

THE CLEAN POWER PLAN IDEA BOOK

resource**media**



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Keeping up communications on one issue or campaign over an extended period can be a challenge. Sometimes a little inspiration can help. To that end, the Clean Power Plan Idea Book provides some examples and ideas for advocates and communities to turn to in coming months in their ongoing media and communication work toward strong state compliance plans. This is not meant to be exhaustive nor one size fits all. It is simply a collection of ideas we've noted, captured and compiled to help provide a reminder or spark some creativity in keeping the Clean Power Plan drumbeat alive.



Spotlighting Business Support

Businesses of all stripes have already supported the Clean Power Plan, not just because it's the right thing to do, but because it's also good for their bottom lines. Now that states are in the process of creating compliance plans, another push to line up and feature local business support can again highlight this important sector standing behind strong progress on energy efficiency and renewables via the Clean Power Plan.

Business declarations, events, letters or activities can become media opportunities, including news announcements, op-eds, blog posts and social media content. [Ceres has led a high-profile effort](#) on this front and has helped organizing and media materials, having enlisted hundreds of manufacturers, technology firms, apparel makers, retailers, and more.

Examples and Links

Advocates can organize business support by state or geography, as was done in [Colorado](#) and [Oregon](#).

Or by business sector, as was done with this [ski industry op-ed](#) in Utah and another by [Montana clean energy developers](#).

If you have only one willing business, you can help them go it alone, as with this [event by a Washington brewery](#) unveiling a new beer, No Coal Porter.

Businesses can appeal directly to decision makers, as in this [letter to Illinois' governor](#), which can generate [news coverage, as it did in Virginia](#).

The [Green Chamber of Commerce](#) and the [Sustainable Business Council](#) have additional ideas on drumming up business support.

Tip: A list of industry statements of support for the Clean Power Plan that were submitted to EPA is available online [here](#).

Examples and Links

The surest way to support the Clean Power Plan is with resolutions that explicitly make the point, as in [Denver, Colo.](#), [Broward County, Fla.](#), and [Reading, Pa.](#)

More indirect resolutions in favor of renewables, as in [Louisville, Ky.](#), or climate protection, as in [Summit County, Colo.](#), still help bolster the rationale for state compliance.

If a resolution isn't plausible, how about urging councils or commissions to appoint a study committee, like in [Ashland, Ore.](#)

Keep track. [The more cities that support the Clean Power Plan, the better.](#)

Host events, like they did in [Austin, Texas](#) and [Chattanooga, Tenn.](#)

And don't forget to share the news on [your own media channels.](#)



Tapping Town Hall

Many city councils and county commissions have already voiced support for the Clean Power Plan through formal resolutions. Can these local bodies be convinced to weigh in again in ways that will facilitate strong state compliance plans, highlighting local benefits of the transition to clean energy?

County and municipal resolutions can provide a news hook for media coverage, and they can be presented to officials at the state level to show momentum and breadth of support. Resolutions that are explicit about the Clean Power Plan may be the right fit in some places, while in others a more indirect approach just focusing on the benefits of clean energy and energy efficiency may work better.

Consider pairing a local government resolution with a community event to provide reporters with both the hard news hook and an opportunity for images and interviews with local residents and businesses.



Hitching a Ride on Other News Hooks

Hearings or other official parts of the Clean Power Plan process will, of course, be moments for media outreach. But there are also less direct ways for advocates to generate media about the Clean Power Plan by tying their efforts to less obvious news hooks.

Things like notable anniversaries, important milestones, holidays, celebrations, awards and ceremonies provide opportunities for touting the benefits of the Clean Power Plan and a transition to clean energy through commentary and events.

It's helpful to compile a forward-looking calendar of potential news hooks and plan varying ways to utilize them, such as blog posts, letters to the editor, op-eds, social media shares, or press statements.

The tone of your messaging will of course need to match the moment – from light-hearted in some cases to more somber and reflective in others.

Examples and Links

Holidays present a pre-themed package to wrap around media efforts:

- [Martin Luther King Day](#)
- [Valentine's Day](#)
- [Easter](#)
- [Memorial Day](#)
- [Flag Day](#)
- [Fourth of July](#)

Anniversaries offer great opportunities to play up the risks of fossil fuels and the benefits of clean energy:

- **Feb. 2** – Dan River coal ash spill
- **April 2** – Mass. vs. EPA
- **May 17** – Passage of 1st RPS in U.S. (Iowa, 1983)
- **June 1** – Start of North Atlantic hurricane season

***Milestones** – Are there notable achievements on the horizon for your state or community, like:*

- Groundbreaking or completion of a new wind or solar project
- [Reaching X GW of solar or wind capacity](#)
- Passage of a local or state clean energy law

Tip: Check out the [National Day Calendar](#) for quirky ideas, like National Backward Day on Jan. 31 (since it's backward to spend money to prolong aging coal plants).

Examples and Links

In Montana, [the renewable energy industry partnered with sportsmen](#) to tout the state's clean energy potential and highlight the threat posed to wildlife by climate change.

