



EESI UPDATE

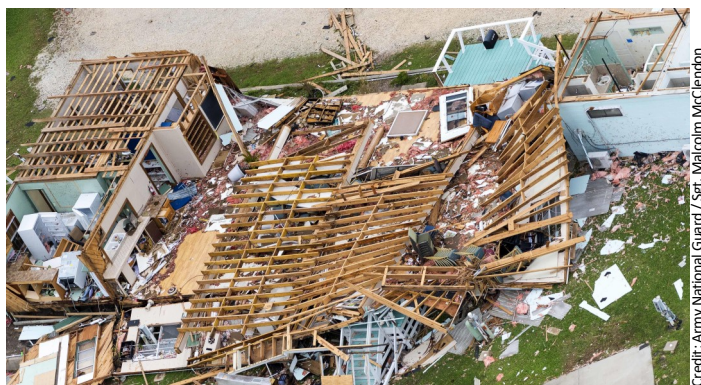
A periodic update to EESI's friends on our work in policymaker education, coalition building, technical assistance, and policy development.

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EESI Doubles Down on Resilience to Protect U.S. Communities from Climate Change Impacts

AS THE FREQUENCY AND SEVERITY of storms increase, and wildfires and other disasters devastate communities, the importance of climate change solutions that enhance community resilience has moved to the forefront. Extreme weather events are increasing the number of businesses and homes that are considered uninsurable in the private market, which in many cases leaves government—and, therefore, American taxpayers—liable for the costs and the risks as the “insurer of last recourse.”



Damage caused by Hurricane Harvey in Rockport, Texas (Aug. 28, 2017)

One of the best ways to decrease the costs of disasters is to improve the climate resilience of our nation's infrastructure, both its built infrastructure and natural infrastructure (such as by planting trees and creating rain gardens to reduce flooding). Using tools like updated flood maps and storm tracking data, we can introduce solutions at the federal level to provide guidelines and resources to states and communities.

Those of us who are concerned about climate change have been taken on a rollercoaster ride the past few years, watching as extreme weather events increased even while climate action stalled and backslid. This year, we have entered a new era of divided government. We saw a big shift with 101 new Members of Congress elected, many of whom ran on transitioning to clean energy and addressing climate change as part of their platforms.

Freshmen in both the House and Senate—as well as veteran policymakers—will need assistance in understanding the complex issues they face in trying to find a workable path toward sustainability and climate solutions. Numerous ideas are percolating on Capitol Hill—and policymakers will likely need assistance in understanding all the details.

EESI was created to fill this need almost 35 years ago—and it's more relevant than ever today! People like you are critical to ensuring policymakers know what tools are at their disposal.

EESI has engaged on federal resilience and adaptation for almost a decade. In 2017, EESI increased its focus on resilience with *Building Resilient and Secure Infrastructure*, a keystone series of Congressional briefings/livecasts, which highlighted problems and solutions to create a more resilient, secure, and climate-adapted infrastructure system. Thirteen U.S. federal agencies agreed that there is no time to lose in their most recent National Climate Assessment!

With your support, together we can advance resilience as a core federal policy issue—and opportunities abound. Key resilience strategies include:

- Minimum standards for building codes
- Prioritizing help for low-income and minority communities that are more climate-vulnerable
- The use of nature to mitigate damage and protect lives and property
- Additional funding for weather satellites, remote sensing and technical assistance so local officials can be as informed as possible
- Increased climate change and extreme weather research
- Promotion of sound land use and management practices and listening to community needs
- Linking federal recovery assistance to climate resilience planning and investment
- Risk-based pricing of insurance as appropriate. □

Fort Collins Wins \$1 Million Prize from Bloomberg Philanthropies EESI Closely Involved in Their Energy Efficiency Initiative



