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# Power Finance & Risk

Exclusive Insight on Power M&A and Project Financing

**MERGERS & ACQUISITIONS**

## Masdar, EDF hit first close on 1.6 GW portfolio

**Masdar** reached first close on a 50% stake it is buying in a 1.6 GW renewables portfolio from **EDPR North America**. *Page 5*

**PROJECT FINANCE**

## BOEM to resume Vineyard review

The **Bureau of Ocean Energy Management** is resuming its environmental review of the 800 MW Vineyard Wind project. *Page 7*

**CAPITAL MARKETS**

## Chilean genco securitization closes

Chilean power producers have closed Latin America's first "tariff stabilization securitization" in response to a power price freeze. *Page 11*

# GenOn preps bank loan for PJM peakers

Taryana Odayar

**GenOn Energy** is preparing to launch a project financing for a pair of dual-fuel peaking power plants in PJM Interconnection in the bank market.

The $305 million five-year loan will refinance the 1.6 GW Chalk Point plant and the 312 MW Dickerson facility, both in Maryland, through a borrower called **Genon Lanyard**.

**Investec** is acting as sole bookrunner on the term loan A and is preparing to hold bank meetings later this month.

The deal will be the first "quasi-merchant" financing this year in PJM, says a source close to the transaction, who adds that it will have a "conservative" structure.

Chalk Point is located on the Patuxent River in Aquasco, Prince George's County, while Dickerson is on the Potomac in Montgomery County. The sites are home to several decades-old coal-fired units as well as the gas- and oil-fired peakers, but the former are in the process of being mothballed and are not included as part of the financing. PAGE 7 »

**Haven't seen one of those in a while!**


# Total bolsters US solar, storage base with 2.8 GW purchase

Taryana Odayar

French oil and gas supermajor **Total** has solidified its presence in US renewables with the acquisition of a 2.2 GW fleet of development-stage solar projects with 600 MW of co-located battery storage assets in Texas.

The portfolio comprises four large-scale solar projects each with co-located battery energy storage systems in industrial areas close to Houston that have high electricity demand.

Total is buying the assets from two co-developers – Austin-based developer **SunChase Power** and **MAP RE/ES**, which is the renewable energy investment platform of **MAP Energy** that was bought PAGE 6 »

## Key Capture clinches energy storage project financing

Taryana Odayar

**Key Capture Energy** has closed a roughly $100 million financing for a portfolio of six energy storage projects in Texas, and is conducting pre-marketing for debt to finance another portfolio in the same state.

**CIT Bank**, **Rabobank** and **Siemens** arranged the deal that has just closed. The portfolio comprises three operational projects totaling 30 PAGE 8»

## Alarm over energy counter-reform in Mexico

Carmen Arroyo

As Mexico's President **Andres Manuel López Obrador** lays out his vision of a counter-reform of his country's energy industry, private investors in power and renewables are pondering whether to leave – assuming they are able to find an exit.

López Obrador, better known as AMLO, sent a fast-track initiative to change Mexico's Electric Industry Law to the PAGE 10»

## IN THIS ISSUE


### MERGERS & ACQUISITIONS
5 | Masdar, EDF close on 1.6 GW
5 | InstarAGF sells wind assets
5 | Belltown markets renewables
6 | AEP to sell Ohio hydro

### PROJECT FINANCE
7 | BOEM resumes Vineyard review
6 | NTE pivots to renewables

### RESTRUCTURING
9 | Creditors take Blackstone CCGT

### LATIN AMERICA
9 | Developer plots Brazil solar
9 | Equinor eyes Brazil port solar

### CAPITAL MARKETS
11 | Chilean genco securitization

### PEOPLE & FIRMS
12 | Riverstone's power co-head exits
12 | NRG's CFO joins Evergy
12 | IFC names LatAm director
12 | LatAm addition for Shearman

### DEPARTMENTS
3 | Generation Auction & Sale Calendar
4 | Project Finance Deal Book


## PPA PULSE

### Peninsula passes on new projects

California community choice aggregator **Peninsula Clean Energy** bypassed new-build renewable energy projects in its latest procurement round, picking existing and repowered wind resources instead.

The non-profit joint powers agency, which serves residents of San Mateo County, just south of San Francisco, signed power purchase agreements totaling 245 MW for generation from three wind projects.

One of the deals, with **Avangrid Renewables**' 150 MW Shiloh I wind farm in Solano County, is a seven-year extension of a PPA that was originally five years in length, which will take it through to December 2030. The Shiloh I project has been online since 2006.

One of the other two projects – both of which are repowerings – is **Terra-Gen**'s 193 MW Voyager II project in Kern County. However, the CCA has not contracted directly with the project, but rather with one of its offtakers, **Shell Energy North America**.

Shell's PPA covers 130 MW of Voyager II's output, and the company will sell half of that to PCE under the new contract.

The third contract is for **NextEra Energy Resources**' Sky River project, which is undergoing repowering and due to be back online by September 2021. PCE will buy about half of its output for 20 years

*Here is a round-up of the rest of the week's procurement news:*

### Paddle power

In Québec, **Boralex** and the Innu communities have secured a 30-year PPA for their jointly-owned 200 MW Apuiat wind farm, which is due to be online by the end of 2024.

The offtaker is **Hydro-Québec Production**, the generating arm of the province's government-owned power company. It will pay about 6¢/kWh.

The word "Apuiat" in the Innu-aimun language means paddle, a symbol of moving forward together in the same direction. The profits of the Apuiat project will be split 50:50 between Boralex and the Innu, while the community of Uashat mak Mani-utenam and the city of Port-Cartier will receive annual royalties.

### Corporate combo

Meanwhile in Oklahoma, **Allete Clean Energy** has secured a pair of corporate customers for its 303 MW Caddo Wind Project.

**Hormel Foods** and specialty truckmaker **Oshkosh Corp** will buy a combined 100 MW from the under-construction project. It is due to be online by the end of 2021.

