



# EESI

# 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.

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## Paris Climate Deal Marks Turning Point

IN OUR LAST *EESI UPDATE*, we wondered whether a strong climate deal could be reached in Paris. And, as of Earth Day, 175 nations—including the world's #1 and #2 emitters, the United States and China—signed the historic Paris climate agreement at the United Nations! The Paris climate agreements are being turned into action, as they must.



Photo: Amaury Laporte

Action may not be easy, but neither was the road to Paris, one of many such international negotiations since the Framework Convention on Climate Change was first signed

in 1992. But with strong commitments from countries around the world due to the increasingly obvious impacts of climate change, the world's nations unanimously reached a deal that sets the stage for decisive climate action. The agreement seeks to keep warming *significantly below* 2 degrees Celsius (3.6 Fahrenheit), with "efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5 °C" (2.7 °F). Until now, the global community had only agreed to limit global warming to 2 degrees Celsius, but 2 °C would not avert significant impacts, such as sea-level rise in coastal areas and low-lying island nations.

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## What Is the Future of the Clean Power Plan?

### A Word from EESI Executive Director Carol Werner

**THE SUPREME COURT'S DECISION** on February 9 to temporarily block implementation of the Clean Power Plan was unexpected to say the least. The Clean Power Plan is a key part of the administration's commitment to tackle climate change and move the United States to clean, sustainable energy. The Clean Power Plan (CPP) calls for the U.S. electricity sector to reduce its carbon emissions by at least 32 percent below 2005 levels by 2030. It shows the rest of the world that we are serious about implementing the Paris climate agreement (see above). But the truth is, whatever happens to the Clean Power Plan, our country's move towards clean, renewable energy has become unstoppable.

The Supreme Court's stay was unexpected because it was unprecedented. The Court had never before stopped the implementation of a regulation before its review by a federal appeals court. Such an unusual decision suggests the five Justices who granted the stay were at least somewhat sympathetic to the Clean Power Plan's challengers.

The uncertainty caused by the Supreme Court stay pales in comparison to the uncertainty unleashed by the death of Justice Antonin Scalia just four days later, on February 13. Scalia, 79, was one of the five justices who granted the stay. His death means predicting the Court's future rulings will be harder; his successor will likely serve as the tie-breaker in a Clean Power Plan ruling.

There are many ways this situation could play out. Another Justice leaving the Court would create further uncertainty and cannot be ruled out (four of the eight remaining Justices are 67 or older).

As you know, the nomination of a new Supreme Court Justice is embroiled in presidential election-year politics. So a new Justice may not be confirmed until the first quarter of 2017, after a new President has come into office. By coincidence, the first quarter of 2017 is also probably when the Clean Power Plan would reach the Supreme Court's docket. (The case must first be decided by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit, whose ruling is expected in the fall).

Clean energy is our future; the Clean Power Plan is following underlying trends, not driving them. Clean energy is an important way of reducing air pollution and improving public health. Moreover, renewables are already cost-competitive with fossil fuels in many areas, and their prices continue to fall.

At least 19 states, and many utilities, see the trends and are pushing forward with their Clean Power Plan implementation efforts. They know that even if the Clean Power Plan is rejected by the Courts, it's in their interest to move to sustainable clean energy. They know that ultimately carbon emissions from existing fossil fuel plants will have to be curtailed, even if that means drawing up new rules from scratch.

We hope it doesn't come down to that. The Clean Power Plan may not be essential, but it will certainly speed up our transition to a sustainable, fossil-free economy—and time is of the essence in addressing climate change, whose effects are already apparent. With you on our side, EESI will keep pressing forward to address climate change with common-sense solutions. □

## RECENT BRIEFINGS

### APRIL

- The Changing U.S. Energy Landscape
- Can Coal Country Thrive in a Clean Energy Economy?

### MARCH

- Solar Power and Resilient Design for Schools & Shelters
- Sustainable Affordable Housing: Saving Energy, Saving Lives
- Geothermal Energy: Heating Up
- Advancing Mobility Sustainably: Ridesourcing and Public Transport Together
- The 2017 Budget: Impacts on Energy Efficiency & Renewable Energy

### FEBRUARY

- Environmental Justice in the Clean Power Plan
- What's in the Paris Climate Deal?

