stability of all the Arctic and sub-Arctic regions.

EESI featured the impacts on the Southwest region—spanning from California to Colorado and New Mexico—in an April 2 briefing. This vast region, important for agriculture but highly dependent on irrigation, is becoming drier and hotter. The Southwest region provides more than half of the nation's high-value specialty crops (vegetables, fruits, nuts...), making it extremely important to food supplies and prices. Just after the release of the final NCA, EESI held an overview briefing on May 8. EESI arranged for two of the report's lead authors to come to Capitol



Courtesy: U.S. Navy / Ernest R. Scott

**Norfolk Navy Base in Virginia, the world's largest naval station, is vulnerable to climate change.**

Hill to explain the report's troubling conclusions, and how they arrived at them.

We continued our focus on regional impacts, adding a special look at military issues, with a May 22 briefing about the Southeast. We brought in the U.S. Navy's Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Energy, Installations and Environment, Roger Natsuhara, who underscored the vulnerability of the Navy's coastal installations as well as the need for the Department of Defense and local communities to work closely together to respond to climate change impacts. The Southeast briefing highlighted the region's vulnerability to more frequent hurricanes, reduced water availability, and sea level rise. This will affect the region's infrastructure, including the numerous military installations in the Southeast.

Briefings on climate impacts in the Midwest and Northeast followed shortly thereafter, on July 17 and 25 respectively. You can read all about them, and view full video recordings, at [www.eesi.org/briefings](http://www.eesi.org/briefings).

The NCA—and EESI's briefings—also tackled the important questions of what communities must do to adapt to inevitable climate change impacts and what is the federal government's critical role in all of this. Adapting may involve building infrastructure away from coastlines, creating better water management systems, and increasing green spaces and protective wetlands. Meanwhile, choices made now on how we generate power will affect not only our country's energy path, but also our ability to deal with the effects of climate change. □

## Thirty Years and Counting! *(continued from page 1)*

in participating homes by 34 percent and, in most cases, the monthly energy savings exceed the cost of loan payments. I am delighted, therefore, to announce the expansion of our on-bill financing initiative into a national effort to improve the energy efficiency of homes served by rural electric cooperatives and public utilities, thanks to a grant from The JPB Foundation.

EESI also has undertaken an ambitious campaign to reach out to policymakers about climate change impacts in their regions. In conjunction with the May 6 release of the Third National Climate Assessment (NCA), we organized briefings on impacts in the Southwest, Southeast, Midwest, and Northeast, as well as on the NCA's report in general. See the article on page 2 for more information.

We've been ramping up our climate change resilience activities. Our communities need to be better prepared to withstand the climate threats we are already facing—and to be prepared for the more challenging ones we can expect as the effects of global warming become more pronounced. You'll find several articles about these issues throughout our newsletter (see pages 4, 6, and 8).

With a major United Nations Climate Change Conference scheduled for 2015, we—like you—are focused on action to mitigate climate change. One promising area we will continue to work on is reducing “super pollutants,” such as soot and methane, which trap even more heat than carbon dioxide. They are responsible for roughly half the global warming we are currently experiencing, but remain in the atmosphere for less than 20 years. Cutting their emissions now will, therefore, help mitigate climate change in a generation or less.

EESI also will continue to emphasize the need for resilience measures for our buildings, transmission, and transportation infrastructure. That will help your community cope with the climate change that is already taking place.

You could say our new website, at [www.eesi.org](http://www.eesi.org), is a physical embodiment of our focus on the future. I hope you will take a look at it if you haven't done so already. We now have a much better search interface to make it easier for you to find what you're looking for; extensive social media options, to make sharing content with your friends and followers a breeze; a mobile-friendly interface, so you can comfortably refer to EESI when you're on the move; and a new section on speakers, where you can quickly track down specific speakers, download their slides, and view their presentations.

The Obama administration, with its eyes set on its legacy, has made working on climate change a top priority. This June, it proposed long-awaited and groundbreaking regulations on carbon pollution from existing power plants, which account for nearly 40

percent of domestic carbon emissions. The final rule is expected to be released next June. Meanwhile, more and more leaders across society are calling for climate action. This is critical as lasting solutions will need bipartisan and broad-based support. Finally, the successful U.N. Climate Summit in New York and the upcoming 2015 United Nations Climate Change Conference in Paris is focusing the international community on the issue.

Clearly, now is the time to redouble our efforts, to ensure that policymakers tackle climate change while we still have a chance to limit its impact. I hope you will join us in this endeavor!

