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World's oldest message in a bottle washes up in Germany after 108 years at sea

New Actions to Bring Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency to Households across the Country



Tree grows from 5000 year old seed

In 1963, the late archeologist Yigael Yadin unearthed a small stockpile of 2000 year old ancient Judean Date Palm seeds stowed in a clay jar buried beneath the rubble in the Masada Excavations in Israel.

The Judean Date Palm variety has been extinct for over 1800 hundred years and carbon dating indicated the seeds were about 2,000 years old.

For the next four decades the ancient seeds sat in a drawer untouched, at Tel Aviv's Bar-Ilan University in the office of botanical archaeologist Mordechai Kislev.

In 2005, botanical researcher Elaine Solowey, director of the Arava Institute for Environmental Studies at Kibbutz Ketura in Israel, decided to plant some of the seeds and see what, if anything, would sprout. Upon request a few of the seeds were passed on to Solowey to attempt germination.

After adequate research on revitalizing the seeds, some of the 2000 year old seeds were planted. A few weeks later, in March of 2005 something amazing happened. A sapling Judean Date Palm was miraculously sprouted and brought to life from the ancient seeds discovered in the excavations 42 years earlier.

The tree was nicknamed Methuselah after the oldest person named in the Old Testament of the Bible. In 2011, the palm produced its first flowers, and now ten years after the Judean Date Palm was miraculously brought back to life, the male date palm tree named Methuselah, has become a father.

“He is over three meters [ten feet] tall, he’s got a few offshoots, he has flowers, and his pollen is good,” Solowey told National Geographic. “We pollinated a female with his pollen, a wild [modern] female, and yeah, he can make dates.”



Judean Date Palm revived in Israel after 1800 years of extinction

Known as **Methuselah**, this Judean Date Palm was sprouted and amazingly brought to life in 2005 from a 2000 year old seed found in a clay jar in the 1963 Masada Excavations in Israel.

PRODUCTS OF ISRAEL

Solowey now hopes she will be able to plant an ancient date grove. To do that, she would need to grow a female plant from an ancient seed as a mate for Methuselah, and it's looking promising – Solowey has managed to sprout a small handful of other date palms from ancient seeds recovered at archaeological sites around the Dead Sea, and at least two of them are female.

Information for this post was taken from the following sources:

<http://www.ancient-origins.net/news-history-archaeology/extinct-tree-resurrected-ancient-seeds-now-dad-002838>

<http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/051122-old-plant-seed-food/>

World's oldest message in a bottle washes up in Germany after 108 years at sea

The bottle was released into the sea by George Parker Bidder in the early 1900s
businessinsider.com

THE WHITE HOUSE Office of the Press Secretary August 24, 2015

FACT SHEET: President Obama Announces New Actions to Bring Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency to Households across the Country

Advancing Clean Energy Technology Innovation, Cutting Energy Bills, and Creating Jobs

President Obama is committed to taking responsible steps to address climate change, promote clean energy and energy efficiency, drive innovation, and ensure a cleaner, more stable environment for future generations. That is why at Senator Reid's National Clean Energy Summit later today, he is announcing a robust set of executive actions and private sector commitments to accelerate America's transition to cleaner sources of energy and ways to cut energy waste.

These actions build on state leadership, all across America, to continue to expand opportunities to install energy saving technologies in households today, particularly those that need it most, while driving the development of innovative, low-cost clean energy technologies for tomorrow.

Last year, the United States brought online as much solar energy every three weeks as it did in all of 2008, and the solar industry added jobs 10 times faster than the rest of the economy. Since the beginning of 2010, the average cost of a solar electric system has dropped by 50 percent. In fact, distributed solar prices fell 10 to 20 percent in 2014 alone and currently 44 states have pricing structures that encourage increased penetration of distributed energy resources.

Americans are also more empowered to capture opportunities to improve efficiency and cut energy waste. In fact, up to one third of households can track their energy use and learn ways to make choices on how to save on their energy bills. Since President Obama took office, the U.S. Department of Energy has already put in place appliance efficiency standards that will save American consumers nearly \$480 billion on their utility bills through 2030, and the Environmental Protection Agency's ENERGY STAR Program continues to help save consumers more than \$34 billion per year going forward.