**McDonalds Corp** has a PPA for the remaining 200 MW (PFR, 12/7). Allete acquired the project from **Apex Clean Energy** at the start of 2020. ■


PFR Power Finance & Risk

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Do you have questions, comments or criticisms about a story that appeared in ***PFR***? Should we be covering more or less of a given area? The staff of ***PFR*** is committed as ever to evolving with the markets and we welcome your feedback.

Feel free to contact **Richard Metcalf**, editor, at (212) 224-3259 or richard.metcalf@powerfinancerisk.com

## GENERATION AUCTION & SALE CALENDAR

These are the current live generation asset sales and auctions, according to Power Finance and Risk's database.

# Generation Sale DATABASE

| Seller | Assets | Location | Adviser | Status/Comment |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ● American Electric Power | Racine Plant (48 MW Hydro) | Ohio | Scotiabank | Eagle Creek Renewable Energy agreed to buy the asset as of February (see story, page 6). |
| Apollo Global Management | Sunlight Financial | US | | Sunlight has agreed to go public via a merger with Apollo's SPAC as of January (PFR, 2/1). |
| Ares Management, Highstar Capital | Linden Cogen (972 MW Gas, 28%) | New Jersey | | Thailand's ECGO Group agreed to purchase the stake as of February (PFR, 2/8). |
| ● Belltown Power Texas | Portfolio (870 MW Renewables) | Texas | | The sponsor was marketing the portfolio as of February (see story, page 5). |
| Blackrock | Hearthstone Utilities | US | Credit Suisse, Royal Bank of Canada | Ullico agreed to acquire the company on December 22 (PFR, 2/8). |
| Blackstone Group | Onyx Renewable Partners | US | BNP Paribas (seller), Macquarie Capital (buyer) | Sale to SDCL Energy Efficiency Income Trust announced in January (PFR, 1/18). |
| Brookfield Infrastructure Partners, Kinder Morgan | Natural Gas Pipeline Co of America (Gas, Storage) | US | RBC Capital Markets | Private equity firms are considering buying the stake in the asset as of February (PFR, 2/8). |
| Caithness Energy | Shepherd's Flat (845 MW Wind) | Oregon | Nomura Greentech | Brookfield Asset Management has agreed to buy the asset as of January 8 (PFR, 1/18). |
| Cemig | Light (26%) | Brazil | Itau BBA, BTG Pactual, Santander, XP Investimentos, Citi | Cemig is looking to sell the stake as of January (PFR, 1/18). |
| ● Colombia | Interconexion Electrica (51.41%) | Colombia | HSBC, Bancolombia | Ecopetrol entered exclusive talks to buy ISA's stake on February 5 (see story, page 11). |
| Consolidated Edison | Stagecoach Gas Services (50%) | US | TD Securities | The developer is selling a stake in the firm (PFR, 1/11). |
| Duke Energy | Duke Energy Indiana (19.9%) | Indiana | JP Morgan, Centerview Partners, Barclays | GIC Private Limited agreed to purchase the stake as of February (PFR, 2/8). |
| esVolta | esVolta | US | Nomura Greentech | Macquarie agreed to buy a stake as of January (PFR, 1/25). |
| ● EDF Renewables | Portfolio (1.6 GW Solar, Wind, 50%) | US | BofA Securities | Masdar reached first close on the purchase as of February (see story, page 5). |
| Eletronorte | NTBE (49%) | Brazil | | Eletronorte has issued an RFP for an adviser (PFR, 1/18). |
| First Solar | Portfolio (10 GW Solar) | US | BofA Securities, CohnReznick Capital | Leeward Renewable Energy has inked an agreement to buy the platform as of January (PFR, 2/1). |
| Hecate Energy | Portfolio (1,500 MW Solar-plus-storage) | US | Cantor Fitzgerald | The sponsor is looking for a buyer as of January (PFR, 1/18). |
| ● InstarAGF Asset Management | Okanagan Wind (30 MW Wind) | British Columbia | CIBC Capital Markets | CK Group has agreed to purchase the wind duo as of February (see story, page 5). |
| Light | Portfolio (Hydro, 51%) | Brazil | | Brasal Energia has agreed to buy the stakes (PFR, 1/11). |
| LS Power | EvGo | US | BofA, Credit Suisse | The Pacific Investment Management Co SPAC has eyed the company as of January (PFR, 2/1). |
| New Energy Solar | Mount Signal 2 (154 MW Solar, 50%) | California | | US Solar Fund has agreed to buy the stake as of January (PFR, 2/1). |
| Northleaf Capital Partners | South Branch (30 MW Wind, 49%) | Ontario | National Bank Financial | The bank circulated teasers for the sale the first week of February (PFR, 2/8). |
| Photosol Group | San Juan I (299 MW Solar-plus-storage) | New Mexico | BNP Paribas | The sponsor is testing the equity market as of the second week of January (see story page 1). |
| ● Powin Energy | Powin Energy | US | | Energy Impact Partners and Trilantic North America agreed to buy a controlling stake as of February (see story online). |
| PSEG Power | Portolio (468 MW Solar) | US | Goldman Sachs | Teasers circulated in November (PFR, 1/18). |
| ● Renova Energia | Alto Sertão III Phase B (305 MW Wind) | Brazil | | Prospective bidders sent letters of intention to Renova on February 1 (see story online). |
| Rockland Capital | PH Robinson (360 MW Gas) | Texas | Thorndike Landing | The sponsor had appointed a financial advisor as of February (PFR, 2/8). |
| ● Southern Power | Portfolio (160 MW Storage) | California | | AIP Management has agreed to invest in the battery storage pair as of February (see story online). |
| ● Sunchase Power, MAP RE/ES | Portfolio (2.2 GW Solar, Storage) | Texas | | Total closed the purchase as of February (see story, page 6). |
| ● US Energy Partners | US Energy Partners | New York | | Catalyst Power Holdings closed the purchase as of February (see story online). |

● **New or updated listing**

*The accuracy of the information, which is derived from many sources, is deemed reliable but cannot be guaranteed.*
*To report updates or provide additional information on the status of financings, please call Taryana Odayar at (212) 224 3258 or e-mail taryana.odayar@powerfinancerisk.com*

## PROJECT FINANCE

Deal Book is a matrix of energy project finance deals that Power Finance & Risk is tracking in the energy sector.

