

The CONEG Connection - October 18, 2016

News and highlights from the Northeastern Governors and Washington, DC in the policy areas of energy, environment and transportation.

Heating Bills Could Increase This Winter But Remain Comparable to Recent Winters

In its new **Winter Fuels Outlook**, the Energy Information Administration (EIA) projects that most U.S. households will spend more on home heating this winter compared to last winter, but expenditures are expected to be comparable to or lower than the average winters from 2010–11 through 2014–15. The price of home heating fuels is heavily dependent on weather. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has forecasted that temperatures this winter will be 17% colder in the Northeast and Midwest, 18% colder in the South, and 2% warmer in the West compared to last winter. EIA also includes projections for scenarios where weather varies from those forecasts.



Natural Gas: EIA projects that households heating primarily with natural gas (nearly half of all U.S. households) will spend \$116 (22%) more this winter compared with last winter, but expenditures will be comparable to those in the five winters prior to last winter. Although additional capacity is expected to become available this year, pipeline constraints will continue to present challenges to the Northeast and New England in particular, and could lead to price volatility during cold snaps.

Heating Oil: Of particular interest to the CONEG states, EIA expects households heating with home heating oil to spend an average of \$1,370 this winter which is a \$378 (38%) increase over last winter but 32% lower than average expenditures for the winters of 2010–11 through 2014–

15. Prices are expected to average \$2.46 per gallon compared to \$2.06 last year. Compared to 5% nationally, approximately 22% of households in the Northeast use heating oil as their primary heating fuel. This is down from 27% five years ago as an increasing number of homes are converted, and new homes are constructed, to use natural gas or electricity for space heating.

Electricity: Households heating primarily with electricity are forecast to spend an average of \$945 this winter which is \$49 (5%) more than last. Thirty-nine percent of U.S. households use electricity as their primary heating source, with regional totals ranging from 63% in the South to 15% in the Northeast. Electricity prices in New England have been affected by constrained fuel supplies as the region's increasing reliance on natural gas for electricity generation can put supplies of natural gas used for generation in competition with natural gas used for space heating during cold spells.



NEWS FROM AROUND THE REGION:

CONNECTICUT

Governor Dannel Malloy awarded the U.S. Navy's highest civilian award for public service.

Governor Malloy received a strategic plan for fighting Connecticut's opioid epidemic.

Governor Malloy and CTDOT Commissioner Redeker unveiled a state-of-the-art Track Construction Machine, keeping the new CTrail Hartford Line on schedule for January 2018 Launch.

The Connecticut Department of Transportation Highway Safety Office today announced that Connecticut's 2016 seat belt rate has increased to a record 89.4 percent ; continues successful work with other states, including CONEG states, to increase seat belt use.



MASSACHUSETTS

Governor Charlie Baker and Lt. Governor Karyn Polito announced that Massachusetts will receive more than \$2 million in grant awards from the National Park Service's Land and Water Conservation Fund for 11 park improvement projects across the Commonwealth .

MIT breaks world record for nuclear fusion.

Massachusetts prepares for total toll booth elimination .



MAINE

Senator Collins tours Maine transportation projects with USDOT Secretary Foxx, FHWA Administrator Nadeau and MDOT Commissioner Bernhardt.

With no drought relief in sight, residents are encouraged to use water wisely.

MaineHousing and the state's community action agencies are making \$250,000 available to provide drought relief to income-eligible households without potable water.

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Governor Maggie Hassan and the Executive Council today approved state grants to support local law enforcement in combating the state's opioid crisis through an expansion of Operation Granite Hammer.

Keene State College is the first U.S. college or university to heat its campus with purified waste vegetable oil .

NEW YORK

Governor Cuomo announced a five-year New York Power Authority contract to install 300 EV charging stations across the state as part of the Governor's ChargeNY initiative's goal of 3,000 charging stations by 2018; currently about 1,600 have been installed in New York.



Governor Cuomo announced a \$10 million investment to support new and existing incubators that help early-stage and emerging clean energy companies across the state to connect with investors, development partners and mentors.