The executive actions and private sector commitments President Obama is announcing today will continue to promote the use and development of smart, simple, low-cost technologies to help households save on their energy bills and help America transition to cleaner, and more distributed energy resources. These include:

- Making \$1 billion in additional loan guarantee authority available and announcing new guidelines for distributed energy projects utilizing innovative technology and states looking to access this financing;
- Unlocking residential Property-Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) financing for single-family housing to make it easier for Americans to invest in clean energy technologies;
- Launching a new HUD and DOE program to provide home owners with a simple way to measure and improve the energy efficiency of their homes, by increasing homeowners borrowing power;
- Creating a DOD Privatized Housing Solar Challenge, and announcing companies are committing to provide solar power to housing on over 40 military bases across the United States, while saving military families money on energy bills and making military communities more energy secure;
- Announcing \$24 million for 11 projects in seven states to develop innovative solar technologies that double the amount of energy each solar panel can produce from the sun;
- Approving a transmission line that will support bringing online a 485-megawatt photovoltaic facility that will be constructed in Riverside County and produce enough renewable energy to power more than 145,000 homes; and
- Creating an Interagency Task Force to Promote a Clean Energy Future for All Americans; and announcing independent commitments from local governments, utilities, and businesses that are stepping up to drive energy efficiency in more than 300,000 low-income households and investing more than \$220 million in energy saving activities for veterans and low-income customers to help decrease their energy bills.

Today's actions build on a longstanding commitment to [create a clean energy economy](#) for all Americans, will help states meet the targets in the Clean Power Plan announced earlier this month, and set us on a path to reach the President's goals, including:

- Achieving an economy-wide target to reduce emissions by 26%-28% below 2005 levels in 2025;
- Increase the share of renewables – beyond hydropower – in their respective electricity generation mixes to the level of 20% by 2030;

- Installing 300 megawatts of renewable energy across federally subsidized housing by 2020; and
- Doubling energy productivity by 2030.

EXECUTIVE ACTIONS TO DRIVE CLEAN ENERGY AND CUT ENERGY WASTE

To continue to reinforce American leadership in deploying clean energy and cutting energy waste while creating jobs and reducing carbon pollution, the Administration is announcing the following actions:

Making \$1 Billion in Additional Loan Guarantee Authority Available and Announcing New Guidelines for Distributed Energy Projects Utilizing Innovative Technology: Distributed Energy Projects are currently driving innovation and transforming U.S. energy markets. Technologies such as rooftop solar, energy storage, smart grid technology, and methane capture for oil and gas wells, solve key energy challenges. Catalyzing these technologies and demonstrating the viability of these markets would create economic opportunity, strengthen energy security, transform certain energy markets, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. To accelerate the pace of innovation in distributed energy, the Department of Energy is:

- **Inviting Innovative Distributed Energy Projects to Apply to More Than \$10 Billion in Current Loan Guarantees:** The Department of Energy is supplementing its current loan guarantee solicitations to invite applications for Distributed Energy Projects. The current Solicitations, totaling more than \$10 billion in loan guarantee authority, are now clearly unlocked to support scale up of Distributed Energy Projects utilizing innovative technology. Today's announcement includes guidance from the Department on how a Distributed Energy Project transaction could be properly structured.

- **Making Available \$1 Billion in Additional Loan Guarantee Authority for New, Innovative Projects :** As part of its new push for Distributed Energy Projects utilizing innovative technology, the Department of Energy is providing up to \$1 billion in additional loan guarantee authority through its current Solicitations for new Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Projects and Fossil Energy Projects. This significantly boosts the resources available to new applicants.

- **Providing Clarity for States and State Green Banks on How to Work with the Department's Loan Programs Office:** The Department of Energy is also issuing new guidance making clear that state-affiliated financial entities, including state green banks, may submit applications for Eligible Projects. That means any state or state-affiliated entity that satisfies all other requirements for qualification as a borrower can submit applications for Eligible Projects, including Distributed Energy Projects. In addition, the Department made clear today that state and state-affiliated entities, including state green banks, may participate in Distributed Energy Projects as lenders or co-lenders, off-takers or equity providers.

