



News & Updates

Acadia Center Newsletter | February 2019

Dear Friends,

The year 2019 marks the 20th anniversary of the founding of Acadia Center. Over these two decades, Acadia Center has played an important role in demonstrating how state, local, and regional efforts are critical to climate action. From the first state and regional climate roadmap, to shaping policies that have vastly increased investments in energy efficiency, to its latest investigations showing how the Northeast cut climate pollution by half by 2030, Acadia Center has offered sound analysis that cuts through the clutter of debate. This work has proved with real world examples that reducing climate pollution directly improves public health and the economy, benefits all consumers if done properly, and can make our energy and transportation systems fairer and more accessible.

Acadia Center is continuing this focus in 2019 with solid research and information distribution, large-scale change, and coalition building to reduce emissions from the two largest polluting areas: transportation and buildings. We continue to press the case with ambitious but pragmatic solutions that can move this region to a low polluting, clean energy system—the key to a healthier, more productive economic future.

At the core of its mission, Acadia Center sees promise in the fact that a clean energy transition is also a foundation for shared goals: vibrant communities, strong economies, and a livable future.

Thank you for your support and interest in our work. Please read on to learn more about Acadia Center's work in 2019.

Daniel L. Sosland
President



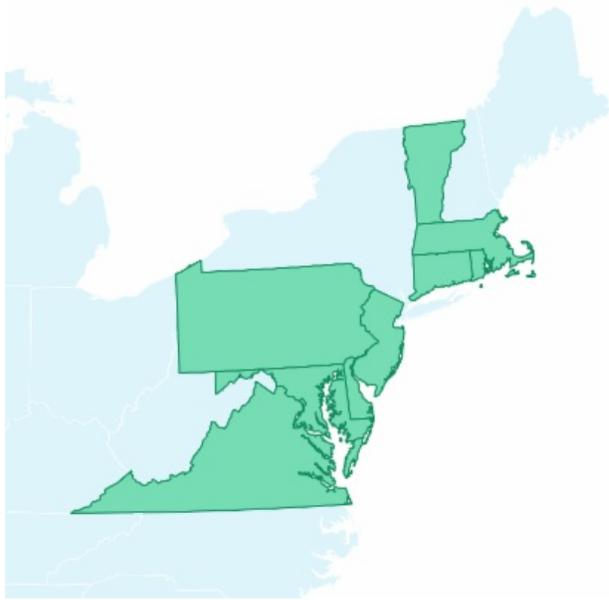
New York Aims High on Clean Energy

New York Governor Andrew Cuomo recently [announced an ambitious plan](#) that, if implemented, would put the state on track for a rapid clean energy transition. Some highlights of the plan include:

- A doubling of the state's distributed solar target to 6 GW by 2025, in line with what Acadia Center has advocated for as part of the Million Solar Strong campaign
- An offshore wind target of 9 GW by 2035, a more than three-fold increase over the previous goal of 2.4 GW by 2030
- A commitment to make the state's electricity carbon-free by 2040, the most aggressive target in the nation
- An increase in the state's Clean Energy Standard to 70 percent renewable electricity by 2030, and
- 3,000 MW of energy storage by 2030

New York needs a policy and regulatory roadmap that provides clear signals to utilities and market actors that will enable them to take the necessary steps to ensure that these targets are met. Acadia Center looks forward to supporting this crucial effort.

States Embark on Regional Effort to Cut Transportation Emissions



GDP: \$3.33 trillion

- 17% of national GDP
- Would be the world's 5th largest economy

Transportation emissions: 254 million tons CO₂

- 4x the emissions covered by RGGI
- 13% of US transportation emissions

Source: Acadia Center analysis of data from the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis and the International Monetary Fund



In December, nine states and Washington, DC, announced a commitment to develop a regional policy that will reduce transportation emissions, create new jobs and make major upgrades to transportation systems across the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic. As Acadia Center analysis shows, this region would represent the world's 5th largest economy.

Under the agreement, states will work together throughout 2019 to create a program with a declining cap on regional emissions, pollution permit auctions, and reinvestment of auction proceeds. Acadia Center is working across the region to build support for this program and to ensure that it effectively reduces carbon emissions, benefits public health, and improves our transportation networks at a regional level and in underserved communities.

[Learn more](#)

Running the Numbers on Transportation Reinvestment in Massachusetts

Massachusetts ranks near the bottom of the nation in terms of commute time and the quality of its transportation networks. To support healthy communities and businesses, the state must improve transportation access and equity while updating infrastructure and cutting pollution.

Acadia Center analyzed the impacts of a proposed policy to tackle these challenges: a regional [cap-and-invest program](#) for the transportation sector. Acadia Center's analysis shows that this program could enable the state to make over \$5.5 billion in crucial transportation investments by 2030, which would generate over 52,000 long-term jobs and \$17.5 billion in economic activity. These investments could support commuter rail enhancements, electric buses and other transit improvements, electric vehicles and charging infrastructure, new walking and biking trails, and more.