Courtesy: Bloomberg Philanthropies

FORT COLLINS, COLORADO—a city EESI has been assisting—is one of nine winners of Bloomberg Philanthropies' 2018 U.S. Mayors Challenge. Fort Collins's loan program for residential energy upgrades was awarded a \$1 million prize from Bloomberg Philanthropies in October. **Its innovative on-bill financing-based approach aims to provide health and equity benefits for low- and moderate-income renters by improving the energy efficiency and indoor air quality of rental homes.**

Fort Collins is a shining example of cities, rural areas, and states that are **adopting the innovative approach that EESI has been championing: on-bill financing.** Fort Collins's loan programs enable residents to pay

for energy upgrades without any upfront costs—paying back the cost right on their energy bills.

With your support, EESI and Fort Collins are jointly developing an online guide and related resources that will be available for other cities and municipal utilities in Colorado and across the United States. This will help those who wish to operate their own on-bill financing program—styled after the Fort Collins loan program—so that we can continue to drive energy innovation and efficiency enhancements.

This helps people who are struggling with high energy bills by giving them the ability and opportunity to decrease those bills—improving home comfort and energy efficiency at the same time.

The Bloomberg Mayors Challenge was highly competitive. It was a year-long competition that challenged local leaders to uncover and test bold, inventive ideas to confront the toughest problems faced by cities today. The evaluation committee assessed the cities' applications based on their idea's vision, potential for impact, implementation plan, and potential to scale to other cities. The on-bill financing program in Fort Collins passed the test! □

Carol Werner Announces Retirement as EESI Executive Director



CAROL WERNER, EESI's Executive Director for the past 21 years, will step down this summer, once her successor is confirmed.

Carol is clear that, while she is stepping down from her position as EESI's Executive Director, **she is not retiring completely—the fight against climate change is too important to walk away from.**

At EESI, **Carol was a driving force behind EESI's 1988 declaration that addressing climate change is a moral imperative** and that all of EESI's work should be looked at through a climate lens. She has organized hundreds of Congressional briefings and many other energy, environmental, and climate events. Carol has also been instrumental in launching EESI's project providing technical assistance to rural electric cooperatives and municipal utilities (see article above).

Currently, Carol serves on the board of the National Center for Appropriate Technology, the board of the NASEO Institute, the Advisory Board of Planet Forward at George Washington University, and the Advisory Board of the President's Climate Action Project (PCAP), among others. She was a co-founder of the U.S. Climate Action Network and the Surface Transportation Policy Project.

EESI Chair Jared Blum said, **"Carol's been an amazing asset to the organization, and has played a critical role in making EESI the trusted resource it is today.** She will remain in her role until we've confirmed a successor, to ensure a seamless transition. The Board is committed to continuing the impactful leadership role of EESI, and the new leader will reflect the commitment and passion that has been a trademark of this organization for over 30 years." Blum emphasized that EESI is in a good position to continue its important role, with a strong, talented staff in place. □

Top Three Accomplishments of 2018

EESI'S AMAZING DONORS truly made possible more good than we can detail in this short space! Among our top accomplishments of 2018 were: (1) **promoting climate resilience**, (2) emphasizing the **national security impacts of climate change**, and (3) supporting the development of **on-bill financing programs** to allow small utilities to innovate—and help their customers save money!

America's infrastructure urgently needs to be updated and made ready to withstand **more frequent and severe extreme weather caused by climate change**. In a series of Capitol Hill briefings, **EESI presented examples of best practices from states and cities**.

EESI played a role in the passage of the *Disaster Recovery Reform Act*, which makes it **easier for communities to prepare for disasters**, and to rebuild better afterwards (read more on page 1). **EESI also set the stage for the PREPARE Act**, which coordinates federal **extreme weather preparedness** and supports regional, state, and local action.



Virginia National Guard soldiers bringing a child to safety ahead of Hurricane Sandy.

