



Written by [Brian Koenig](#) on August 8, 2012

Obama Expedites Seven New Solar and Wind Projects

As congressional Republicans continue their assault on President Obama's seemingly failed "green" agenda, the White House announced August 7 it will expedite seven federal wind and solar projects across four western states. The programs, which will be grounded in Nevada, Arizona, California, and Wyoming, will generate enough power to run 1.5 million homes, the White House said in a press release.



"As part of President Obama's all-of-the-above strategy to expand domestic energy production and strengthen the economy, we are working to advance smart development of renewable energy on our public lands," Interior Secretary Ken Salazar [affirmed](#). "These seven proposed solar and wind projects have great potential to grow our nation's energy independence, drive job creation, and power economies across the west."

A component of Obama's "We Can't Wait" campaign — a series of executive actions intended to expand the economy in the face of congressional opposition — a recent executive order [championed](#) by the White House is designed in part to expedite environmental programs:

As a part of a Presidential Executive Order issued in March of this year, the Office of Management and Budget is charged with overseeing a government-wide effort to make the permitting and review process for infrastructure projects more efficient and effective, saving time while driving better outcomes for the environment and local communities.

Additional expedited infrastructure projects will be announced in the coming weeks.

Kicking off the National Clean Energy Summit in Las Vegas, Sen. Harry Reid (D-Nev.) said August 7 the United States must work to replace coal with wind and solar. "Every year we spend hundreds of millions of dollars buying coal from other states to burn in Nevada," he [stated](#). "It's time to make a different choice, a choice that brings new clean energy industries and jobs to Nevada, a choice to invest in our own natural resources."

In a press release, the White House touted the Obama administration's purported "success in permitting an unprecedented number of utility-scale renewable energy projects." And thanks to a streamlined review process, the statement added, the Interior Department in the past three years has authorized more renewable energy projects (a total of 31) on public lands than in the past 20 years combined. Politico [described](#) the executively-ordained projects:

The single largest project in the suite is a 3,000-megawatt wind farm in Wyoming called the Chokecherry and Sierra Madre Wind Farm Project by the Power Company of Wyoming. The Interior Department said it expects to complete the federal permitting process for the largest proposed wind farm in North America by October 2014, according to a White House statement.

The remaining six projects include Mohave Wind Energy by BP Wind, Quartzsite Solar Energy by Solar Reserve, Desert Harvest Solar Energy by enXco, McCoy Solar Energy by NextEra, Moapa Solar Energy Center by RES Americas, and Silver State South by First Solar. RES Americas's



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center in Nevada is being jointly developed on public lands as well as the Moapa River Indian Reservation.

On Monday, the Interior and Defense Departments [strung together](#) a deal aimed at integrating green-tech projects with power military bases to maintain power during failures to the commercial electric grid.

In response to Obama's unyielding push to advance his environmental agenda, Republicans have underscored a slew of failed renewable energy programs enacted under his administration. Moreover, critics have accused the president of rewarding prominent campaign donors in the process.

The most serious consequence, though, has been the enormous costs to taxpayers that have streamed from the financial collapses of several solar companies, most notably the demise of solar panel-maker Solyndra. In a 154-page report commissioned by House Republicans, lawmakers described the solar firm's collapse as a "cautionary tale" of political bargaining and deluded policy that left taxpayers on the hook for half-a-billion dollars.

"Solyndra is a prime example of the perils that come when the Federal government plays investor, tries to keep a company and industry afloat with subsidies and attempts to pick the winners and losers in a particular marketplace," the report stated. "Policy and political pressures inevitably come into play to the detriment of taxpayers, as it did with Solyndra."

Critics contend that the administration's decision to expedite the seven solar and wind projects is undoubtedly political, as it seems explicitly designed to build enthusiasm for the wind production industry, which has been vigorously pushing for the renewal of a wind energy tax credit. The swing state of Iowa, for example, has a growing wind power sector that has been lobbying heavily for the tax credit renewal — and a kickback to those folks, the Obama campaign likely presumes, may shore up a few additional votes in the state.



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