Announcing New Programs to Accelerate the Deployment of Clean Energy Technologies Available Today: For more than 80 years, the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) has provided low-income households and underserved communities access to safe and affordable mortgage credit. And with today's announcement, FHA will provide additional opportunities for borrowers with FHA insured loans to benefit from affordable financing of home energy improvements, saving them money, and improving the environment. Today more than 7.6 million households in the U.S. live in FHA-insured single family housing. To accelerate this transition and drive the deployment of renewable energy and energy efficiency in single family housing, the Department of Housing and Urban Development is taking the following actions:

- **Unlocking Residential Property-Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) Financing:** PACE is an innovative mechanism for financing energy efficiency and renewable energy improvements. PACE financing allows homeowners to benefit from energy improvements immediately and pay back the cost over time through their property taxes. When the property is sold, the remaining PACE loan stays with the more energy efficient property

and the next owner is responsible for repaying the loan. PACE programs have the potential to unlock alternative sources of capital to accelerate renewable energy and efficiency retrofits for households, and reduce energy costs for consumers.

To remove existing barriers and accelerate the use of PACE financing for single family housing, HUD's Federal Housing Administration (FHA) is announcing today that, under guidance to be issued soon, properties with subordinated PACE loans can be purchased and refinanced with an FHA insured mortgage. HUD is issuing a [preliminary statement](#) indicating the conditions under which borrowers purchasing or refinancing properties with existing PACE assessments will be eligible to use FHA-insured financing. Secretary Castro is also sending a [letter to Governors](#) describing the options the FHA offers to make it easier for consumers to undertake energy efficiency and renewable energy improvements in their homes. FHA's evolving PACE guidance is also being informed by ongoing conversations with the Federal Housing Finance Agency.

This action is distinct from the multifamily PACE guidance for the State of California that HUD released earlier this year. The guidance clarified the circumstances under which HUD will approve unsubordinated PACE financing on HUD-assisted and -insured multifamily housing in California in order to facilitate the establishment of a California Multifamily PACE Pilot.

➤ **Increasing Homeowners Borrowing Power to Make Energy Efficiency Improvements:** HUD's FHA Energy Efficient Home Program and DOE are launching a program to provide potential homeowners with an easy way to measure and improve the energy efficiency of their homes. Under the new HUD and DOE [Home Energy Score](#) partnership, in areas where the Home Energy Score is available, single family households will be able to increase their access to financing tools to make energy efficiency improvements. DOE's Home Energy Score offers a "miles per gallon" type rating to estimate a home's energy use on a 10-point scale. A "1" corresponds to the least energy efficient homes and a "10" corresponds to the most energy efficient homes, while the average U.S. home will score a "5." Through this new partnership, homebuyers or homeowners who want to obtain an FHA-insured purchase or refinance mortgage for a single family home that receives a Home Energy Score of 6 or higher will be eligible to increase their income qualifying ratio by 2 percentage points above the standard Single Family FHA limit, making it easier to secure financing to make these improvements.

DOD Privatized Housing Solar Challenge: Approximately 72 MWs of solar energy producing infrastructure has been installed on over 60,000 Department of Defense (DOD) privatized housing units to date. To amplify this progress, earlier this summer, DOD and the White House Council on Environmental Quality convened the companies that own the privatized housing units to share best practices and encourage them to set goals for increasing the amount of solar energy generated on privatized military housing through the end of 2016.

Today, four companies are committing to provide solar power to housing on over 40 military bases across the United States, while saving military families money on energy bills and making military communities more energy secure. These commitments total over 233 MWs, reducing annual carbon emissions by approximately 324 metric tons.

- **Balfour Beatty:** Balfour Beatty Communities has joined forces with DOD to install solar at the following 12 military installations across the US: Lakehurst, NJ; New London CT; Long Island, NY; Newport, RI; Saratoga Springs, NY; Ft Bliss, TX; Ft Detrick, MD; Wheaton, MD; Ft Hamilton, NY; Ft Leonard Wood, MO; West Point, NY; and Ft Carson, CO. This effort will generate approximately 63.35MW of solar power and continue to reduce carbon emissions across Balfour Beatty Communities' Military Family Housing portfolio.
- **Corvias:** Corvias Solutions (Corvias) along with Onyx Renewable Partners, is working with DOD to install solar on 12 military installations across the United States. This effort is expected to generate

approximately 100MW of solar power that will provide increased energy security and reduce annual carbon emissions by approximately 92,000 tons. Corvias will continue to innovate with its Army partner and has received initial approval to move forward on solar installations at Aberdeen Proving Grounds and Fort Meade, MD; Fort Bragg, NC; Fort Polk, LA; Fort Rucker, AL; Fort Sill, OK; and Fort Riley, KS.