By [focusing on air pollution](#), North Carolinians are holding state officials accountable for opposing the Clean Power Plan.

[Opinion pieces from farmers and ranchers](#), who are on the front line of climate impacts, can be persuasive.

[Featuring conservative voices](#) in support of the Clean Power Plan or climate protection helps move the argument out of partisan politics.

[Social justice and equity](#) offer a powerful rationale for supporting the transition to clean energy.



Thinking Outside the Box on Op-Eds

Many media outlets have published multiple editorials and op-eds concerning the Clean Power Plan over the past year – and they're likely to publish more about this issue given the politics and its high profile. While it will definitely be wise to try to shape editorial positions and offer opinion pieces pegged to state compliance itself, an even wider set of opinion opportunities open up if you think beyond the Clean Power Plan itself as the topic.

In other words, rather than pitching op-eds on the Clean Power Plan, can the commentary be on clean energy, climate, justice, fossil fuel pollution, jobs, health, or air quality? Even without mentioning the Clean Power Plan, opinion pieces tied to themes like these can help frame the public discourse about the right kind of compliance on the Clean Power Plan. That could open up more bites at the op-ed space 'apple' in outlets that have already published extensively on carbon regs for power plants.

Tip: A list of some of the top newspapers in the U.S. and their opinion submission criteria is available [here](#).

Anytown Times-News

Poll shows strong support for existing rooftop-solar program



Pulling from Polling

With the high profile of the Clean Power Plan, many media outlets, organizations and academic institutions conduct ongoing public opinion research on the plan and related climate and energy topics.

Of course, new polling specific to a state will be a natural media hook and can be tailored for local press outreach, as in this [story from Nevada](#) on polling about solar and these polling results [from Michigan](#). But it's also good to keep an eye on [national or regional polling](#) from sources like those listed at right for nuggets to share with reporters or to incorporate into blog posts, news releases and talking points.

Local reporters may not consistently report or be aware of polling and may appreciate being notified. Go a step further and flag specific relevant findings for them.

Examples and Links

Polling is conducted by all sorts of institutions on climate and energy issues, with the research sliced and diced in many ways – by state, by region, nationally and demographically:

Conservation groups:

- [LCV polling](#) on climate
- [Sierra Club](#) swing states
- [NRDC polling](#) of African Americans on climate
- [Earthjustice polling](#) of Latinos on climate

Universities:

- [Univ. of Texas](#)
- [Univ. of Arizona/Stanford](#)
- [Quinnipiac University](#)
- [Yale](#)

Pollsters:

- [Public Policy Polling](#)
- [Gallup](#)

Mass media:

- [New York Times](#)
- [Wall Street Journal/NBC](#)
- [Washington Post/ABC](#)
- [USA Today](#)

Tip: Polling data does have a shelf life. Anything over a year old is probably too stale to reference in your media and messaging.

Examples and Links

ACEEE [state scorecard](#)



[State of the Air report](#)



AWEA [Market research](#)



SEIA [market insights](#)



Annual [jobs census](#)

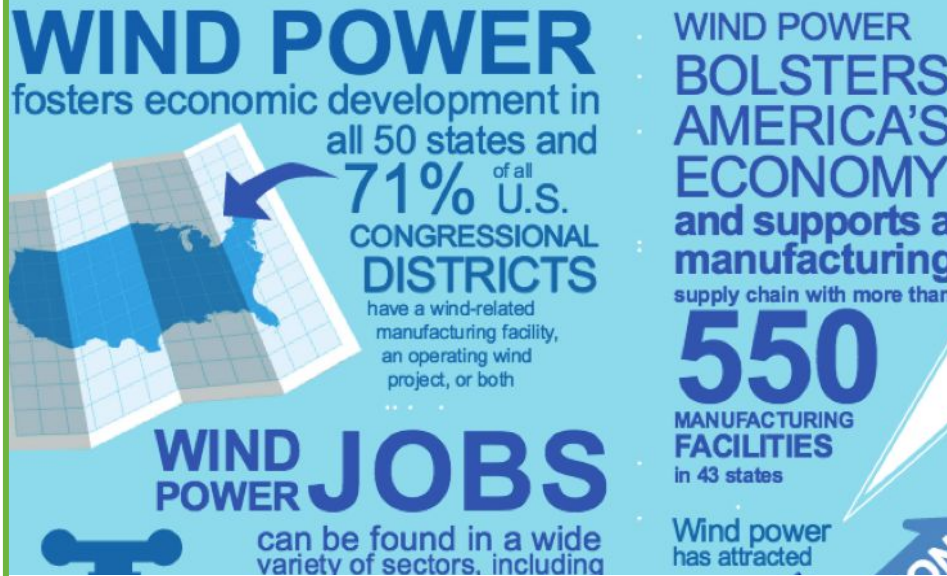
Agencies such as the [National Renewable Energy Lab](#) and [Lawrence Berkeley National Lab](#) release frequent analyses and technical reports that, while wonky, have great nuggets:



[Renewables Databook](#)



[Wind, solar market reports](#)

**Recycling Good Data**

Most are no stranger to releasing reports to the news media, but not everyone has the resources or expertise for original research and analysis. Fortunately there are regular reports on clean energy, climate, efficiency and the Clean Power Plan that can spark opportunities to repackage information and highlight relevant points for local reporters. Even if they don't use the data right away, a busy reporter may appreciate having a relevant analysis or data point flagged for them for later use.

