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K&L Gates' ReNEWS Southeast – Volume 11

K&L Gates reports on the latest renewable energy policies and activities in the southeastern United States.

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K&L Gates' ReNEWS Southeast is a periodic bulletin that tracks key developments in renewable energy policy, activities, and technologies that are driving the industry forward.

Florida Regulators Approve Teco's Eighth and Ninth Solar Facilities in State

- On October 17, 2019, The Florida [Public Service Commission](#) ("PSC") [approved](#) the third phase of [Tampa Electric Company](#) ("TECO")'s solar plans, which includes minor rate increases for customers. The third phase will see two new Hillsborough County projects—Wimauma Solar and Little Manatee River Solar—come online by January 2020.
- The projects require \$26.5 million in additional revenue, which is below the cap approved in TECO's 2017 rate settlement agreement. The utility will increase the monthly bill of a residential customer using 1,000 kilowatt-hours by \$1 to recover the costs of added solar generation. TECO expects its \$193 million in estimated fuel savings from the two projects to help offset rate increases.
- The PSC approved TECO's first phase of solar projects, the Payne Creek and Balm facilities, in May 2018. The PSC rapidly thereafter approved the Lithia, Grange Hall, Peace Creek, Bonnie Mine, and Lake Hancock solar facilities in phase two in October 2018. The phase three projects, each capable of generating roughly 75 megawatts ("MW") of electricity, will bring the utility's total solar power to 550 MW. We have previously reported on TECO's steady progress to increase its solar capacity in [ReNEWS Southeast Volume 1](#).

Hanwha Q Cells Opens Largest North American Solar Module Plant in Georgia

- On September 20, 2019, [Hanwha Q Cells USA](#) ("Hanwha"), the American subsidiary of the South Korean solar panel manufacturer, officially opened the largest solar module manufacturing plant in North America. Despite the recent ribbon-cutting ceremony, the factory has been producing modules for months, running equipment tests and calibrations, and slowly ramping up production to reach full capacity.
- The facility will produce 12,000 photovoltaic modules per day, or roughly 1.7 gigawatts annually. These particular modules have 120 half-cut mono-PERC cells in Hanwha's Q.PEAK DUO BLK-G6 line. These have six busbars, around 19 percent module efficiency and a wattage of 330–345 watts.
- The \$200 million factory, located in Dalton, Georgia, is the manufacturer's first U.S. factory, despite the United States being the company's largest market. The company hopes to further increase its customer base in the second largest solar market after China. However, the United States will have to go through a renaissance of solar manufacturing before it can stop importing the majority of its solar products.

Virginia to Purchase Renewable Power for Government in Nation's Largest Renewable Energy Contract of Its Kind

- On October 18, 2019, Gov. Ralph Northam of Virginia [announced](#) that the Commonwealth of Virginia entered into a 20-year agreement with [Dominion Energy](#) for 420 MW of renewable energy, the largest state contract for renewable energy in the nation's history. The energy will include 75 MW of wind energy produced by [Apex Clean Energy](#) from Virginia's first onshore wind farm, Rocky Forge wind project, to be located in Botetourt County. The remaining 345 MW will come from solar facilities via power purchase agreements. The total 420 MW is enough to power more than 100,000 households.
- The announcement follows Executive Order Forty-Three, Gov. Northam's bold clean energy plan, as covered in [ReNEWS Southeast Volume 10](#). Based on the state contract, 30 percent of the electricity used by the state's government entities will be from renewable sources by 2022, meeting one of the goals of the governor's clean energy plan.

Durham, NC-Based Outfit Plans to Provide \$150M in Capital for Early-Stage Renewable Projects

- New lender [Leyline Renewable Capital](#) has raised [\\$150 million](#) from private equity firm, Newlight Partners, and plans to use that capital to fund early-stage solar projects and anaerobic digesters in the United States, Canada, and elsewhere over the next two-and-a-half years. Leyline founder and CEO Erik Lensch, who has been active in the North Carolina solar development space since at least 2006, stated that he wanted to focus on providing working capital to experienced small- to mid-size developers to allow them to avoid short-term finance crunches and to have more available internal capital.
- Leyline also expects to distribute a substantial portion of these funds to anaerobic digesters, as Lensch sees a window of opportunity in biogas development. In particular, Leyline could provide capital that assists digester developers with up-front engineering costs in particular.

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