- **Lincoln Military Housing:** Lincoln Military Housing is leveraging the current 20 MW system being installed on privatized military housing in San Diego to install a new proposed solar project that would add 60 MW of power generating capabilities to its national portfolio of privatized military housing. Lincoln Military Housing provides more than 31,000 family homes for military members across the United States.
- **United Communities:** United Communities, which provides homes for 2,000 military families living at Joint Base McGuire Dix Lakehurst in New Jersey, will deploy an additional 10 MW of cost-effective, private sector solar generated electricity serving 1,147 of these homes in 2016. This new project will increase solar generation to at least 16 MW, representing 90% of total electricity consumed by the residents of these privatized military homes. The significant electricity savings generated from the additional ground-mounted solar array will directly benefit families living on the base.

Pushing the Bar on Low-Cost Solar Technology: The Advanced Research Projects Agency – Energy (ARPA-E)’s Micro-scale Optimized Solar-cell Arrays with Integrated Concentration (MOSAIC) Program is announcing \$24 million for 11 projects in seven states across the country to develop innovative solar technologies to double the amount of energy each solar panel can produce from the sun, while reducing costs and the space required to generate solar energy.

- **California Institute of Technology** (Pasadena, CA) - *Micro-Optical Tandem Luminescent Solar Concentrator*
- **Glint Photonics, Inc.** (Burlingame, CA) - *Stationary Wide-Angle Concentrator PV System*
- **Palo Alto Research Center** (Palo Alto, CA) - *Micro-Chiplet Printer for MOSAIC*
- **Massachusetts Institute of Technology** (Cambridge, MA) - *Integrated Micro-Optical Concentrator Photovoltaics with Lateral Multijunction Cells*
- **Massachusetts Institute of Technology** (Cambridge, MA) - *Wafer-Level Integrated Concentrating Photovoltaics*
- **Panasonic Boston Laboratory** (Newton, MA) - *Low Profile CPV Panel with Sun Tracking for Rooftop Installation*
- **University of Rochester** (Rochester, NY) - *Planar Light Guide Concentrated Photovoltaics*
- **Semprius, Inc.** (Durham, NC) - *Micro-Scale Ultra-High Efficiency CPV/Diffuse Hybrid Arrays Using Transfer Printing*
- **The Pennsylvania State University** (University Park, PA) - *Wide-Angle Planar Microtracking Microcell CPV*
- **Texas A&M University Engineering Experiment Station** (College Station, TX) - *Waveguiding Solar Concentrator*
- **Sharp Laboratories of America** (Camas, WA) - *A High-Efficiency Flat Plate PV with Integrated Micro-PV atop a 1-Sun Panel*

Approving a New Transmission Line to Deploy Solar Energy: Today, U.S. Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell announced that the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has approved the Blythe Mesa Solar project in California and its transmission line that will support bringing online the 485-megawatt photovoltaic facility that will be constructed in Riverside County and produce enough renewable energy to power more than 145,000 homes in California.

Creating an Interagency Task Force to Promote a Clean Energy Future for All Americans: Building on the Administration's initiative to increase access to solar energy for all Americans, and recognizing the importance of ensuring that the communities most likely to be impacted by climate change must also share in the benefits a clean energy future, today, President Obama is creating an Interagency Task Force to Promote a Clean Energy Future for All Americans, that will work in partnership with states and community organizations to identify opportunities to improve energy efficiency and scale up the deployment renewable energy in low- and moderate- income communities. The Task Force, whose participants include the Executive Office of the President, DOE, EPA, HUD, USDA, DOL, and Treasury, will work to enhance this shared goal through three key mechanisms:

➤ **Leveraging the Clean Energy Incentive Program:** The Task Force will support low-income communities through the development and implementation of the Clean Power Plan's Clean Energy Incentive Program. The CEIP is a voluntary "matching fund" program that states can use to incentivize early investment in eligible wind and solar projects, as well as demand-side energy efficiency projects, including those that are implemented in low-income communities. In particular, the Task Force will help to identify Administration-wide funding and technical assistance for states, cities, and organizations, easing access to the Federal tools and programs available to increase energy efficiency and deploy renewable energy in low- and moderate- income communities. This fall, EPA is also releasing a new resource that will highlight effective programs and policies at the state and local levels that have led to the successful adoption of energy efficiency and renewable energy in low-income communities.

