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### Garrett, Charles to get wind, solar power plants

#### CEG and Silver Spring firm invest in renewable energy

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Maryland's fledgling campaign to develop renewable power got a twin boost Monday, as Constellation Energy said it would take over construction of a 70-megawatt wind farm in Garrett County and another company unveiled plans for the state's largest solar array in Charles County.

Baltimore-based Constellation said it has agreed to acquire the \$140 million Criterion wind project from Clipper Windpower Inc., which had proposed putting 28 tall turbines atop Backbone Mountain near Oakland. It was the first of three commercial-scale wind projects to win state approval under a 2007 law meant to promote wind energy development in Maryland.

Meanwhile, CPV Renewable Energy Co., with headquarters in Silver Spring, plans a 10-megawatt "solar farm" near Waldorf, to be built alongside an already proposed natural gas-burning power plant.

Of the two, the wind project is closer to fruition, because it has already received needed state approvals. Constellation expects to close its deal with Clipper Windpower early next year and have the turbines generating electricity by the fall. The project already has a long-term agreement to sell power to Old Dominion Electric Cooperative, a wholesale supplier to electric co-ops in Maryland, Delaware and Virginia.

Maryland Energy Administrator Malcolm D. Woolf called the announcements "very big," and said they were evidence that state efforts to promote renewable energy projects were beginning to pay off.

Barely 5 percent of all power generated in Maryland comes from hydroelectric dams or other renewable sources, but a 2008 state law passed at the urging of Gov. Martin O'Malley requires electricity suppliers such as Constellation to get 20 percent from renewable sources by 2022 or pay fees for failing to do so.

Still, renewable-energy projects have been slow to materialize - in part, observers say, because of the economic slump and tight credit, making financing for new ventures hard to come by. But with government incentives and tax credits available to boost renewable prospects, there have been signs of activity lately.

"It's taken some time, but [people are] beginning to see these projects will make money, and they're coming together," Woolf said.

A spokeswoman for Clipper Windpower said its decision to sell the Garrett County wind project did not reflect any lack of confidence in the market for renewable power in Maryland. Mary Gates-McCann said it



was "normal" for the company, with headquarters in California and the United Kingdom and a turbine manufacturing plant in Iowa, to develop wind projects and then sell them to someone else to build and operate.

It's Constellation's first venture into generating electricity from wind, though spokesman Lawrence McDonnell said the company has been buying wind power produced in the Midwest. The company also has installed relatively small-scale photovoltaic solar arrays at spice-maker McCormick & Co. in Hunt Valley and at the Maryland Environmental Service headquarters in Millersville.

Constellation is getting more involved in renewable energy because of a combination of growing consumer demand for clean power and government incentives, McDonnell said. Together, they make projects more marketable.

"It illustrates that the market forces are beginning to work. The demand is there, and you'll see more of these built."

The Garrett County wind farm, which would provide enough electricity for 23,000 households, is one of three commercial-scale wind projects approved in the state. Last month, the Public Service Commission approved a \$50 million, 50-megawatt wind farm on Backbone Mountain planned by Synergics Wind Energy of Annapolis.

Residents living near the proposed Garrett County wind farms have voiced concerns about safety and have complained that buffer zones required by the county between their homes and the turbines are inadequate.

A third wind farm proposed near Frostburg - also approved by state regulators - has been stymied by setback requirements and other zoning restrictions imposed recently by Allegany County.

CPV's \$35 million "solar farm" is less firm than the Constellation project; it still needs financing and a guaranteed customer for the electricity it would generate. CPV spokesman Braith Kelly said the company hopes to have the array built by 2012.

The solar plant would be paired with a \$600 million, combined-cycle natural gas generator planned there. Kelly said the gas plant would even out fluctuations in the electric grid, such as when the solar facility is dormant because the sun is not shining.

The photovoltaic arrays would be spread across 85 acres of unused industrial land, the spokesman said. The project was announced as part of plans unveiled Monday for revitalizing the unfinished St. Charles planned community by incorporating environmentally friendly design into development while doubling its size.

The Charles County solar plant would eclipse a 2.1-megawatt solar facility planned at the University of Maryland, Eastern Shore in Princess Anne, previously touted as the state's largest.

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