*Carol Harner*

**Executive Director, Environmental and Energy Study Institute**

*P.S.—Please consider **donating to EESI** on the occasion of its 30th anniversary, so we can achieve these goals together. If you'd like to learn more, I invite you to explore the “Why Give” section on our new website.* □

### MACACHINO—A DELICIOUS PARTNERSHIP FOR CLEAN ENERGY



**SUJA JUICE**—a winner of the Whole Foods 2014 Supplier of the Year award—and EESI have partnered to advance clean energy through a delicious beverage, Macachino. EESI is thrilled to be one of the non-profit organizations Suja Juice Company has chosen to take part in their Suja Elements Cause Collective™ program. The program involves 12

nonprofits, each one with a Suja flavor that bears its organization's brand. Best of all, the organizations—including EESI—receive a donation every time their flavor is purchased! Suja has already donated more than \$17,500 to EESI this year. Suja has also generously provided sample beverages for attendees to enjoy at major EESI events, as part of our partnership.

The EESI flavor is Macachino, made from the all-organic ingredients of cacao, coffee bean, coconut, black sesame, almond, vanilla, as well as maca, a highly nutritious plant indigenous to Peru. It is also the only Suja juice flavor with caffeine!

The drinks are available exclusively in Whole Foods stores around the country. EESI receives a 20-cent donation for each bottle of Suja Macachino purchased. EESI has been deeply impressed by Suja's commitment to sustainability and corporate philanthropy. We look forward to continuing this partnership! □

## EESI Highlights Need for Sustainable Transportation Funding

**OF THE MANY BENEFITS** of using public transportation, people often cite reduced carbon emissions and other pollution, reduced road congestion, and encouraging land-use patterns which result in fewer and shorter trips. But transit also provides a broad, positive **economic** impact, which was highlighted at EESI's May 15 Congressional briefing. Michael Melaniphy, President of the American Public Transportation Association (APTA), unveiled a new report which found that more than 50,000 jobs (mostly private sector) are created with every \$1 billion of investment in transit. These jobs are split between those created directly from the investment and indirectly through productivity gains. The report also found that there is a \$4 economic return to a community for every \$1 invested in public transportation. Salt Lake City Mayor Ralph Becker also spoke at the briefing, sharing the positive impacts his city's recent transit investments have had on its quality of life and economy.

The federal government currently supplies about 40 percent of transit construction and maintenance funding. Roughly 80 percent of federal transit money flows from the Highway Trust Fund (HTF), which is primarily funded by federal fuel taxes, augmented in recent years by general funds. Due to diminishing HTF funds and no agreement over how to raise additional revenue (such as raising fuel taxes), transit and other transportation systems face increased uncertainty over continued federal support, further straining these systems and slowing economic growth.

The current surface transportation authorization bill, MAP-21, was set to expire at the end of September, but was just recently extended through May 2015. Extensions, which plagued



Salt Lake City's new light rail line

efforts to craft MAP-21 in the first place, are a result of several factors (including a lack of needed urgency to craft a full bill), but none more significant than differences over how to provide long-term funding for surface transportation infrastructure. In recent years, federal transportation funding has shifted to short-term commitments from less sustainable sources, making it difficult for cities and states to undertake large construction projects and enable economic growth. The HTF is under constant threat of running out of money; it would have this August, had Congress not agreed on a last-second funding patch using controversial revenue sources. The primary reason for these dwindling funds is that the per gallon fuels tax has not increased since 1993, and has lost value as construction and maintenance costs have risen with inflation. One way to solve the current problem with the HTF would be to restore the value of the fuels tax to 1993 levels by raising the per gallon tax to reflect 21 years of inflation (the tax would increase by about 12 cents per gallon). This is not a politically-appealing solution, but there is growing bipartisan support as more policymakers become fed up with short-term patches that keep the national transportation system stuck in the previous century.

Please refer to our *Federal Funding for U.S. Transit and Roadway Infrastructure* issue brief for more information. □

## National Landmarks in Peril as Climate Change Unfolds

**EESI AND THE UNION OF CONCERNED SCIENTISTS (UCS)** held a briefing on May 20 about the threats climate change is posing to U.S. historical landmarks and national parks. We highlighted the worrisome findings of a new UCS report, *National Landmarks at Risk*. It focuses on 30 national landmarks which are under threat from rising sea levels, increased flooding, more intense weather events, and more frequent forest fires. Those near coasts (e.g., Statue of Liberty, Jamestown, VA) or in fire-prone areas (e.g., Bandelier National Park) face some of the greatest threats.