Governor Andrew Cuomo today announced the award of up to \$5 million for latest phase of the Five Cities Energy Plans initiative to help the cities reduce overall energy costs and carbon emissions, advance energy sustainability, and support the creation of clean-energy technologies and jobs.

Governor Cuomo announced a transformational plan to reimagine New York's bridges and tunnels for the 21st century.

The New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) has developed the NY-Sun Solar Guidebook for Local Governments to provide information to help municipalities and officials incorporate solar into local permitting.

Governor Cuomo announced a new public awareness campaign encouraging New Yorkers to report the illegal sales of synthetic drugs, warning about the dangers associated with use of man-made drugs and providing information on seeking help for addiction.

Governor Cuomo announced a Taste NY pilot program that will provide locally-produced snacks and craft beverages on select Amtrak trains traveling in and through New York.

RHODE ISLAND

Governor Gina Raimondo announced the availability of \$1.5 million in Innovation Vouchers grants of up to \$50,000 for small Rhode Island companies to fund research and development (R&D) in a variety of industry sectors, and to support activities such as commercializing a new product and scale-to-market development of new ideas.

Governor Raimondo announced the award of almost \$1 million in Main Street Rhode Island Streetscape Improvement Fund grants to seven communities to be used for projects such as improving sidewalks, lighting, signage and landscaping and installing handicap drop-off areas in downtown commercial districts.

The Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) announced that FHWA and the FTA have approved RIDOT's 10-year transportation plan (only the third such plan adopted nationwide) that will bring RI's bridges to the federal minimum standard of 90 percent structural sufficiency by 2025, saving approximately \$950 million.



VERMONT

The Vermont Agency of Transportation is awarding \$3.5 million in construction and planning grants through the Bicycle and Pedestrian Program for municipalities to improve bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure through projects such as improving pedestrian crossings and filling critical sidewalk gaps.

The Federal Transit Administration has awarded \$480,000 in Mobility on Demand grants to the VT Agency of Transportation for statewide transit trip planner apps that will benefit non-traditional rural transit users and people with disabilities.



NEWS FROM WASHINGTON, DC:

Falling residential electricity prices

EIA reports that residential electricity prices during the first six months of 2016 were on average 0.7% lower than the same period last year, with prices in New England and the Middle Atlantic falling 6% and roughly 2.5% respectively; If the trend continues, annual average U.S.

residential electricity would decline for the first time since 2002.

New EPA climate change web portal

The U.S. EPA has launched the Adaptation Resource Center (ARC-X), a new online portal that will provide community leaders with customized information and tools to increase resilience to climate change.

Amtrak OIG on PTC implementation

Amtrak's Inspector General has released a report that details the progress Amtrak has made to implement Positive Train Control technology, tasks that remain, and recommendations for meeting the December 31, 2018 legislative deadline for PTC implementation.

DOT Hazmat emergency preparedness grants to states

The U.S. DOT's Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration announced the award to all 50 states of \$20.4 million in Hazardous Materials Emergency Preparedness grants to enhance their ability to respond to hazardous materials transportation incidents such as those involving energy products carried by rail.

EPA awards Urban Waters grants

U.S. EPA has awarded \$1.3 million to 22 organizations in 18 states (including CONEG states) to help protect and restore urban waters.

New medication-assisted treatment app

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) announced an October 21, 2016, launch of MATx, a free mobile app that will provide health care practitioners with immediate access to potentially life-saving information about medication-assisted treatment (MAT) for opioid use disorder.



Did You Know...

U.S. energy-related carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions for the first six months of 2016 was the lowest emissions level for the first six months of the year since 1991, largely due to mild weather, decreases in fossil fuel consumption, and increases in renewable fuel consumption.

Source: Energy Information Administration

Correction: Due to a formatting error, the October 4, 2016 issue of the CONEG Connection did not include a source for “ *Did you know...* ” regarding Penn Station. The source was The New York Times, “[An Alternative Plan](#)” by Michael Kimmelman. We regret the error.

400 North Capitol Street, NW
Suite 382
Washington, DC 20001

202-624-8450

info@coneg.org