➤ **Enhancing Federal Resources for Low-and Moderate Income Communities:** Building on the [programs already available](#), the Task Force will review the Administration's programs and policies relating to the availability of clean energy and renewable energy programs nationwide, including within low- and moderate-income communities, with the goal of enhancing funding available in both our existing programs and through the FY2017 budget process.

➤ **Identifying Private Sector Partners and Foundation Support:** Today, the President is calling on mayors and county officials, the private sector, and foundations to step up and support the deployment of clean and efficient technologies in low-and moderate-income communities. The Task Force will facilitate partnerships between communities and private sector organizations. Already, the following organizations are stepping up to drive energy efficiency in more than 300,000 low-income households and investing more than \$220 million in energy saving activities for veterans and low-income customers to help decrease their energy bills:

- **The American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy (ACEEE)** is committing to advancing energy efficiency in low-income households in the next year through:
 - Providing technical assistance and developing resources for utilities and state agencies so that energy efficiency programs can better serve low- and moderate-income households, especially those residing in affordable multifamily buildings.
 - Working with HUD to increase energy efficiency investments in subsidized housing stock. This includes encouraging utilities to provide whole-building energy data and targeted programs that serve this sector.

- Providing technical assistance and resources to local governments so that citywide energy efficiency efforts reach low- and moderate-income households and small businesses in these communities. ACEEE will also work with local governments to ensure that these energy efficiency efforts be considered as strategies within state and utility energy planning.
 - Producing a best practice guide on community-based lending for energy efficiency in low- and moderate-income communities.
- **Bosch** is committing to dedicating part of its sales force to focus specifically on outreach to school districts in low income communities, as well as in extreme climate areas, where energy resiliency is paramount. These activities could include:
 - Working to educate stakeholders and decision makers in low-income communities about the opportunities and benefits of high-efficiency buildings, particularly schools.
 - Sharing critical information with stakeholders on how projects can be implemented in their regions, including case studies from existing Bosch school improvement projects.
 - Providing best practices on how other schools integrate energy efficiency projects into student curriculum and reinforce teaching and learning about energy conservation in the classroom.
- **CLEAResult and E4thefuture** are announcing a new initiative that will establish a deeper Weatherization program that will focus on recruiting and training Native American professionals to become energy auditors. The initial scope of this project will have a goal of identifying as many as 10 new energy professionals from the Native American tribal communities that CLEAResult serves in Michigan. This initiative will demonstrate that residential energy efficiency works to not only lower energy costs for low income consumers but also strengthen communities, create jobs and improve the housing conditions for low income consumers.
- **Connecticut Weatherization Assistance Program (CT WAP)**, their Community Action-based subgrantees, utility partners, and strategic financial partners have identified a range of energy efficiency opportunities that are the result of innovative efforts to expand the reach of the U.S. WAP and other residential efficiency programs via community outreach to underserved areas. CT WAP and its subgrantees have prepared needs assessments related to Urban Revitalization programs combined with health and safety stakeholders on the state and local levels and have established key relationships with renewable energy, heating system replacement, community lighting and client education services. CT WAP estimates that 1,000 homes per year (2,800 persons) could benefit from additional efficiency efforts above and beyond what services are currently being delivered in the state, or more than 4,000 units (11,200 persons) over a 48-month period. Given the existing capacity and workload, contracting and expansion of services would require a ramp up period of 30 to 60 days and production and public benefit could be realized within 90 days of agreements.
- **Commons Energy in Ohio** is making a new commitment to provide service to low and moderate income populations in Efficiency Smart's service territory. This builds on their existing commitment to comprehensive total-energy solution for owners of small to mid-size multifamily affordable housing, education, health care, and community and municipal facilities who may have difficulty accessing capital, technical skills, and implementation services.