# Live Deals: Americas

| Sponsor | Project | Location | Lead(s) | Deal Type | Loan Amount | Tenor | Notes |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| AES Gener | | Chile | | Capital increase | $306m | | The closing of the increase was announced on February 8 (see story online) |
| AES Gener, Guacolda Energia, Colbún, Enel Green Power, Enel Generación Chile, Engie Energia Chile, Eólica Monte Redondo | | Chile | Goldman Sachs | Asset-Backed Securitization | $489m | 7-yr | The deal closed on February 8 (see story, page 11). |
| Ares Management Corp | Lincoln Land (300 MW Wind) | Morgan County, Illinois | Santander | Term loan | $500m | | Deal closed on December 31 (PFR, 1/18). |
| Blackstone Group | Frontera (526 MW Gas) | Texas | PJT Partners, Alvarez & Marsal, Houlihan Lokey | Restructuring | $944m | | The debt will be converted into equity as a result of the Chapter 11 protection the firm filed for on February 3 (see story, page 9). |
| Caithness Energy | Long Island Energy Center (350 MW Gas) | New York | Investec | Holdco debt | $150m | 9-yr | The deal closed on January 28 (PFR, 2/8). |
| Distributed Solar Development | Portfolio (Solar) | US | Credit Suisse | | $300m | | Blackrock raised the debt as of January (PFR, 2/1). |
| Equinor, BP | Empire Wind (816 MW) | New York (offshore) | | Debt | | | Société Générale appointed as financial adviser (PFR, 11/30). |
| | | | | Tax equity | | | |
| GenOn Energy | Chalk Point (1.6 GW Gas, Oil) | Maryland | Investec | Term loan A | $305m | 5-yr | The sponsor was preparing to launch the financing, and to hold bank meetings later in February (see story, page 7). |
| | Dickerson (312 MW Gas, Oil) | | | | | | |
| Grenergy Renovables | Portfolio (130 MW Solar) | Chile | Natixis | Term loan | $85m | | Loan closed in the first week of January (PFR, 1/18). |
| Interchile | Cardones-Polpaico (Transmission) | Chile | | Bond refinancing | $1bn | | The sponsor has sent out RFPs to banks (PFR, 10/19). |
| InterEnergy Group | Portfolio (255 MW Wind, Solar) | Panama | Citi | Bond refinancing | $262.664m | 18-yr | Issuance closed in December (PFR, 1/11). |
| Invenergy | Samson Solar Energy (1,310 MW Solar) | Texas | Santander, SocGen, Caixabank | Construction financing | | | Close announced on January 13 (PFR, 1/18). |
| | Traverse (999 MW Wind) | Oklahoma | CIBC, MUFG, Santander, Natixis, SMBC | Construction loan | $1.2bn | | Deal was live as of first week of January (PFR, 1/18). |
| Inversiones de Generación Eléctrica | Jilamito (14.8 MW Hydro) | Honduras | IDB Invest | Term loan | $20.25m | | Debt package approved in December (PFR, 12/14). |
| Key Capture Energy | Portfolio (250 MW Storage) | Texas | | | | | The sponsor is conducting pre-marketing for debt as of February (see story, page 8). |
| | Portfolio (230 MW Storage) | Texas | CIT Bank, Rabobank, Siemens | Term loan | $100m | C+5yr | The deal closed on February 5 (see story, page 8). |
| Mainstream Renewable Power | Copihue (100 MW Wind) | Chile | | Term loan | $160m | | The bank sent an RFP to banks in January (PFR, 2/8). |
| Momentum Energy Storage Partners | Momentum Energy Storage Partners | US | Leyline Renewable Capital | | | | Leyline invested in the company as of February (PFR, 2/8). |
| Northern Indiana Public Service | Rosewater Wind (102 MW Wind) | Indiana | Wells Fargo | Tax equity | $170m | | The deal closed as of February (PFR, 2/8) |
| NRG Energy | Astoria Replacement Project (437MW Gas) | New York | Crédit Agricole | Term loan | $280m | C+5yr | The debt raise is ongoing, with the bank group meant to be finalized on January 15 (PFR, 2/1). |
| Oaktree | Seaside LNG (50% of JAX LNG) | Florida | Investec | Term loan (holdco) | $122m | C+5yr | Lender meetings scheduled for second week in December (PFR, 12/7). |
| | | | | Ancillary facilities | $25m | C+5yr | |
| Pine Gate Renewables | Pine Gate NC Portfolio (Solar, Storage) | North Carolina | Crestmark | Term loan | | | Deal announced on January 14 (PFR, 1/25). |
| | | | US Bank | Tax equity | | | |
| Standard Solar | Portfolio (24.6 MW Solar) | Minnesota, Massachusetts | Crestmark | Tax equity | | | The deal closed as of February (PFR, 2/8). |
| sPower | Luna Storage (400 MWh Storage) | California | KeyBanc Capital Markets, Crédit Agricole, Silicon Valley Bank, Export Development Canada | Term loan | $154.2m | | The deal closed on December 29, 2020 (see story online). |
| TexGen Power | TexGen Power (2.2 GW Gas-fired) | Texas | Cantor Fitzgerald (adviser) | TBC | TBC | TBC | Proposals sought from potential arrangers in November 2020 (PFR, 1/25). |
| Tokyo Gas America | Aktina (500 MW Solar) | Texas | BofA, Morgan Stanley | Tax equity | | | The sponsor has secured the commitment (PFR, 12/21). |

**New or updated listing**

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NORTH AMERICA MERGERS & ACQUISITIONS

# Masdar, EDF reach first close on 1.6 GW renewables portfolio

The **Abu Dhabi Future Energy Co**, also known as **Masdar,** has reached first close on its acquisition of a 50% stake in a 1.6 GW solar, wind and battery portfolio from **EDF Renewables North America**.