Senator Martin Heinrich (D-NM) opened the briefing by speaking about the devastating wildfires that have destroyed national parks and archeological sites in New Mexico. Dr. Jeffrey Altschul, President of the Society for American Archaeology, and Dr. Anastasia Steffen, an archaeologist for the Valles Caldera National Preserve (NM), echoed these sentiments, as they discussed the devastating effects that major fires have had on ancient ruins across New Mexico.

The Annapolis Chief of Historic Preservation, Lisa Craig, discussed efforts her city is taking to adapt to the changing climate. Annapolis, MD, is home to the Naval Academy as well as to many colonial and historic buildings, which are directly threatened by increasingly frequent floods. The National Parks Conservation Association speaker, Alan Spears, also discussed the importance of protecting national monuments from rising sea levels, specifically the Harriet Tubman National Monument and the Ft. Monroe National Monument. Both of these are vital landmarks in U.S. and African-American history.

We should endeavor to protect all U.S. landmarks from climate change. Yet, Spears noted that we have insufficient resources to protect all of the sites that are in danger. Many local communities have rallied to protect their cherished landmarks, but Congress and the federal government also have a vital role to play. EESI is showcasing the need to create mitigation and adaptation plans that can help protect the landmarks that we as a nation most want to save for future generations. □

## Farm Bill Includes EESI-Backed Energy Efficiency Program

Courtesy: USDA (photo by David Kosling)



President Obama signs the Farm Bill in East Lansing, MI

**AFTER MANY STOPS AND STARTS**, the Farm Bill passed in February. The passage of the bill, formally the *Agriculture Act of 2014*, meant significant victories for all of us who support clean energy in the United States. While nutritional assistance and agricultural issues dominated the news, the Farm Bill also includes language allowing the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to loan out funds to rural electric co-ops at zero interest. This new program, the Rural Energy Savings Program (RESP), represents a major achievement for EESI's long-standing efforts in this policy area, following from our work with rural electric cooperatives in South Carolina on a pilot energy efficiency retrofit project.

RESP, managed by USDA's Rural Utilities Service, was authorized to receive \$75 million per year until 2018 to provide zero-percent loans to rural electric co-operatives (co-ops) and other rural utilities. The funds will then be re-lent to co-op members to make energy efficient improvements to their homes, such as air sealing, duct repair, and HVAC upgrades. The loans are repaid by co-op members on their monthly utility bills, in a process known as "on-bill financing," with the intent that the savings from the energy-efficiency improvements exceed loan payments.



Shape Up Your Home for Energy Savings

The "Help My House" Loan Pilot Program, implemented in South Carolina, reduced participants' average annual energy spending by 34 percent and cut energy bills enough to more than cover the cost of the monthly repayments for most participants.

EESI has worked extensively on an on-bill financing pilot with the Electric Cooperatives of South Carolina and the Central Electric Power Cooperative to serve as a model for scaling up and widespread replication. The

"Help My House" Loan Pilot Program,

"Help My House" showed that significant energy savings can be achieved in homes served by co-ops by tying repayment of the energy retrofits to the utility bill. Investing in energy efficiency increases comfort, saves rural residents money, and creates contractor jobs where they are sorely needed.

Partly inspired by the pilot's success, USDA used its existing authority to finalize a similar, but broader, energy efficiency loan program in December. This USDA program, known as the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Loan Program (EECLP), provides \$250 million a year in federal loans and financial assistance to energy efficiency and renewable energy programs operated by co-ops and public power authorities serving rural areas. Benefits of the program go beyond energy and monetary savings as it can create new businesses and jobs in rural communities. EESI made numerous recommendations to USDA during the comments phase of this process; many of these suggestions were included in the final design of the program.

EESI is expanding its work in this area, building on the momentum from the new USDA resources coming online. EESI will continue to disseminate lessons learned and best practices from the South Carolina pilot, help connect co-ops with federal loan information, and provide technical assistance. EESI and its partners will conduct outreach to co-ops and public power utilities that could benefit from South Carolina-style on-bill financing programs. EESI will help groups quickly and effectively take advantage of opportunities as they become available.