- **The Compact of Mayors**, a global coalition of mayors and city officials that have pledged to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and enhance resilience to climate change, is committing to further the uptake of clean energy technologies, including in low-income communities, and to track overall progress. U.S. Cities are taking significant steps to reduce emissions, but the only way to measure progress is through a transparent and consistent system that provides accountability. 19 U.S. Cities have already signed onto the Compact, and 15 more are announcing their commitment today, including:
 - Atlanta
 - Austin
 - Bridgeport
 - Camuy (PR)
 - Chicago
 - Chula Vista
 - Grand Rapids
 - King County
 - New York
 - Oakland
 - San Francisco
 - Santa Monica
 - Seattle
 - West Hollywood
 - West Palm Beach
 - The President is challenging all Mayors to publicly commit to a climate action plan ahead of the Paris UN meeting, and has set a goal of having at least 100 US cities that have signed onto the Compact by the end of November.
- **The Community Preservation Corporation (CPC)** , a nonprofit mortgage lender providing leading-edge capital solutions to the complex issues facing communities throughout New York State, has committed to underwriting the projected energy reduction savings from conservation projects into its first mortgage financing procedure. CPC will work with their partners at both the state and municipal level including the Governor's office, HCR, NYSERDA, and the New York City Energy Efficiency Corporation to create and preserve over 750 units of high-performance housing for low- and moderate-income households. First by capturing the savings of energy efficiency and water conservation measures in the loan underwriting, then monitoring the project through occupancy to track realized savings, CPC aims to create synergies within the multifamily lending industry that lead to deeper savings and additional stakeholder participation.
- **Direct Energy** has provided over 1,700 Programmable Thermostats to eligible low-income households in Texas, under a program created by the Public Utility Commission of Texas, in order to help those households better manage their energy usage. Going forward, Direct Energy will continue this effort by partnering with **Nest Labs** and others to reach as many additional households as possible.

- **Dominion Virginia Power** – in collaboration with more than 30 state agencies, non-profit organizations and other community stakeholders – will invest \$57 million (\$42 million of which is funded by shareholders) for an expanded EnergyShare program starting September 1 to provide financial assistance, weatherization services, and educational outreach to people living with disabilities, homeless veterans, seniors, and low-income customers.
 - Dominion will link eligible individuals with weatherization providers and fund project work providing long-term, sustainable savings to customers;
 - In partnership with the Virginia Department of Veterans Services, Dominion will provide approximately 1,000 vouchers annually for \$500 each to veterans being housed through rapid re-housing or permanent supporting housing programs;
 - Working with the Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services, Dominion will provide approximately 1,000 vouchers annually for \$500 each to individuals living with disabilities, thereby providing an important wrap-around service.
 - The program includes significant community outreach and energy conservation education for all customers;
 - The overall program will benefit tens of thousands of customers.

The expanded EnergyShare will be a collaborative model for how utilities can work with state agencies and non-profits to provide sustainable savings for those facing financial hardships through a combination of energy assistance and energy efficiency.

- **Energy Efficiency for All (EEFA)**, a partnership between the National Housing Trust, Natural Resources Defense Council, Energy Foundation and Elevate Energy with funding support from The JPB Foundation, will help low income renters gain access to \$170 million in new private and public resources for energy efficiency in affordable multifamily housing. EEFA will accomplish this commitment by bringing together the energy and housing sectors to tap the benefits of energy efficiency for millions of Americans living on limited incomes. EEFA's mission is to make multifamily homes healthy and affordable, while helping utilities achieve their energy efficiency goals and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. EEFA has energy, health, and housing partners in 12 states and supports a national learning network.
- **Energy Optimizers, USA and Miller Valentine** are announcing a new partnership to develop and implement energy efficiency renovation projects in over 12,000 low-income properties throughout 13 states. This program is estimated to save more than \$21,600,000 for the building owners and occupants and create more than 6,500 jobs. This project will include LED lighting, solar hot water systems, energy efficient HVAC systems and insulation.
- **GRID Alternatives** will ensure every low-income solar customer served by GRID receives comprehensive energy efficiency education, and will enroll eligible families into locally or federally funded low-income weatherization programs. This service ensures eligible low-income families receive energy efficiency services at no cost and maximizes their financial benefit from weatherization and solar installations.
- **The Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority** commits to serving approximately 200-300 households via a Healthy Homes Program to address deferral issues

preventing homes from being weatherization-ready. The program will address roof leaks, mold, moisture, electrical systems and other issues that frequently lead to deferral of weatherization jobs. The focus of this program is not only to make the home weatherization-ready, but to address issues that may affect the health of families served. Additional hazards to be addressed might include eliminating trip hazards, installing hand rails, and addressing asthma triggers. Approximately 200 to 300 people will benefit from this program, which is slated to start April 1, 2016.