The companies announced that they would partner on the eight-project portfolio last summer (PFR, 8/13). The portfolio comprises three wind projects in Nebraska and Texas totaling 815 MW and five solar projects in California totaling 689 MW – two of which include lithium-ion battery storage systems representing 75 MW.

The deal is expected to reach final close in the fourth quarter of 2021, subject to regulatory approvals.

**BofA Securities** is acting as exclusive financial adviser to Masdar on the deal, which will mark the Emirati company's second strategic investment in the US.

Masdar first entered the North American renewables market in early 2019 with the acquisition from **John Laing** of stakes in two wind farms, namely the 149 MW Rocksprings facility in Texas and the 29.9 MW Sterling facility in New Mexico (PFR, 1/15/19).

Meanwhile, Masdar is working on a roughly $400 million holding company financing, codenamed Project Genesis, to lever up its portfolio of renewable assets in the US (PFR, 11/23). **BNP Paribas** is leading the transaction.

Masdar is a subsidiary of the **Government of Abu Dhabi**'s sovereign wealth fund, **Mubadala Investment Co.** ■

## Belltown markets 870 MW renewables portfolio

Solar and storage developer **Belltown Power Texas** is marketing an 870 MW portfolio of projects in the Lone Star State to investors.

The company is aiming to close on the projects in the first half of the year. Details of the individual projects were not disclosed.

The sale process comes after Belltown developed and sold five projects totaling 750 MW in Texas in 2020.

The assets Belltown sold in 2020 included:

- Three contracted solar projects totaling 250 MW, collectively known as Blue Bonnet, which went to an affiliate of South Korea's **Hanwha Group**, which in turn is selling the assets (PFR, 4/22, 4/30, 5/6).
- A 360 MW project in Denton County
- A 65 MW project in Hunt County, which has a busbar PPA with **Rayburn Country Electric Coop** and was acquired by **Adapture Renewables**.

The year before, the developer sold a 180 MW project in Falls County to a subsidiary of **Ecoplexus**.

**CohnReznick Capital** acted as adviser to Belltown on some of the sale processes (PFR, 4/9/19).

"Belltown has come a long way since inception in 2017, building a strong team that has proven its ability to identify, develop, and transact on solar projects in ERCOT," said **Lloyd Pope**, the company's president. "Approaching 1 GW is a milestone that motivates us to continue striving for excellence in our development activities."

Belltown specializes in greenfield project development in ERCOT, particularly the North and South zones, where it identifies sites and navigates interconnection, real estate, permitting, environmental and tax concerns leading up to the ready-to-build stage. ■

# Hong Kong buyer emerges for Canadian wind assets

A Hong Kong-based buyer has emerged in the sale of a pair of wind farms in Canada, marking the company's first renewables investment in the country.

The buyer, **CK Group**, has agreed to acquire a pair of wind farms totaling 30 MW in British Columbia from **InstarAGF Asset Management**.

The assets are the Pennask Wind Farm and the Shinish Creek Wind Farm, which are collectively known as the Okanagan Wind platform, and located in the Okanagan region of British Columbia.

CK is making the investment through a Calgary-based subsidiary called **Canadian Power Holdings**.

The deal is penciled to close toward the end of the second quarter.

The advisers to Canadian Power on the deal are:

- **CIBC Capital Markets** – financial
- **Stikeman Elliott** – legal

CK Group has experience transacting renewables in Australia, continental Europe, China and the UK, but Okanagan Wind will be the group's first renewable energy acquisition in Canada.

Its existing holdings in the country, through Canadian Power Holdings, include the Meridian Cogeneration Plant in Saskatchewan as well as stakes in four power plants in Alberta and Ontario, through its 49.99% interest in **TA Cogen Limited Partnership**.

> *"We look forward to working with the team at Okanagan Wind, as well as the community and First Nations partners."*
>
> **Derek Goodmanson**, CEO of Canadian Power Holdings

Okanagan Wind was the first wind generation platform in the region when it came online in 2017, according to CK.

It sells its output under an inflation-linked power purchase agreement with **British Columbia Hydro and Power Authority** with 37 years of remaining contract life.

"We look forward to working with the team at Okanagan Wind, as well as the community and First Nations partners," says **Derek Goodmanson**, CEO of Canadian Power Holdings.

The buyer will honor impact benefit agreements struck with local **First Nation** communities, which provide job opportunities, annual benefit payments, scholarship funds and environmental monitoring. ■

Okanagan Wind platform

NORTH AMERICA MERGERS & ACQUISITIONS

# Total bolsters US solar, storage base with 2.8 GW purchase

«FROM PAGE 1 by **Global Infrastructure Partners** toward the end of last year (PFR, 1/4).

The purchase price will be paid in stages as the projects advance. Construction on the first two projects will start later this year, and all the projects are due to come online between 2023 and 2024.

Total will also purchase generation from the portfolio under the terms of a 1 GW corporate power purchase agreement. The PPA will cover the demand of all of Total's industrial sites in the US, including the Port Arthur refining and petrochemicals platform and the La Porte and Carville petrochemical sites.

"Supplying green electricity to all our industrial activities in the United States is concrete proof of our ambition to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050," said **Patrick Pouyanné**, the company's chairman and CEO.

This latest acquisition brings Total's renewables development pipeline in the US close to 4 GW in capacity, in line with its goal of reaching 35 GW of renewable generation by 2025, added Pouyanné.

