

## **ENERGY POLICY: White House rolls out executive actions to promote solar, efficiency (Thursday, September 18, 2014)**

**Robin Bravender, E&E reporter**

Top Obama administration officials touted a new program to install solar power in low-income Washington, D.C., homes today as the White House announced a new suite of executive actions to advance solar deployment and boost energy efficiency.

U.S. EPA chief Gina McCarthy joined Housing and Urban Development Secretary Julián Castro, Council on Environmental Quality acting Chairman Mike Boots, and White House energy and climate adviser Dan Utech in the Ivy City neighborhood of northeast D.C. this morning to view new solar installations by the nonprofit GRID Alternatives on affordable homes developed by Habitat for Humanity.

The officials were flanked by workers in hard hats as they applauded the project and tied it to the administration's climate change policies.

"The challenge of climate change requires work like this," McCarthy said. "It requires creative thinking, it requires joining what is essentially all of us in our efforts to fight climate change, which is not only one of the greatest public health challenges of our time, but it also is one of the greatest economic challenges of our time."

She lauded the project's efforts to extend renewable energy across the population.

"The real goal here, and I think of the president, is to make sure that as we're moving towards this energy transition that nobody is left behind in that transition," she said.

She put in a plug for EPA's draft rule to curb greenhouse gas emissions from power plants, a contentious policy that's central to President Obama's plans to tackle climate change through the executive branch during the remainder of his term.

The solar installation project "demonstrates that the work we're doing on our Clean Power Plan to ask states to think about new ways of delivering electricity in ways that are sustainable and affordable, that this gives them a vision of what they might invest in to really bring this home in a creative way, so that we're making sure that the values of energy efficiency and renewable energy aren't just accrued to those who have money to put in, but can be accrued to everyone."

### **Executive actions**

The White House also announced this morning a series of executive actions aimed at advancing solar power and promoting energy efficiency.

All told, the administration said the actions announced today will slash carbon dioxide emissions by nearly 300 million metric tons through 2030 -- the equivalent of taking more than 60 million cars off the road for a year.

Those actions include a new Energy Department solar training network, a pilot project to train veterans at up to three military bases this fall.

DOE announced a proposed energy efficiency standard for commercial air conditioners that could save consumers nearly \$10 billion on energy bills through 2030, the White House said, and could have the largest savings of any efficiency standard issued by DOE to date.

DOE also issued a final determination on commercial building codes today after preliminarily affirming in May that the industry's latest commercial building code offers more energy savings than the previous standard.

The Agriculture Department also today announced \$68 million in 540 renewable energy and energy efficiency projects nationwide, including 240 solar projects. Funding will come through the Rural Energy for America Program that offers financial assistance to farmers, ranchers and rural small businesses to install renewable energy projects and boost energy efficiency, the White House said.

The administration also announced new private- and public-sector commitments across the country to advance solar power and improve energy efficiency.

"The president is committed to advancing clean energy in this country and to creating opportunity for hardworking Americans," Utech said today at the event. He called solar power "a vital part of our energy strategy, our economic strategy and our strategy for cutting pollution, and I think we've made great progress in the last few years."

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