



Department of Commerce

Energy News Overview

September 2016

Crude oil by rail controversy:

The controversial subject of crude oil transport by rail made the news recently. The Spokane City Council voted to penalize oil and coal trains moving through Spokane - cities and states generally are prohibited from regulating railroads. The city of Vancouver (WA) City Council voted to ban future oil refineries or facilities - this will not affect the current Tesoro proposed facility. A business group in Vancouver gave public support to the Tesoro proposal. See links under Crude by rail heading on page.

Carbon pricing:

Sightline published a [detailed and thorough three part analysis](#) of CarbonWA's revenue neutral initiative (I-732). The initiative also received backing from the Audubon Society. The Dept. of Ecology held several public meetings on the proposed Clean Air Rule, which would put a slowly declining cap up most fossil fuel use in the state. For the most part the hearings attendees were generally supportive of the CAR, but with the caveat that it did not go far enough. Editorials on the CAR in several major newspapers were more critical. In California Gov. Brown proposed extending the state's cap and trade program beyond 2020 with the goal of a reduction in emissions of 40 percent by 2030. Canada announced a nationwide tax on carbon dioxide emission to combat the threat of climate change. See links under Carbon pricing heading on page.

Renewable energy:

After years of generous subsidies and encouraging policies, several states have started to limit homeowner access to rooftop solar power. Some of the push back on by the states on rooftop solar is fiscally motivated; additionally some of the resistance is from electric utilities. In contrast large scale, integrated, utility scale solar installations are being added at a rapid rate. The Atlantic produced an article on the divergence between red states and blue states with regard to renewable energy. Several red states have frozen or terminated their Renewable Portfolio Standards (RPS), while several blue states such as California and Oregon have boosted their RPS targets. NPR and the Washington Examiner produced skeptical reviews of burning some types of biomass to produce electricity. See links under Renewable energy heading on page.

Energy efficiency

The US Senate struggled to move forward with a compromise energy bill. The US House of Representatives added \$100 million funding for LIHEAP.