Courtesy: Sgt. Maj. Dennis Green

EESI emphasized risks that climate change presents to **national security at the operational and strategic levels**—and highlighted voices from the national security community. We tracked bills related to climate change and national security. We just held another briefing, ***Making Military Bases and Their Communities More Resilient***, on March 1 and will soon announce a spring 2019 climate security forum.

In 2018, EESI supported the development of on-bill financing programs in 12 states to

help low- and moderate-income households save energy and money! EESI is helping electric cooperatives apply for millions of dollars in zero-interest federal loans, including \$13 million in funding for South Carolina cooperatives. Another EESI partner, Fort Collins, Colorado, won a \$1 million prize from Bloomberg Philanthropies for its on-bill financing program (see article on facing page). □

“Shoddy Budgeting Today Leads to Bigger Fires Tomorrow”

IN AMERICA'S WEST, wildfires are a common hazard, but the problem is accelerating dramatically—one of a number of types of extreme events that has become more common in recent years. For example, last year's fire season saw not only **California's largest ever wildfire** (the Mendocino Complex Fire), but also its **most deadly and destructive one** (the Camp Fire). These wildfires will only become worse with increasing temperatures from climate change.



Courtesy: U.S. Air Force Master Sgt. C. DeWitt

Wildfires used to be common and would eventually burn themselves out as part of a natural cycle. But with increased population at the urban/forest interface in the West, this became untenable due to the danger to human life and property.

The increasing incidence and severity of wildfires in the past two decades has forced the U.S. Forest Service to spend more of its money fighting fires than ever before—money that is taken out of its budget for forest management practices that could reduce fire risk. This practice is known as ‘fire borrowing.’ Senator Ron Wyden of Oregon, where wildfires have been devastating in recent years, said it best in his impassioned speech to Congress, “Shoddy budgeting today leads to bigger fires tomorrow and it needs to stop!”

The federal budget hasn't classified wildfires as natural disasters, an issue raised by Rep. Mike Simpson of Idaho in the Wildfire Disaster Funding Act, which seeks to provide additional federal funds for wildfire suppression and other emergency management activities. The bill has *94 bipartisan co-sponsors so far*, and, if enacted, will allow the U.S. Forest Service to *devote more of its budget to fire prevention*—meaning smaller and less threatening and expensive fires tomorrow. □

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Thank you to all of our amazing donors! You make everything described in this issue of EESI Update possible! You are the way our country will make strides toward climate solutions. EESI engages with policymakers to defend clean energy programs and advance win-win bipartisan solutions that urgently address climate change. Please make a gift today at www.eesi.org/donate. Thanks!

Celebrating Love with a Gift for Sustainability!

WHEN JOE HARPER AND MARK STEPHANZ decided to get married, they knew they wanted to make charitable giving an option for their guests.

Joe is a magazine editor and Mark is a financial consultant. They consider themselves fortunate in life. So they chose four charities, including EESI, to reflect their values and concerns. **In total, they raised more than \$10,000!** They also showed their commitment by becoming donors to EESI themselves. They and many of their guests are environmentalists, so including EESI was a natural. They noted **“environmentalism shouldn't be political!”**

Mark explained that they have “many passions in life and preserving our planet is one of them!” Environmental issues have been important to both of them since childhood. As Joe put it, “I grew up at a time when being conscious of sustainability and clean energy was not so politicized. The Earth is our home.” Mark



added, “We are acutely aware that we are in a pivotal time as it relates to the sustainability of our planet.”

Mark told us, “We try to keep our carbon footprint as low as possible.” Living in New York City, they almost always walk or take transit, bring their bags to the grocery store, and avoid single-use plastics.

Asked if they had any tips for those who were considering incorporating a charitable component into their next special occasion, Joe advised: **“Do your research and go for the small nonprofits, where every penny counts.** Don't overlook the smaller, less-known **groups who are doing effective work in highly specific areas.** Weddings will probably not get you a substantial enough sum to put a dent into the needs of large nonprofits, but **it can do a lot for a smaller group!**” □

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