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

## RECENT EESI PUBLICATIONS

- [A Brief History of Octane in Gasoline: From Lead to Ethanol](#)
- [Obama FY2017 Budget Proposal: Sustainable Energy, Buildings, Transportation and Climate](#)
- [Offshore Wind - Can the U.S. Catch up with Europe?](#)

**These publications can be found at: [www.eesi.org/pubs](http://www.eesi.org/pubs)**

## Paris Climate Deal Marks Turning Point (continued)

*Continued from front page*

The Paris agreement contains much that is good. Critically, almost every country—whether industrialized or developing—made commitments to cut their carbon emissions. They are expected to submit ever more ambitious climate plans every five years, as renewable energy technologies become cheaper and more available and more efficiency gains are sought in every sector. And, though the commitments are not legally binding, transparent procedures will be set up to keep nations accountable. It is critical that the world's nations stick to their plans to turn these commitments into *action*.

Nation-states are clearly not the only key actors on climate. *Business commitments* in the run-up to Paris were, and remain, critical. In the United States, 154 major companies (employing nearly 11 million people) have signed the American Business Act on Climate Pledge. More than 500 institutions with more than \$3.4 trillion in assets are divesting from fossil fuel stocks. And 28 of the world's wealth-

iest investors will commit a combined \$2 billion over the next five years to clean energy research and development.

But we're not out of the woods yet. The national climate action pledges are not legally binding, and, taken together, they will not keep warming below 2 degrees Celsius, let alone 1.5°C. Developing countries, those most in need of help with their mitigation and adaptation efforts, need the world to follow through on commitments for climate finance.

The Paris agreement was a hard won turning point, but it was also a starting point. EESI's Executive Director, Carol Werner, emphasized that turning the deal into action is key, "The momentum must not be squandered. A deal is only as good as its implementation."

For more information on how the Paris agreement was achieved and what's in it, see our February 10th briefing, *What's in the Paris deal?* □

## EESI Makes an Impact in Many Ways

**EESI BRIEFINGS**, newsletters, and publications are well-known in the DC policy community and among EESI supporters like you. But our work takes many other shapes, not often obvious! EESI staffers aren't simply briefing organizers. They are often invited to share their expertise in clean energy and sustainability.

- **The White House has asked EESI for advice on how it can better help rural communities benefit from low-cost federal funds for on-bill financing (OBF) programs;** the OBF approach helps families make their homes more energy efficient at no upfront cost.
- EESI staffers John-Michael Cross and Miguel Yanez and our consulting team are **crisscrossing the country, urging public utilities and rural electric cooperatives to explore the benefits of on-bill financing.** EESI provides information and crucial technical assistance to launch on-bill financing programs.

- The Department of State asked EESI Executive Director Carol Werner to give a presentation on clean energy strategies and policies to a **delegation of 10 government officials from Central and Latin America.**
- Policy Director Ellen Vaughan served as a reviewer for the Department of Energy's **U.S.-China Clean Energy Research Collaboration in Building Energy Efficiency**, an initiative overseen by the Building Technologies Office.
- EESI Policy Associate Jessie Stolark has participated in **numerous panels on biofuels and bioenergy, including the DOE's 2015 Bioenergy Conference.**

EESI staffers also serve as a **resource for reporters.** According to Policy Associate Laura Small, "Reporters often either directly quote me or ask me to guide their research. I devote a great deal of time and energy to providing accurate and comprehensive information to reporters, because their impact can be so great." □

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

### Give today!



AS OUR COUNTRY continues to implement its climate action plan and as the Paris agreement is ratified, keeping up the momentum is crucial. You are key to helping make that possible! EESI receives no Congressional appropriations, but **depends on you and others like you to help make this work possible.** If you are reading this, you clearly care about energy efficiency and renewable energy, and you want win-win, sustainable solutions.

You can help our country transition to sustainable energy when you make a 2016 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.
- **Mail your gift** to 1112 16th St NW #300 Washington DC 20036.
- **Double Your Impact with an Employer Match.** Ask your workplace if they match 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 show their commitment with general support, and receive special benefits.
- **Donate Appreciated Stock or Securities.** If you donate appreciated stocks or securities that have been in your portfolio at least a year, you may be eligible for a tax deduction equal to their fair market value—a win-win. Contact 202-662-1887 or [swilliams@eesi.org](mailto:swilliams@eesi.org) for more information.
- **Remember EESI in your Will, Insurance Policy, or IRA.** Including EESI as a beneficiary in your estate means that sustainable energy will be part of your legacy. It can be as simple as naming EESI as a beneficiary of your life insurance policy or Individual Retirement Account. You can also include EESI in your will or estate plan.