The news follows Total's recently announced 50:50 joint venture with **Hanwha Group**-owned solar and energy storage developer **174 Power Global** to develop a 1.6 GW portfolio in the US (PFR, 1/15). ■

# AEP finds buyer for Ohio hydro plant

**American Electric Power** (AEP) has found a buyer for its 48 MW Racine Plant in Ohio, following an auction process that was launched in the summer of 2020.

Hydro developer **Eagle Creek Renewable Energy** has agreed to buy the hydro plant from AEP's competitive generation affiliate, **AEP Generation Resources**.

The sale is expected to close in the second quarter of 2021, subject to **Federal Energy Regulatory Commission** approval.

The Racine facility is located in a village of the same name, in Sutton Township, Meigs County, and was commissioned in 1982.

**PROJECT TORNADO**

The sale of Racine is the result of an auction process launched by AEP last summer, as part of an operational, seven-project hydro portfolio totaling 70 MW, as previously reported (PFR, 8/13).

**Scotiabank** acted as financial adviser to AEP on the sale process, which was codenamed Project Tornado, while **Porter Wright** served as legal counsel on the sale of Racine specifically.

Apart from Racine, the other assets in the portfolio are nearing 100 years old and range in size from 1 to 6 MW. The run-of-river plants are all fully merchant and unlevered, *PFR* understands.

The sale of Racine is part of AEP's ongoing strategic evaluation of its generating assets, says **Nicholas Akins**, AEP's chairman, president and CEO.

AEP Generation Resources has retired or sold all of its capacity, except for the 595 MW coal-fired Cardinal Plant Unit 1, which is set to retire in 2030, consistent with the investor-owned utility's move to exit the competitive generation business. ■

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### LATIN AMERICA MERGERS & ACQUISITIONS

**MPC SECURES PARTNER FOR CARIBBEAN ASSETS**

**MPC Energy Solutions** has closed a partnership agreement with distributed energy service firm **Enernet Global** to develop assets in the Caribbean after becoming a minority shareholder in the company. MPC invested in Enernet in October of last year.

**PETROBRAS STARTS NON-BINDING PHASE OF PIPELINE SALE**

**Petrobras** has started the non-binding phase on the sale of stakes in two pipelines, **Transportadora Brasileira Gasoduto Bolivia-Brasil** (TBG) and **Transportadora Sulbrasileira de Gás** (TSB), following its massive divestment program.

### STORAGE

**DENMARK'S AIP INVESTS IN BATTERY STORAGE PAIR**

Copenhagen-based **AIP Management** has agreed to invest in a pair of battery storage projects in California that **Southern Power** is developing on the sites of solar projects that the two firms already co-own. The four-hour systems have a combined capacity of 160 MW/ 640 MWh.

### CAPITAL MARKETS

**APOLLO FLOATS THIRD ENERGY TRANSITION SPAC**

**Apollo Global Management** has closed the initial public offering for its third blank check company targeting the energy transition and sustainability, hot on the heels of its second such vehicle acquiring residential solar finance company **Sunlight Financial**.

**AES GENER COMPLETES CAPITAL HIKE**

**AES Gener** has closed a $306 million capital increase to finance the development of renewable energy projects in Chile and Colombia, concluding a process that began in April of last year. The company sold the 99.8% of the stock to shareholders in two preferential rights periods at Ps110 ($0.155) a share.

**SPIRE LAUNCHES $150M CAPITAL RAISE**

Missouri-based gas distributor and marketer **Spire** is planning to raise $150 million through an underwritten public equity offering. Spire owns gas utilities in Alabama, Mississippi and Missouri, as well as a 65-mile gas pipeline carrying shale gas to Missouri.

*Extended versions of these stories are available to subscribers at www.powerfinancerisk.com.*

NORTH AMERICA PROJECT FINANCE

# BOEM to resume environmental review of Vineyard Wind

The **Bureau of Ocean Energy Management** (BOEM) is resuming its environmental review of the 800 MW Vineyard Wind project off the coast of Massachusetts.

The announcement follows President **Biden**'s executive order on January 27, calling for the US **Department of the Interior** to identify steps toward accelerating renewable energy project development on public lands and waters, "with the goal of doubling offshore wind by 2030."

BOEM, an agency of the Department of the Interior, will proceed to develop a final environmental impact statement (EIS) for the Vineyard offshore wind project, after the environmental review.

“Offshore wind has the potential to help our nation combat climate change, improve resilience through reliable power, and spur economic development to create good-paying jobs,” said BOEM director **Amanda Lefton**. “BOEM is committed to conducting a robust and timely review of the proposed project.”

*“Vineyard made the correct strategic decision on waiting until after the Biden transition to re-submit this stage of the federal permitting process with BOEM.”*

**Chris Gladbach**, a partner, McDermott Will & Emery

The company behind the project, **Vineyard Wind** (a joint venture between **Copenhagen Infrastructure Partners** and **Avangrid Renewables**), had paused the Department’s consideration of the facility while it reviewed whether the use of **General Electric**'s Haliade-X turbines warranted any modifications to their construction and operations plan (COP).

On January 22, Vineyard Wind submitted a letter rescinding its temporary COP withdrawal and requesting that BOEM resume its review.

“It is clear, to us at least, that Vineyard made the correct strategic decision on waiting until after the Biden transition to re-submit (and re-start) this stage of the federal permitting process with BOEM," **Chris Gladbach**, a partner in **McDermott Will & Emery**'s Washington, DC office tells *PFR*.

"Given the strategic priority of offshore wind to this administration and also given the history of the NEPA process with this project (and the last published EIS supplement that was favorable to the anticipated project layout), we have reason to hope that the final environmental review will be completed on an expedited basis," says Gladbach. "That said, it is not over until it is over – and the industry really needs a win on this one to continue to move forward in force.”

The news comes on the heels of other major BOEM announcements, including the agency's plans to pursue two environmental assessments on potential wind energy lease areas in the Pacific Ocean, says **Carl Fleming**, also a partner in McDermott's DC office.