Reports provide great fodder for publishing on your own in blogs, Tweets, LTEs and more. Here's an [example from the Southern Alliance for Clean Energy](#) of piggybacking on a report for a blog.

Public Citizen has compiled a number of state-specific reports about the economic benefits and cost savings of implementing the Clean Power Plan. Its "[Clean Power, Clear Savings](#)" series comprises reports and fact sheets from 11 states.

Tip: Maximize the mileage for the facts and figures you use by tailoring them as locally as possible for local media.



Making the Most of Online Outreach

There are so many great and creative efforts online these days that it can be overwhelming to keep up and decide on what to do. At right and below, we flag a few different types of projects that might help spark an idea or approach for you.

These range from using petition platforms from [MoveOn](#) or [Change.org](#) like this [LCV petition that drew nearly 400,000 signatures](#), to photo petitions, virtual tours, thunderclaps, and surveys like this [Kentuckians for the Commonwealth project](#) to involve residents in shaping the state's energy future (which also drew [media attention](#)).

In an age of clicktivism, look for ways to lend your online project a grassroots touch to keep it authentic for media and decision-makers.

Examples and Links

The Sierra Club used Thunderclap to [direct more than 700 tweets](#) to the EPA.

Supporters of EPA's Clean Water Rule effectively used an [online widget](#) that allows users to choose from a selection of tweets and send them to various targets.

A coalition working in the Midwest developed a [virtual clean energy tour](#) to showcase the benefits of renewable energy in rural communities.

RE-AMP created a [photo petition](#) to capture images of people supporting strong action on climate, then loaded the images to Flickr for sharing.

Online surveys like [this one from Alabama](#) can be promoted via targeted Facebook ads. This survey drew 1,600 responses, most strongly supporting solar.

Examples and Links

[Hosting a film night or film series](#) on a locally relevant climate or clean energy issue can generate buzz, as it did in Alabama.

Consider creating an award like the annual climate protection [awards from the U.S. Conference of Mayors](#) to honor local businesses or individuals for their climate and clean energy work.

Polling shows that youth are highly in support of climate protection and clean energy. [A student rally](#) that taps their energy and enthusiasm could easily attract media.

If you've gone to the effort of collecting signatures for a petition, [make an event of delivering them, as they did in Missouri – by canoe.](#)

Interfaith Power & Light helped organize [a series of climate preach-ins](#) in 2015 and has a wealth of resources online to help you replicate the events locally.



Engaging Through Events

Events! They take a lot of work, but they can be great both for organizing and for generating media coverage. Events have been linked to throughout this idea book already, and below and at left we've rounded up a few more that might help spark an idea for you.

Official input sessions convened by a state will be obvious times to think about piggybacking an event that can offer good visuals and interviews for media, but for communities and media markets where there won't be such an opportunity nearby – or if it's far in the future – consider [organizing your own local input session](#). You'll increase your chances for wider attendance and media coverage if you invite a diversity of speakers and include some high-profile names.

Tip: If there will be opposing voices at your event, be sure to include something that identifies your supporters, like T-shirts, caps or buttons.



Pitching a Profile or Feature

In addition to event-driven media or press outreach tied to ongoing news and developments, it also can be worth the effort to develop profile or feature-type story pitches. These can break free from the usual ‘he-said-she-said’ frame in a lot of brief news items and bring in more detail, visuals, emotion, and story – the stuff that can make coverage compelling, educational and influential.

When developing feature pitches, it helps to think about the visuals, locations, people and personal stories that will bring the story to life.

Check out a few of the examples to the right for a little inspiration. It may take some time and patience but the effort can really pay off.

Examples and Links

Climate change is already being felt by many – [farmers](#), [firefighters](#), [fisherman](#) to name a few – each with a uniquely profound story to tell about the impacts on their lives and livelihoods.

Profiles don’t always have to be of people. Buildings have personalities too, so consider pitching [a feature on a home or business](#), whether it’s new and highly efficient or been given an energy retrofit.

The success of clean energy has led to an explosion of [small businesses in the cleantech sector](#), each with a story to tell. Local media in particular are often looking for this kind of feature to fill their business pages.

Consider pitching features to alternative news media, which often have more freedom to tackle a topic that might be lacking the hard hook attractive to traditional news, as with this [feature on coal ash in Utah](#).

Tip: Remember local TV when thinking about feature pitches, especially for stories with good consumer angles for a station with a good investigative crew.

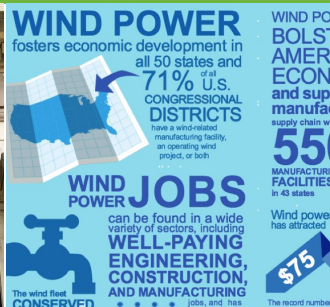


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