The State of Energy Efficiency: Building on Success, Responding to Challenges

Energy efficiency is a cornerstone of climate action because it reduces overall energy demand while supporting jobs, lowering consumer costs, and making homes more resilient to temperature swings. This in turn reduces the amount of large-scale energy infrastructure that needs to be built using ratepayer funds.

Northeast states continued to achieve nation-leading efficiency performance in 2018. This progress is supported by collaborative processes that Acadia Center helped establish, including stakeholder boards committed to installing lower-cost energy efficiency over more expensive energy sources.



Acadia Center's energy efficiency priorities include:

- Continuing to achieve high energy savings rates and greenhouse gas reductions;
- Expanding access to energy efficiency for underserved groups including renters, low- and middle-income households, and small businesses; and
- Reducing reliance on heating oil and other fossil fuels by using electricity in cleaner, more efficient, and more flexible ways.

Massachusetts

In Massachusetts, the new [2019-2021 plan](#) maintains high electric and gas savings goals. It also introduces a new program that integrates energy storage into systems that reduce energy demand at peak times and, for the first time, includes incentives prioritizing fuel switching from oil and propane to high-efficiency heat pumps.

As groundbreaking as this efficiency plan is, it could have been even better. In its approval of the Plan, the DPU rejected three key pieces created by stakeholders and the utilities through the [Energy Efficiency Advisory Council](#) process. These pieces represented the future of expanding equitable access to the programs, appropriately valuing the carbon reductions efficiency can create, and leveraging the efficiency programs to further consumer—rather than utility—control. [Learn more.](#)

Rhode Island

After a setback last year due to diverted funds, Rhode Island energy efficiency got back on track. The approved 2019 plan included high energy savings goals, an increased focus on

expanding access to heat pumps, a new 100% landlord incentive to spur efficiency investments for renters, and expanded efforts to reduce peak demand.

Connecticut

Though Connecticut reached #5 in nationwide efficiency rankings in 2018, it has been achieving significantly less energy savings than Rhode Island and Massachusetts in recent years. This session, Acadia Center is working through the legislature to reverse a harmful energy efficiency fund raid before the second fund transfer goes through in June.

New York

The Public Service Commission recently approved a new energy efficiency plan for New York that sets aggressive energy savings targets, improves data transparency, establishes a statewide heat pump target to promote clean and efficient heating, and requires 20% of efficiency funding to be directed to low and moderate-income customers. The plan also includes several changes recommended by Acadia Center, including setting interim targets to provide clear signals to utilities and approving a well-established funding mechanism for efficiency programs.

Legislative Sessions Open with Hope, Urgency

This year's state legislative sessions opened with currents of urgency, hope, and determination.

In Maine and Connecticut, new administrations are weighing policy options for making up ground on energy efficiency and supporting a clean energy transition. In addition to legislative work on creating binding offshore wind targets and reversing last session's efficiency fund raid, Acadia Center is fighting to restore solar net metering in Connecticut and update it to maintain fair and predictable rates as the number of distributed solar customers grows. In New Hampshire, Acadia Center is working to expand energy efficiency funding and is supporting efforts to strengthen commitments to renewable energy.

In Massachusetts, Acadia Center is working with partners and stakeholders on legislation that would cut transportation emissions and invest in clean and equitable transportation. Other notable Massachusetts bills would accelerate the transition from fossil fuels to clean heating, prevent utilities from participating in the selection process for their own bids in clean energy procurements, and save money for ratepayers by ensuring that utilities do not receive automatic rate hikes or higher profit margins than in surrounding states. Smart solar siting continues to be a priority in Rhode Island, where improved ordinances and siting incentives can ease pressure to develop forested land by prioritizing solar on roofs and in previously disturbed or developed areas.

Transportation

Scientific American: [Cap and Trade for Cars is Coming to the Northeast](#)

Stateline: [A Regional Push to Clean Up Cars, Trucks and Mass Transit](#)

The Day: [State eyes investments in electrifying vehicle fleet](#)

Renewable energy

The Times Record: [Sea Change: Maine should act more like the renewable energy dynamo it is](#)

Energy efficiency

Energy News Network: [Critics: Massachusetts energy efficiency plan missed chance to promote equity](#)

Energy News Network: [Connecticut efficiency program turns focus to smaller commercial buildings](#)

Forum Recap: The Future of Solar in Connecticut



Last year, the Connecticut General Assembly passed a huge energy bill known as SB9. Much good came from the passage of this bill, but its solar provisions will likely result in unintended long-term repercussions that hurt the state's attempts to catch up on rooftop solar. To get the ball rolling on fixing these issues, Acadia Center and partner organizations hosted an educational forum at the State Capitol to discuss what's at stake for the future of solar in Connecticut.

Support Our Work

Acadia Center's work is made possible by the generosity of foundations and individual donors.

Acadia Center holds Charity Navigator's top rating for financial responsibility.

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