Another key announcement was the recent appointment of **Amanda Lefton** as BOEM director. Lefton is the former first assistant secretary for energy and the environment for New York Governor **Andrew Cuomo**.

"These announcements send a message that the new administration is dedicated to doubling offshore wind capacity by 2030 and moving the United States toward 100% clean electricity by 2035," says Fleming.

The offshore wind industry secured another win toward the end of last year, when a 30% federal investment tax credit (ITC) was made available to projects starting construction by the end of 2025, under the Covid-19 pandemic relief and government spending bill, as previously reported (PFR, 12/21).

"Less than a week later, the **Internal Revenue Service** (IRS) issued generous guidance for the new ITC, suggesting that these projects have strong support within Congress and the **Department of the Treasury**," notes Fleming. ■

# GenOn preps bank loan for PJM peakers

«FROM PAGE 1 GenOn announced that it had begun the process of deactivating the three coal-fired units at Dickerson last May, citing "unfavorable economic conditions and increased costs associated with environmental compliance." The coal-fired units date back to 1959, 1960 and 1962.

Then in August, the company pointed to the same conditions when it announced that it would be retiring the two coal-fired units at the Chalk Point site by June 1, 2021. They have served Maryland and the surrounding region since 1964 and 1965.

The remaining units at Dickerson will be its two 147 MW dual-fuel units, which have been online since 1992, and its 18 MW distillate fuel oil unit, which dates back to 1967.

At Chalk Point, the surviving units are two gas-fired turbines with capacities of 596 MW and 585 MW as well as six smaller units that run on a combination of distillate fuel-oil and gas. The oldest of these units was commissioned in 1967 and the most recently installed have been operational since 1991.

GenOn tapped the bank market last year for a $250 million debt package to lever up two vintage gas-fired assets in California, namely the 1,516 MW Ormond Beach and 54 MW Ellwood projects.

**CIT Bank**, **Investec** and **Société Générale** were bookrunners on that deal, which included a $170 million, three-year term loan priced at 250 bp over Libor. The transaction closed on November 18 (PFR, 11/23). ■

NORTH AMERICA PROJECT FINANCE

# NTE pivots to renewables with 5 GW blueprint

**NTE Energy**, traditionally a gas-fired power plant developer, is shifting toward renewables with plans to develop solar and storage projects totaling more than 5 GW over the next five years.

The company is working with investment partners as it readies a project pipeline that includes 1.2 GW of solar and 3.9 GW of battery energy storage systems, of which around 3 GW to 4 GW is slated to be online by 2026.

"Advances in clean energy technology and strong market demand for renewables are positioning 2021 to be a record year," said **Steve Remen**, who worked in business development at **groSolar** and **EDF Renewables** before joining NTE as managing director of renewable energy resources.

NTE's renewables pipeline includes early-stage assets in ISO-New England, MISO, Ercot, New York-ISO, SERC, PJM Interconnection and WECC, some of which will be co-located with new or existing thermal generation projects.

> *"Advances in clean energy technology and strong market demand for renewables are positioning 2021 to be a record year."*
>
> **Steve Remen**, managing director of renewable energy resources, NTE

"By co-locating renewable projects with thermal generation, we can offer customers access to affordable renewable energy options backed up by reliable natural gas," said Remen.

NTE has a 2.7 GW gas-fired project pipeline in various stages of development, including the 650 MW Killingly Energy Center, on which construction is expected to begin this year.

NEWS IN BRIEF

BATTERY STORAGE

**DEVELOPER UNVEILS BATTERY STORAGE FINANCING**

Renewables developer **sPower** has announced the financing of its 400 MWh Luna Storage project in California, which was reported by *PFR* in January. The $154.2 million financing, one of the largest for a utility-scale standalone battery storage asset, closed on December 29.

BUILD-TRANSFER

**IPL PICKS INVENERGY SOLAR PROJECT**

**Indianapolis Power & Light Co** (IPL) has awarded a build-transfer agreement to Invenergy for a 195 MW solar project in Indiana. Invenergy will develop and construct the project before transferring it to the **AES Corp** subsidiary, subject to approval from the **Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission**.

TRANSMISSION

**COLOMBIA LAUNCHES SECOND TRANSMISSION TENDER OF 2021**

Colombia's Mines and Energy Planning Unit (UPME) has launched a procurement process for the 230 kV Carrieles substation and related transmission lines between the municipalities of Jericó and Támesis, in the department of Antioquia. It is the second such tender this year.

*Extended versions of these stories are available to subscribers at www.powerfinancerisk.com.*

# Key Capture clinches energy storage project financing

«FROM PAGE 1 MW and three construction-stage projects totaling 200 MW.

The deal, which closed on the morning of February 5, comprises a construction-plus-five-year term loan and letters of credit, as *PFR* first reported in October (PFR, 10/23).

The margin is 250 bp over Libor with several step-ups after the construction period.

The legal advisers on the deal are:

- **Norton Rose Fulbright** – to the lenders
- **Clean Energy Counsel** – Key Capture's transaction lead
- **Stahl** – Key Capture's adviser on Texas matters

The projects are backed by a novel hedging arrangement that is based on ancillary service payments in Ercot.

"As far as we are aware, this is the first project financing done for projects in Texas that are covered by ancillary services hedges as well as a mix of construction and operating projects," **Ann Anthony**, Key Capture's CFO, tells *PFR*.

So far, the utility-scale battery storage project finance transactions that have closed in the US have been backed by assets in California, which earn revenues under resource adequacy contracts.

Key Capture's hedge structure for its newly financed Texas portfolio is designed to return 80% of the projects' combined capex during the tenor of the loan.

The sponsor has also executed an interest rate swap for the portfolio to lock in attractive, long-term pricing, *PFR* understands.