These loan programs represent the ultimate win-win opportunity. Loan beneficiaries save money on power while improving their homes, utility companies ultimately save by avoiding spending on new power plants, and decreased energy use helps to curb global warming by cutting greenhouse gas emissions. □

### RECENT EESI PUBLICATIONS

- Polling the American Public on Climate Change
- Timeline of EPA Actions on Greenhouse Gases
- Summarizing Government Climate Change Reports
- Plug-in Electric Vehicles
- FY 2015 Budget Proposal: Sustainable Energy, Buildings, and Transportation
- Climate Adaptation at the Federal Level
- The Value and Impact of Building Codes
- Federal Funding for Transit and Roadway Infrastructure
- Energy Storage

*Fact sheets and issue briefs can be found at:*

[www.eesi.org/pubs](http://www.eesi.org/pubs)

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**A GREAT BIG  
THANK YOU  
TO OUR INTERNS!**

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## Building Codes Glaze Eyes But Save Lives

**A STRONG, ENERGY EFFICIENT** and resilient building can protect against a changing climate and save money in the process. At the least, homes and buildings should comply with current minimum model codes and standards for safety, health, and energy efficiency. However, most buildings in the United States do not even meet these minimum requirements. They waste substantial amounts of energy and are at risk from extreme weather events. EESI's Ellen Vaughan discussed the many benefits of building codes, and of updating them on a regular basis, in *The Value and Impact of Building Codes*, a paper published by the International Code Council (ICC).

Building codes do not tend to generate strong passions, but their importance should not be underestimated. Buildings account for 40 percent of U.S. energy consumption as well as 40 percent of the country's greenhouse gas emissions. Strengthening standards for the design and operation of the nation's buildings and ensuring compliance would make us significantly safer, healthier, more comfortable and resilient; lower our energy bills; and reduce CO2 emissions.

EESI's paper also presents the economic benefits of building codes and standards, particularly energy codes. While the initial cost of energy efficient buildings may seem off-putting, the investment can pay for itself in one to two years. After that, building owners can see hundreds of dollars in energy savings every year. This requires real estate buyers to look past the initial cost of a more efficient building to see the somewhat longer-term benefits of sustainability and resilience. For the average home buyer, upfront costs can be a big financial hurdle, and most home builders are reluctant to spend more to build 'green' if the market won't support higher purchase prices that allow them to recoup their costs.

Currently, the resiliency or energy efficiency of a building is not fully taken into account when it is priced. An update to appraisal and underwriting methods that recognizes high-performance features would more accurately reflect a building's true, long-term value. This



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Visit [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com) and choose the **Environmental and Energy Study Institute** as your preferred charity to advance clean energy solutions.

would help spur the market for green buildings and create an incentive for investment in energy efficiency retrofits. EESI is working to help spur this change.

Additionally, EESI held a briefing, *Building Resilience: Saving Money, Saving Communities, Saving Lives*, which covered the growing interest in improving the resiliency of our buildings to protect them from natural disasters and climate change. Cooper Martin, Director of Resilient Communities at the American Institute of Architects (AIA), said resiliency is "the immune system of our nation." He noted that the nation's buildings are not equipped to face our current climate challenges, as evidenced by the thousands of homes and businesses that have been destroyed in recent natural disasters. This weakness does not bode well for the climate challenges we will face in the future and makes EESI's work to promote stronger building standards critical.

See *The Value and Impact of Building Codes* at [www.eesi.org/papers](http://www.eesi.org/papers) for more information. □

## You Can Help Our Country Transition to Sustainable Energy!

### Donate

**POLICY** and policymaker education are key drivers for technology innovation, efficiency enhancements, and actions that foster sustainability. You are the key to making innovative environmental and energy solutions possible!

From energy efficiency to short-lived climate pollutants, our policymakers *need* EESI's fact-filled briefings, newsletters, and one-on-one assistance to make informed policy decisions.

**You can help our country transition to sustainable energy when you make a tax-deductible gift to EESI** in the way that's right for you:

- **Online.** Make an online donation at [www.eesi.org/donate](http://www.eesi.org/donate) – make it easier on your budget by making it a **monthly recurring gift** and support sustainable energy all year long.
- **By Mail.** Mail your gift to:  
EESI, 1112 16th St, NW, Suite 300, Washington D.C. 20036
- **Double Your Impact with an Employer Match.** See if your workplace matches employee contributions.

- **Become an EESI Associate – or Renew Today.** EESI Associates are businesses, associations, family foundations, and individuals who are an important part of the EESI family. A gift of \$1,000, \$2,000, or more will make you an EESI Associate. EESI Associates provide us with the flexibility to put resources in the areas of greatest need – and of greatest opportunity.

- **At Work.** If your employer has a workplace giving program, you can donate through easy, paycheck-based deductions. Federal employees and members of the military can give to EESI by designating **CFC #10627**. Many other employers offer workplace giving; we are a member of the **EarthShare** federation.



- **Make a Gift of Stock.** You may be eligible for a tax deduction equal to the fair market value of appreciated stock donated to EESI. Contact 202-662-1887 for our brokerage information.

