



EESI UPDATE

A periodic update to EESI's friends on our work in policymaker education, coalition building, technical assistance, and policy development.

| INSIDE | |
|---|---|
| EESI Named Top "Charity Worth Watching" | 2 |
| New Partnership for Advancing an Inclusive Rural Energy Economy | 3 |
| You Power Our Work! | 4 |

EESI's Top 2017 Achievements

2017 WAS AN IMPORTANT YEAR. We engaged with a new Congress and a new Administration – and expanded our technical assistance work with rural utilities throughout the country. EESI made a strategic decision to re-emphasize issues with bipartisan appeal: the national security impacts of climate change and the domestic benefits of continuing climate adaptation aid to developing countries. **The national security community knows that, by causing rising sea levels and more extreme weather, climate change is already affecting America's national security. Without action, things will get worse.**

EESI and its partners called attention to these threats with our June briefing on the national security implications of climate change. Interest in the topic was so great that we had to turn dozens away from the room, alerting them that they could watch online on our website or live on C-SPAN. Between the standing-room-only briefing room and our livecast, more than 300 people crowded in to hear the respected voices of retired military and security experts who warned that addressing climate is essential to our nation's military—their facilities and their work.

2017 MEDIA COVERAGE

The media highlighted EESI's work and experts throughout the year, spreading our impact far and wide. **ABC, BBC, CNBC, Bloomberg BNA, and The Atlantic** interviewed our staff. **C-Span covered two of our briefings live: Investing in U.S. Infrastructure for Maximum Dividends and The National Security Implications of Climate Change**, and two in-depth articles came out about the **on-bill financing program** in Holland, Michigan—one in *Midwest Energy News* and one in the Michigan Municipal League's magazine.

We were pleased to see that the November 2017 **National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA)**, an annual authorization bill that sets defense funding levels and policies, included provisions for the military to take action on climate. The provisions, which the president signed into law, make it clear that climate change is a "direct threat" to national security and direct the Defense Department to prepare for its impacts on vulnerable bases. This is a tremendous success for national action on climate in the con-

text of a year during which the Administration announced America's withdrawal from the Paris climate agreement.



A Puerto Rican family signals it needs help following Hurricane Maria.

Credit: U.S. Customs and Border Protection

Resilience was also a major focus last year, and it continues to be this year. Resiliency was especially relevant last year, given the extreme weather events that hit the United States, including hurricanes and wildfires. **Overall, this caused at least \$372 billion in damages, making 2017 the costliest year on record in terms of U.S. natural disaster damage.** Our series, *Building Resilient and Secure Infrastructure*, examined: how cities can become more resilient to extreme weather; the critical federal-state-private sector partnership that underpins our energy emergency preparedness; and how we can best invest in our infrastructure to maximize dividends over the long run. Federal investments are crucial to help our states and communities become more resilient.

EESI carefully reviewed the Trump Administration's 2018 budget proposal and published a summary and analysis of the sustainable energy, building, transportation, and climate implications of the proposal. The budget outline provided essential insights into which programs the administration had targeted for elimination or reductions, while providing a potential roadmap for mounting a defense against such efforts. EESI's Congressional engagement shored up support for endangered programs, helping to preserve them from the chopping block. EESI has made the defense of relevant federally-funded programs a priority and frequently makes the case for preserving these programs through its publications, coalition activities, and interactions with Hill staff.

You can see all of our top ten 2017 accomplishments here: www.eesi.org/accomplishments. □

None of these achievements would be possible without our donors, so we are extremely grateful for your contributions that allow us to do what we do and ensure that we can make a difference!

Top Priority for 2018: National Security as a Rationale for Climate Action



Credit: U.S. Navy, Ernest R. Scott

Naval Station Norfolk, the largest naval base in the world, is vulnerable to sea level rise.

THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE has long recognized the national security rationale for action on climate. Legislators are also sounding the alarm. A **bipartisan group of 106 Members of Congress delivered a letter to the White House in January on the urgent need to address the "risk of devastation" climate change poses to U.S. military installations and communities.** This letter came on the heels of passage of *The National Defense Authorization Act*, the bill authorizing the annual Defense budget; Congress included climate provisions in this bill and the president signed it into law **with language that explicitly named climate change as "a direct threat to the national security of the United States."**

With this momentum in place, EESI will stress national security as an important rationale for Congress to move forward on climate. We will use our time-tested methods to hit home the importance of climate action to **build bipartisan support for action on climate to protect U.S. national security.**

To that end, EESI will:

- **Further build the case for national security as a rationale for climate action.** Food and water scarcity are major sources of global instability. Using renewable energy on military bases can make them more resilient and less vulnerable to attacks on supply chains. Thanks to EESI's relationships with Congressional staff on both sides of the aisle, we can work behind the scenes to find out what information Congressional offices need.
- **Continue our briefings on the connections between national security and climate change,** featuring panels of persuasive and respected speakers.
- **Increase the reach of our communications through our social media, livecasts, and our highly respected weekly, *Climate Change News (CCN)*.** By providing highlights on the climate-security connection, EESI will reach both the public and Congressional staff effectively.

Republicans and Democrats agree that national security is a key priority. You can help us support the champions who want to make sure addressing climate change is part of our national security strategy—and help inform other policymakers why dealing with climate is critically important for our national interests—and, therefore, for *their* interests. □

EESI Named "Charity Worth Watching" After Earning Perfect Score

**EESI WAS NAMED
#1 ON CHARITY
NAVIGATOR'S
CHARITIES WORTH
WATCHING LIST!**

THANK YOU!



CHARITY NAVIGATOR—America's leading nonprofit evaluator—named **EESI #1 on its list of ten "Charities Worth Watching!"** Charity Navigator showcased 10 nonprofits that have earned its top Four Star rating while having budgets of under \$2 million. Charity Navigator highlighted these nonprofits, arguing that they deserve more attention and should be better known: "some well-known charities are less effective than you'd think, while a number of lesser known charities are truly exceptional."

EESI is a Four Star Charity, Charity Navigator's highest rating category. Moreover, **EESI achieved a perfect score**—100 out of 100—in both of the categories considered by Charity Navigator, financial health and accountability and transparency. This was the first

time EESI has ever earned a perfect score—not surprising since, out of the more than *1.5 million charities* Charity Navigator rated, **only 55 organizations achieved a perfect score!** Of the 325 environmental organizations Charity Navigator has evaluated, EESI is one of only seven to have earned a perfect score!

Charity Navigator has designated EESI as a Four Star Charity nine times to date. Charity Navigator says that "this **exceptional designation** from Charity Navigator **sets Environmental and Energy Study Institute apart from its peers and demonstrates to the public its trustworthiness.**" It also notes that EESI "exceeds industry standards and **outperforms most charities in its cause.**"

EESI's Board Chair, Jared Blum, was elated about EESI's perfect rating and stated that, "this rating by Charity Navigator confirms that—especially during this critical time of threats to the environmental policies so essential to the future—EESI programs are effectively managed and mission-driven by its dedicated board and staff." □

STAFF

Carol Werner
John-Michael Cross
Brian La Shier
Amaury Laporte
Richard Nunno
Adanna Okpala
David Robison
Jessie Stolark
Ellen Vaughan
Susan Williams
Miguel Yanez

INTERNS

Anna Gallichio
Jieyi Lu
Pietro Morabito
Joanne Zulinski

New Partnership for Advancing an Inclusive Rural Energy Economy

EESI AND THE NATIONAL COOPERATIVE BUSINESS ASSOCIATION CLUSA INTERNATIONAL (NCBA CLUSA) have joined forces to form the **Partnership for Advancing an Inclusive Rural Energy Economy**. It helps rural electric cooperatives (aka co-ops) develop on-bill financing programs for energy efficiency upgrades and renewable energy projects, thereby **putting more money in the pockets of households in rural communities**. The Partnership's goal is to reduce household energy costs, increase disposable income, and catalyze clean energy economic development in rural America, while improving the health of the families who live there.

Energy efficiency improvements can reduce household energy use by 20 to 50 percent. These improvements—a combination of new insulation, air sealing, and other measures—also improve home comfort. Rooftop solar, geothermal, and other on-site renewable energy systems offer additional benefits. While such improvements pay for themselves over time, the upfront costs are too high for many people. Energy efficiency retrofits typically cost \$3,000 to \$15,000.