**THANK U, NEXT**

Key Capture is already working on its next energy storage portfolio financing, which will be backed by assets totaling 250 MW that are located primarily in Ercot.

The projects are due to be online in the fourth quarter of 2021 or at the start of 2022, and are contracted with investment-grade offtakers.

They will have a slightly different hedge construct than the last fleet that was financed, in that they are forward-starting and so will align timing-wise with when the portfolio is anticipated to be operational.

The financing lines up with the sponsor's capex plan to deploy between $800 million and $1 billion across various regional transmission operators over the coming years, mainly Ercot, New York-ISO and ISO-New England.

In the meantime, Key Capture has been going through a process to find itself a new owner since last summer. This process is understood to still be live (PFR, 7/21). ■

RESTRUCTURING

# Blackstone to hand Frontera to creditors

The **Blackstone Group** has reached a restructuring deal with the creditors of its Frontera combined-cycle gas-fired plant in Texas, which sells its output across the border in Mexico.

About $944 million in senior secured debt will be converted into equity so that the creditors become the owners of the 526 MW project, according to the proposed plan.

The outstanding debt comprises $773 million under the term loan B and revolving credit facility, which were due to mature this month, as well as $171 million in notes.

Frontera has not made interest payments on the debt since October 2020, according to **S&P Global Ratings**, which dropped its rating from CCC to D as a result. The rating agency cited "very weak power prices in Mexico" as a reason for the plant's financial struggles.

Following negotiations, Blackstone reached an agreement with 97% of the holders of the project's term loan B and 100% of the holders of its notes.

To effect the restructuring, the project's holding company, **Frontera Holdings**, filed for Chapter 11 protection in Texas along with several affiliates on February 3.

In the meantime, the company has secured $70 million in debtor-in-possession financing to get it through the bankruptcy period. Once the project exits bankruptcy, lenders will provide a further $75 million in exit financing.

"These actions represent an important milestone to reducing debt and strengthening the Company for the benefit of our stakeholders," said **Lee Davis**, CEO of Blackstone's competitive generation portfolio company **Kindle Energy**, who also serves as CEO of Frontera.

"Frontera intends to use the court-supervised process to create a sustainable capital structure and position the Company to achieve long-term success," he added.

The advisers on the restructuring are:

- **PJT Partners** – investment banker to the debtor
- **Kirkland & Ellis** – general **bankruptcy** counsel to the debtor
- **Jackson Walker** – local bankruptcy counsel to the debtor
- **Alvarez & Marsal** – financial adviser to the debtor
- **Houlihan Lokey** – financial adviser to the term loan creditors
- **Akin Gump** – counsel to the term loan creditors
- **Silver Foundry** – adviser to the noteholders
- **Morgan Lewis** – counsel to the noteholders

**BACKGROUND**

The Frontera project was once part of the Lonestar Generation portfolio of Texas gas-fired assets, which Blackstone assembled through acquisitions in 2014.

The private equity firm reconfigured the Frontera project to sell its output into Mexico, and the plant became the first US power plant to export all of its generation across the southern border in 2016.

Blackstone then removed the plant from the Lonestar financing vehicle and refinanced it with a separate term loan B in 2018 (PFR, 4/2/18, 4/17/18).

This unique set-up allowed Frontera to benefit from cheap natural gas available in Texas while selling into a market where power prices were almost double, for a while.

However, a slump in Mexican power prices since made the project financially vulnerable (PFR, 9/29/20).

Spark spreads dropped from around $50/MWh in 2018 to around $30/MWh in 2019, according to an S&P report published in October 2019.

The following year, with the Covid-19 pandemic suppressing demand, spark spreads fell even further, dipping below $10/MWh in the first quarter of 2020.

Besides merchant power sales, the project earns revenues though a 15-year capacity agreement with Mexican state-owned utility **Comisión Federal de Electricidad**. ■

LATIN AMERICA PROJECT FINANCE

## Developer to build 1 GW solar project in Brazil

Brazilian company **JKL Energy** plans to build a 1 GW solar plant in the state of Piauí.

The developer has already acquired land in the municipalities of Guaribas and Caracol, and the company's representatives have met with Piauí's governor **Wellington Dias** to discuss tax incentives and environmental licenses.

The governor highlighted the intention to have these projects advanced enough to compete in the electricity auction scheduled for September 2021. ■

## Equinor explores potential for solar at Porto do Açu

**Equinor** has signed a memorandum of understanding with **Porto do Açu** to explore the development of a solar project within the port complex over the next year.

Developed by **Prumo Logística**, which is controlled by **EIG Global Energy Partners**, the port of Açu is the only totally privately-owned port in Brazil.

Its industrial complex includes iron ore export structures and what is expected to be Latin America's largest natural gas hub, including four LNG-to-power plants.

The port of Açu is the only totally privately-owned port in Brazil

"Photovoltaic solar generation is the fastest growing source in Brazil and worldwide. We are optimistic about the possibility of implementing a renewable energy project at Açu, an initiative that is in line with our sustainability strategy, which includes developing partnerships and new businesses from the transition to a low carbon economy," says **José Firmo**, CEO of Porto do Açu Operations. ■

FEATURES

# Alarm over energy counter-reform in Mexico

«FROM PAGE 1 Chamber of Deputies on February 1, giving the legislature 30 days to vote on it. The bill would codify policies that were already being implemented by AMLO's administration to favor state-owned companies and their mostly fossil fuel-fired and large-scale hydro fleets, to the detriment of private investors and wind and solar projects.

"The reform is not new," says a financial adviser in Mexico City. "It's been going on for two years, but passively. Now they are making it into law."

If passed, the bill would undermine or reverse aspects of the privatization agenda carried out by AMLO's predecessor, **Enrique Peña Nieto**, in 2014, by changing dispatch rules, scrapping competitive power auctions, limiting the value of Clean Energy Certificates (CELs) and potentially canceling legacy self-supply contracts granted to older projects (*proyectos legados*).