Thank you for putting your commitment to sustainable energy to work in so many ways – including as support for EESI! □

## Four Stars for Seven Years: EESI Among Top 2% in the Nation



**EESI HAS BEEN NAMED A FOUR-STAR** non-profit organization by Charity Navigator, the leading U.S. charity evaluator, for the seventh time in a row. Only two percent of the 5,500 nonprofits it rates have received this distinction. EESI was awarded this top honor based on its strong financial health, transparency, and ethical practices.

"Only 2 percent of the charities we rate have received at least seven consecutive 4-star evaluations, indicating that the Environmental and Energy Study Institute outperforms most other charities in America," said Charity Navigator President Ken Berger. "This 'exceptional' designation from Charity Navigator differentiates the Environmental and Energy Study Institute from its peers and demonstrates to the public it is worthy of their trust."

EESI received a perfect score for its accountability and transparency. EESI also has very high fundraising efficiency, with 84.4 cents of every dollar it raises going towards its programs addressing climate change, clean energy, and sus-

tainability challenges, with the remainder contributing to financial sustainability, management and accounting oversight, and related areas.

EESI has received accolades from many people who have rated us highly on GreatNonprofits—the Yelp of nonprofits. GreatNonprofits named EESI one of its top rated nonprofits for the fourth year in a row. This distinction was awarded to fewer than 1 percent of all non-profit organizations in the country.

You, too, can rate EESI at [www.eesi.org/rate](http://www.eesi.org/rate). Thanks! □

*Before moving to my present position, I was a Congressional staffer for many years and worked for both political parties. Many of those years, I was working on topics within EESI's sphere of influence and regardless of my position, EESI was a trusted source of information for my colleagues on Capitol Hill and me, and a place I could turn to for more information.*

—**Jim Turner**, former Chief Counsel, Committee on Science and Technology, U.S. House of Representatives

## The Electric Grid Shouldn't Be Taken for Granted

EESI PARTNERED WITH WIRES, a non-profit electric transmission working group, to hold a series of briefings on the value of the high-voltage electric grid in the United States. In these briefings, our speakers emphasized the need to invest in our transmission infrastructure to accommodate renewable energy resources and make the grid more resilient. They discussed the key decisions to be made and options for addressing them.

The first briefing in the series, Transmission 101, gave an overview of the problems facing the nation's electrical grid. Much of the grid is more than 50 years old and no longer equipped to handle the country's modern energy needs. Our current transmission system provides reliable power to homes and businesses for the most part. But congestion on the grid often compromises its efficiency. Improving transmission can reduce this congestion and in turn increase efficiency, improve reliability, and help keep energy prices low.

The second briefing, Transmission 201, explored what it would take to modernize the nation's grid. Existing infrastructure will not be able to support the 30 percent increase in energy demand predicted to occur over the next two decades. Installing new transmission lines will allow this demand to be met, and save money for energy consumers by facilitating competition. Unfortunately, federal and state regulations make updating the grid complicated. Unlike for pipelines,

there is no single federal standard for transmission networks. To upgrade transmission infrastructure, companies need to secure approval from a large number of federal and state agencies, which can deter investors.

At the Transmission 301 briefing, panelists from utility and transmission companies discussed how essential transmission lines are to the reliability of the grid. The power industry is adding more clean energy resources, such as wind and solar, but their intermittent production requires a smarter grid. In addition, many of the best renewable resources are located far from population centers. Upgrading transmission lines and adding new ones to transport electricity across the country cheaply and efficiently can help accelerate the roll-out of clean, renewable energy. Better federal policy can help make that happen.

In June 18's briefing, EESI, in partnership with the National Electric Manufacturers Association (NEMA), explored innovative technologies that can make the grid more resilient. Our panelists discussed important but little-known smart-grid technologies, such as reclosers. These innovations can reduce outages to seconds rather than hours, by rerouting power. Developing a smarter grid involves many technologies that are already available, which could be deployed much more quickly and broadly with targeted policy measures, such as shorter depreciation schedules. □



The Environmental and Energy Study Institute is an independent, non-profit organization founded in 1984 by a bipartisan Congressional caucus dedicated to finding innovative environmental and energy solutions. Our work on climate change, energy efficiency, renewable energy, agriculture, forestry, transportation, buildings, and urban planning issues is made possible through financial support from people like you. Your tax-deductible contribution will help EESI develop innovative policy solutions for a healthy, secure, and sustainable future. **Please visit [www.eesi.org](http://www.eesi.org) to make a secure, online donation, or use the attached envelope. Thank you for your support!**

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