ML STRATEGIES

Energy & Sustainability Washington Update — July 2023

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Bipartisan Infrastructure Law & Inflation Reduction Act Opportunities

Visit our **Energy Funding Matrix** for a roundup of various clean energy opportunities. We update the matrix on a biweekly basis and welcome any inquiries about how the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and Inflation Reduction Act, along with other relevant federal opportunities, may impact your business or organization.

Energy Leads All Sectors in Job Creation

The US Department of Energy released the **United States Energy and Employment Report** 2023, finding that in 2022 the energy workforce added nearly 300,000 jobs – an increase of more than 3.8% over the previous year. Even better – clean energy jobs increased in every state, growing 3.9% with the addition of 114,000 jobs nationally. Key clean energy sectors seeing growth were clean vehicles (battery electric, plug-in hybrid, and hydrogen/fuel cell), solar, wind, and geothermal. The top three states for energy job growth were California, Texas, and West Virginia.

Treasury & IRS Guidance on Advanced Energy Credit

The Department of the Treasury and the Internal Revenue Service issued long-awaited guidance for the Section 48C advanced energy tax credit, a revised and expanded allocation-based investment tax credit for qualified investments in eligible qualifying advanced energy projects. Our colleagues at Mintz have drafted a **detailed overview** of the guidance that covers the application process and timeline, selection criteria, the interaction of Section 45X and Section 48C, and Section 48C(e) energy communities census tracts.

Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund Solar for All Funding

The Environmental Protection Agency has **announced** the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund's Solar for All **Notice of Funding Opportunity**, which opens the $7 billion grant competition to fund residential distributed solar programs to serve low-income and disadvantaged communities nationwide. The application will be open through September 26, 2023. Read more about the competition on the **GGRF** website. EPA will host a **webinar** on the opportunity on July 12, 2023.

DOE to Invest $2 Billion in Domestic EV Production

The US Department of Energy (DOE) Vehicle Technologies Office released a **notice of intent** to invest $2 billion from the Inflation Reduction Act to accelerate domestic manufacturing of electrified vehicles. According to the **announcement**, "These investments are expected to be made available in the coming months and will boost American production of clean energy technology, create and retain good-paying jobs with the free and fair chance to join a union, and support President Biden's national goals for electric vehicles to make up at least half of all new vehicle sales by 2030 and to transition to a net-zero emissions economy by 2050."

Rural Energy Savings Act Introduced in House

Reps. Nikki Budzinski (D-IL) and James Clyburn (D-SC) **introduced** the Rural Energy Savings Act of 2023 to reauthorize the Rural Energy Savings Program (RESP) in the 2023 Farm Bill. First included in the 2014 Farm Bill, the Rural Energy Savings Program provides interest-free loans that electric cooperatives and other utilities can provide to consumers to make affordable, energy-efficiency improvements to their homes or businesses. RESP is administered by the USDA Rural Utilities Service, which has made at least 37 RESP loan awards worth nearly $300 million to utilities in 18 states since 2016. Previously reauthorized in the 2018 Farm Bill with minimal changes, this current reauthorization effort seeks to make RESP more accessible and attractive for rural utilities and related entities.

FASTER Act Would Ease Transmission Permitting Process

Sen. Martin Heinrich (D-NM) introduced the Facilitating America's Siting of Transmission and Electric Reliability (FASTER) Act aimed at addressing key obstacles slowing down the transmission siting, planning, and permitting process. According to a **press release**, “The FASTER Act builds upon the best practices established by Fixing America’s Surface Transportation (FAST) Act to expedite transmission siting and permitting practices without compromising environmental standards. It provides certainty to transmission project developers, requires meaningful engagement with private landowners, and delivers tangible economic benefits for local communities, states, and counties.”

Weatherization Assistance Program Grant Opportunity

The US Department of Energy’s Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP) has **opened applications** for the $25 million Enhancement & Innovation (E&I) competitive grant program that aims to accelerate the clean energy transition through demonstration projects. Successful grant projects will support low-income households in a variety of ways, including expanding the number of weatherization-ready homes, increasing renewable energy technology, expanding health and safety measures, and disseminating new weatherization best practices. In addition, it encourages weatherization providers to hire, train, and retain employees with good-paying jobs. DOE intends to issue multiple awards, with a maximum individual award amount of $2 million. Eligible entities include existing WAP grantees, WAP sub-grantees, and other nonprofit organizations. Concept Papers are due on August 31, 2023, and Full Applications are due on January 5, 2024. DOE plans to announce E&I selections in June 2024.

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Neal Martin brings more than two decades of experience in government and federal relations to his work, helping clients navigate a wide range of issues. He provides strategic guidance to organizations seeking to advance their legislative priorities and enhance their visibility before Congress and federal agencies.