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

## \$48 Million to Help Climate Change-Impacted Tribe Relocate

### EESI Congressional Briefing Helped Showcase Tribe's Plight

Photo credit: Isle de Jean Charles Band



Isle de Jean Charles in Louisiana

**ONE OF EESI'S KEY GOALS** is making connections that will result in **concrete, positive outcomes.** Besides providing needed information to Congressional staffers, who attend in significant numbers, EESI's briefings are ideal networking opportunities and help spread ideas, providing impetus for further action. A remarkable example of such an impact was EESI's briefing featuring the plight of the Isle de Jean Charles Band of Biloxi-Chitimacha-Choctaw Indians, who are losing their land in Louisiana due to sea level rise.

The Isle de Jean Charles tribe has been working to relocate for the past 13 years, in part through the tireless advocacy of Chief Albert White Buffalo Naquin. In 2015, EESI held a Congressional briefing on their plight. At the briefing, *What if the Water Can't be Stopped?*, JR Naquin, standing in for Chief Albert Naquin, explained that the **tribe has lost 98 percent of the island** they have lived on since the mid-19th century because of sea level rise and land subsidence.



Chief Albert Naquin

On January 21, the Obama Administration made an unprecedented move when it offered \$48 million to help this Louisiana tribe relocate away from its disintegrating island home. The tribe is the first coastal indigenous group to relocate as a community in modern times. It may be paving the way for other groups who face climate impacts to plan their own relocations.

The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the Rockefeller Foundation chose the tribe as one of the winners of their innovative National Disaster Resilience Competition—also showcased in an EESI briefing! The joint federal-private program seeks to enhance resilience in American communities.

The grant will fund both the tribe and the Lowlander Center, a nonprofit that supports low-land communities affected by sea level rise. "This award will allow our Tribe to design and develop a new, culturally appropriate and resilient site for our community, safely located further inland," said Chief Albert White Buffalo Naquin. The new settlement will have a health clinic, food market, and an outlet to sell indigenously-produced products. The tribe hopes its resettlement will serve as a resource and example to other communities, both nationally and internationally, which face similar threats. □

## EESI Board Chair Jared Blum Hooked on Energy Efficiency



**JARED BLUM** has been working in the energy efficiency arena for 25 years now, but he got his start as an Elizabethan theater major at Boston University. How did the CEO of the Polyisocyanurate Insulation Manufacturers Association (PIMA) and Chair of EESI turn his study of theater into an accomplished career leading the charge on critical issues like energy efficiency, sustainable construction, and atmospheric environmental initiatives? Jared explains, "Once I realized the potential for positive impact on our world and future generations, I was hooked on energy efficiency and related topics."

Blum says he joined EESI's board 17 years ago because he "was fascinated by its approach to key issues and its role as a forum for all the parts of the energy/environmental puzzle." After 11 years on EESI's board, he was named Chair in 2010 (taking over from EESI co-founder Dick Ottinger, a former member of Congress from New York who remains an EESI board member). Jared is passionate about supporting EESI's mission, through his board service and financially.

Jared Blum is a monthly donor to EESI, saying "it's easy to give to EESI—I just set it up and know that I'm supporting EESI year-round." He has also included EESI in his estate planning, saying, "I

would like my legacy to include the continued push to a clean energy economy—and to support EESI's key role in that."

PIMA, the association Jared leads, has received two awards from the EPA for climate and ozone protection, developed award-winning governmental affairs and technical education programs, and become recognized as a national leader in construction fire safety, energy efficiency, and atmospheric environmental initiatives. **PIMA is also a long-standing EESI Associate, a group of donors helping EESI carry out its mission by contributing \$1,000 or more per year.**

Blum's extensive knowledge in the field of energy efficiency has led to memberships on a number of high-ranking committees and councils as well as consultations with national media, academia, government, and industry on environmental issues. This establishes him as a prominent voice in the national discourse on issues of sustainability and climate change. Blum sees it as critical for EESI to "continue to provide a balanced forum in which innovative policy solutions are developed—something for which it has become so well regarded." □

### STAFF

#### Carol Werner

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### 2016 SPRING INTERNS

Ethan Anabel	Anthony Rocco
Taotao Luo	



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. 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!**

EESI

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