"On-bill financing" offers a solution to this conundrum by enabling energy improvements with no upfront costs to the customer; instead, the utility or a partnering lender pays the upfront costs and offers a low-interest loan that is paid back over time as part of the customer's monthly utility bill. EESI recommends designing projects so that the average monthly savings are greater than the monthly payment, giving immediate financial relief to the participant! We also recommend simple application processes based on good bill payment history, rather than credit scores, to enable low- and moderate-income households to participate; **these families often cannot afford to advance the funds for retrofits. Many cannot qualify for typical home equity loans or front the money for rebate programs.**

The Partnership was made possible in part through a one-year, \$150,000 grant from the New York Community Trust (NYCT). □

New Farm Bill Could Address Dead Zones in American Waterways

IT SHOULD COME AS NO SURPRISE that our waterways – which millions of people directly rely on for food and commerce – are in poor health. Causes of poor waterway health range from warming water temperatures to pollution and overfishing. One of the most widespread contributors are *dead zones* – waters unable to support life due to low oxygen levels. Over the past half century around the world, wide-ranging dead zones have increased from 50 in 1950 to more than 500 today.

Dead zones heavily affect communities across the United States and around the world. For instance, the **world's second largest dead zone**, in the Gulf of



Credit: NASA Earth Observatory

Mexico, causes losses of more than \$82 million a year for America's seafood and tourism industries, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

Dead zones are caused, in large part, by excess agricultural runoff flowing into streams and waterways. With the intensification and growth of agricultural production in the United States, the **agricultural sector is now one of the largest causes of the poor water quality of rivers and streams**. For instance, the Gulf of Mexico dead zone is caused primarily by nutrients carried by the Mississippi River, the source of 41 percent of the water drainage in the United States and one of the most productive agricultural regions in the world.

The implications of this agricultural runoff are vast and a major problem within U.S. waterways, but there are **sensible solutions in the pipeline**. The challenge is to apply conservation dollars in a cost-effective way, while both streamlining federal programs and achieving the greatest possible outcome with the lowest possible cost to farmers and the taxpayer. This is not easy but there are policy options—and it is a problem that desperately needs to be addressed.

This is where a new Farm Bill comes in. This is "must-pass legislation." Thus, **Congress has a unique opportunity to help voluntary conservation measures more effectively handle problems affecting water quality.** This includes working to **improve the ability of federal programs to address nutrient pollution from the agricultural sector.**

Most importantly, there is potential for **bipartisan solutions** to address dead zones and other water-related issues *cost-effectively*. The Farm Bill must also include appropriate incentives and policies for farmers, as the economics need to work for them as well. "Win-win," commonsense solutions are our goal for this critical issue. **EESI will work towards informing you and Congress about these issues and their solutions. Your support and commitment is critical to making that happen. Thank you!**

EESI will continue to work on agricultural runoff, dead zones, and the Farm Bill's implications for both. Please make sure you're signed up to receive our briefing notices, factsheets, and our weekly email newsletter, *Sustainable Bioenergy, Farms, and Forests* (www.eesi.org/signup), to stay informed. □

Subscribe to EESI's weekly newsletter, Climate Change News

A trusted source for 15 years!

- Get a free roundup and summary of the week's climate-related science, business, and policy stories
- Sign up at www.eesi.org/signup to get Climate Change News delivered to your inbox every Monday for free
- Visit www.eesi.org/ccn to view current or past issues

You Power Our Work

EESI engages with policymakers to defend clean energy programs and advance win-win bipartisan solutions that urgently address climate change.

You power our work with your gift! EESI is independent and receives no Congressional funding. Help advance energy efficiency, renewable energy, better buildings, resilient infrastructure, and national security. Our work would not be possible without your support!

- Show your commitment to commonsense solutions by giving at eesi.org/donate or by mail to our **new address** (1020 19th St. NW, Suite 650, Washington, D.C. 20036), or through your Donor Advised Fund.
- Become an EESI Associate with a gift of \$1,000 per year (\$84 a month) or more to support sustainable, win-win solutions.
- Give through your workplace-giving program. EESI is in the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC #10627).
- Name EESI as a beneficiary in your 401(k) or IRA.

Thank you for advancing sustainable solutions!

We've moved!
Please update your records.



EESI

1020 19th Street NW, Suite 650

Washington, D.C. 20036-6101