- **Lime Energy** is committing to provide energy efficient facility upgrades for over 1,000 small businesses in low-to-moderate income communities. Lime Energy has already completed more than 100,000 such projects creating thousands of jobs and driving over \$1 billion dollars back into the local economies of the communities that it serves.
- **The Maryland Public Service Commission** is announcing that no later than the Spring of 2016 it will establish energy efficiency goals specific to limited-income programs administered as part of the statewide EmPOWER Maryland initiative, which will require targeted investment in this critical sector and may require a ramp-up of existing programs in 2016 and beyond. The new goals will build on a framework of accountability designed to increase the reach of the EmPOWER limited-income programs to as many eligible participants as possible. Since 2009, the EmPOWER Maryland program has weatherized, at no additional cost to the homeowner, 16,795 limited-income households, resulting in an average savings per limited-income household of 2,995 kWh per year.
- **The National Housing Trust/Enterprise** commits to improving energy intensity of its portfolio by at least 30 percent by 2025; developing an organization-wide plan with energy reduction milestones to achieve energy savings commitment; sharing information on the energy efficiency implementation models used to achieve the energy savings commitment; making available portfolio-wide energy performance information within 12 months and tracking progress on annual basis.
- **The National Association for State Community Services Programs (NASCSPP)** is committed to creating dynamic partnerships at the national level that will mobilize groups in unison to create national awareness for creative approaches to energy efficiency that reduce the energy burden for low-income families. NASCSPP will ensure that the creative approaches to energy efficiency being accomplished in the Weatherization network do not go unnoticed. They are committed to effectively shining a spotlight on the work of their membership and acting as the single-point-of-contact for the Weatherization network on all matters related to energy efficiency initiatives. The success of these efforts will be shared with all programs to encourage others to find ways to implement innovative practices in Weatherization to assist low-income families being served by the Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP), including the commitments from the Connecticut Weatherization Assistance Program, Dominion Virginia Power, The Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority, and **Southwestern Regional Housing and Community Development Corporation**.
- **New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA)** is announcing it has submitted a proposal to the New York Public Service Commission (PSC) to establish a new \$5 billion ten year Clean Energy Fund (CEF), of which \$78 million each year is proposed to be directed to increasing energy affordability and access to clean energy options for low and moderate income (LMI) communities and households. The New York Governor's office has created an inter-agency working group to identify and pursue strategies to help implement and maximize the impact of NYSERDA's LMI commitment under the CEF.

- **New York State Homes and Community Renewal (HCR)** has established a new, optional Passive House track for applicants seeking competitive points for Green Building under its August 2015 Request for Proposals for Unified Funding Programs (RFP) to encourage a significant increase in the energy efficiency of New York's affordable housing stock. This RFP makes funding available through eleven state housing programs. To obtain the competitive points under this track, projects may qualify under either the Passive House Institute US (PHIUS), or the International Passive House Institute (iPHI) programs. HCR intends to work closely with NYSEERDA to monitor the ongoing energy use intensity of any Passive House projects that may be selected for funding under the RFP, in order to provide valuable data to the market to accelerate the trend toward construction of Passive House certified affordable multifamily buildings.
- **Opower** is committing to serve 300,000 additional low-income households and driving \$3 million more in energy savings over the next year, helping low-income families save a total of 30,000 MWh and \$3 million on their utility bills.
- **Southwestern Regional Housing and Community Development Corporation** will provide a pathway to alternative energy for up to eleven new-build homes. Each home will have a 1kw residential wind turbine installed as part of a package of energy efficiency measures. The wind power will reduce the energy burden for families served, especially when combined with energy efficient methods of home building. The success of this pilot program could be used to launch similar, larger-scale projects in New Mexico. The New Mexico Mortgage Finance Authority is also launching a low-interest loan program to install high-efficiency furnaces for low-income families at a discounted cost in an effort to connect vulnerable households with reliable and efficient heating systems. The initiative will serve approximately 50 households per year and will start November 10.
- **Tony Fadell and Matt Rogers, co-founders of Nest Labs** , have committed to donate 500 Nest Learning Thermostats for a pilot program with the Community and Economic Development Association (CEDA) of Cook County in Chicago. Studies have shown that Nest thermostats can save people an average of 10-15% on their heating and cooling bills, and the Nest-CEDA program will specifically examine their use to benefit low-income weatherization projects.

