



Summary of 2019 legislative energy trends

March 25, 2020

The National Conference on State Legislatures issued a white paper reviewing 2019 energy related legislations. ^[1] State lawmakers considered over 3,500 energy-related bills, enacting over 500 new laws that cover the following energy topics.

- **Clean energy**
 - Over 1,500 bills were considered in 48 states, Washington D.C. and Puerto Rico.
 - Over 300 measures aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs) were considered with over 40 bills enacted or adopted.
 - 17 states considered 40 bills on carbon pricing policies to drive down emissions. The bills either failed or were vetoed.
 - Five states considered legislation related to participation in regional cap-and-trade programs.
 - At least 23 states considered over 100 bills updating or expanding their renewable portfolio standards (RPS) policies or broadening policies to allow for “clean” or “zero-emitting” technologies to meet certain Clean Energy Standards targets.
 - While states were updating and/or increasing their Energy Efficiency Resource Standards (EERS), Ohio enacted H.B. 6, which provides financial support for Ohio’s nuclear plants, reduces the state’s RPS and eliminates EERS over the next seven years.
 - Several states considered legislation focusing on ensuring that low-income communities have access to clean energy programs, and 12 states considered more than 30 bills related to community solar projects.

- **Fossil fuels**
 - More than 900 bills were considered with almost 160 bills enacted, most of which dealt with hydraulic fracturing and measures associated with the drilling process.
 - Seven states passed bills addressing natural gas pipeline safety standards.
 - California, Nevada, Oregon, Utah and Washington considered newer technologies, such as renewable natural gas.
 - Ohio's H.B. 6 was the most direct example of legislation supporting the struggling coal industry.
- **Workforce development**
 - The availability of qualified workers to replace the impending large-scale retirement of technicians capable of installing and operating new infrastructures is emerging as a critical issue.
 - More than 70 bills were introduced related to job retention.
 - State legislatures not only considered new energy technologies but also immediate effects on retiring plants.
- **Grid modernization and infrastructure**
 - A variety of states considered legislation addressing grid modernization and modernizing infrastructure. Only Puerto Rico, Virginia and Indiana passed measures.
- **Cybersecurity**
 - At least 16 states considered nearly 50 bills to address grid cybersecurity and other critical infrastructures. Of the legislation introduced, 11 states passed more than 12 bills.
 - Additionally proposed legislation addressed utility cybersecurity programs, best practices and training opportunities, cybersecurity programs and cost recovery, and how cybersecurity programs affect electricity rates.
- **Resiliency**
 - Resiliency and grid-hardening are top issues after a decade of the most devastating natural disasters.
 - More than 24 bills were introduced on micro grids. Two bills passed with one of the two being vetoed.
- **Energy storage**
 - A variety of states included energy storage with preexisting clean energy policies, such as net metering and renewable standards.
 - More than 180 energy storage-related bills were introduced, which is more than double the number introduced in 2018, with at least 25 states enacting 37 bills.
- **Electric vehicles**
 - More than 500 bills were introduced or amended to address the growth of battery powered plug-in vehicles, such as promoting electric vehicle charging stations, tax credits, rebates or registration fees.
 - Ohio is among 10 states that enacted legislation establishing higher registration fees for electric and hybrid vehicles.
 - Registrations fees range from \$50 to \$200 with Ohio being one of four states to implement a \$200 registration fee. However, in March 2020, legislation was introduced to reduce the registration fees for electric and hybrid vehicle owners.
- **Building efficiency**
 - 32 states considered over 100 bills on building and appliance efficiency, along with increasing electric vehicle charging infrastructures for new buildings.

Legislation addressing energy storage and cybersecurity, reducing GHGs, amending clean energy standards, and examining electric vehicle incentives or charging infrastructure are being considered in 2020 legislative sessions. States are authorizing utility regulatory commissions to oversee significant changes to how electricity is generated, delivered and consumed.

^[1] See Daniel Shea, Laura Shields, and Kristy Hartman. *2019 Legislative Energy Trends*. National Conference on State Legislatures Energy, Environment and Transportation. (February 2020).

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