"This bill generates a scenario of volatility for investors," says **Aldo González**, associate at **Holland & Knight**, in Mexico City. "Coupled with the pandemic and the change of administration in the US, the law change comes at a terrible moment for the sector."

Since López Obrador took office on December 1, 2018, his administration has been working to undo the previous two governments' reforms – which liberalized the power sector – and instead bolster the role of state-owned utility **Comisión Federal de Electricidad** (CFE) and oil firm **Pemex**.

Several of the policies that have been most disruptive to the private sector were put in place in 2020, ostensibly in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, but AMLO has been more explicit about the aims of the newly proposed law.

"With this initiative we will put an end to the distortion of prices in a market that favors speculation, dumping and CFE subsidies for private companies, as well as years of looting," he said when presenting the draft.

### THE REFORM

The initiative introduced by López Obrador would change the dispatch rules that currently govern the system, prioritizing state-owned projects and disregarding the cost of the power and the technology of the project.

The power would be injected into the grid as follows:

- Hydro plants owned by CFE
- The rest of CFE's plants
- Solar and wind projects, most of which are owned by private investors
- Privately-owned combined-cycle gas-fired plants

The change to the dispatch rules is reminiscent of policies introduced by state grid operator **CENACE** in spring 2020, when it halted the interconnection of new renewable assets, arguing that they brought instability to the grid due to their intermittency (PFR, 5/11/20). This policy has since been suspended after developers successfully fought it in the courts (PFR, 10/28/20).

Moreover, the new bill would eliminate CFE and CENACE's obligations to hold long-term competitive auctions to procure power. This has already been the *de facto* case since 2019, when the government canceled the country's fourth such auction (PFR, 2/4/19).

Finally, the bill would allow the reexamination of projects operating under the self-supply framework that existed prior to the 2014 market reforms. Permits for these projects, known as *proyectos legados*, could be revoked.

The administration had already moved against the *proyectos legados* scheme in June, when it increased the transmission fees payable by qualifying projects (PFR, 6/10/20). This policy had also been suspended by a Mexican court (PFR, 10/29/20).

Observers believe the bill will receive enough votes to pass into law, but that it too will face legal challenges.

"The bill has its critics, which could influence the final text, but there is an intention to approve it," says Gonzalez.

### CONSEQUENCES

Market participants in Mexico are closely following the rapidly evolving situation. Investors fear that if the law passes, there will be harmful consequences not only for them, but for the country.

"By prioritizing CFE's fossil fuel-fired assets, the power will be more expensive, and there will be more carbon emissions," says the Mexico City-based financial adviser, who notes that Mexico will struggle to meet its carbon reduction commitments as a result. "The goal will be to pay off CFE's debt."

Moreover, as Mexico's demand for power increases, industry insiders worry that the country will suffer blackouts, as there is not enough CFE-owned capacity. CENACE expects demand to increase by an average of 3% annually.

"A year ago, the forecast was that by spring of 2021, there would be blackouts," adds the financial adviser. "The good news is that the economic activity was so depressed with the pandemic that the energy demand wasn't as high as it would have been, avoiding outages."

Meanwhile, investors are wondering what to do with their assets in the country, which may not meet their projected revenue targets if the bill becomes law. Some may consider a sale, even at a steep discount.

"It's going to be a trade-off between writing them off or holding onto them and accounting for the losses," says the financial adviser.

"I don't think we will see a stampede of investors leaving, but they will have to evaluate their projects," adds **Carlos Ochoa**, a partner at Holland & Knight in Mexico City.

### BACKLASH

Despite the bleak scenario for investors, there is still a long way to go before the effects will be felt.

"It's important that investors keep monitoring changes in the law," says **Alberto Esenaro**, an associate at Holland & Knight. "Changes won't happen immediately. They will be implemented gradually in the everyday operation of the electricity market and face legal challenges."

A Supreme Court ruling on February 3, which struck down CENACE's anti-renewables policy, has been interpreted as a cause for optimism on this front.

"If the bill passes, we will see a wave of lawsuits and developers looking for legal reprieves in the courts," says Ochoa.

International free trade agreements and pressure from foreign countries with investments in Mexico could also limit the law's scope.

"Legal institutions and international treaties will curb the bill," says an official at a renewable energy developer in Mexico.

"It is tantamount to expropriation," adds the financial adviser.

The worst-case scenario for investors – that the law is passed without a hitch – may also not be the end of the story, observes Ochoa. "Regardless of who's elected in the 2024 Presidential elections, Mexico's stance towards renewables has to change." ■

 

CAPITAL MARKETS

# Chilean genco securitization closes

A group of Chilean power producers, which had been affected by a power price freeze implemented in 2019, have reached financial close on a receivables securitization deal in Chile.

The deal, described as Latin America's first "tariff stabilization securitization," closed on February 8.

**Goldman Sachs** arranged the $489 million seven-year asset-backed bond, which will provide financing for seven generation companies, or gencos, through a bankruptcy-remote issuing entity called **Chile Electricity PEC** (CEP), as previously reported (PFR, 1/20).

**IDB Invest** played a key role in the transaction, agreeing to fund the purchase of receivables from the gencos in a deal that was signed on January 27 (PFR, 2/1). The gencos signed sale and purchase agreements with CEP for the first portion of receivables on January 29.

The total amount of IDB's investment could not be confirmed by press time. However, according to filings with Chile's **Comisión para el Mercado Financiero**, one of the gencos, **Enel Generación Chile**, will sell receivables totaling $81 million, while **Engie Energia Chile** and **Eólica Monte Redondo** will securitize $74.7 million, under their agreements with IDB.

IDB Invest had been working on financings to provide credit relief to Chilean power companies since April when the development finance institution's representative in the country said it would look to provide loans for this purpose (PFR, 4/7/20).

The debt was issued in several formats simultaneously to appeal to a wide range of investors and reduce the overall cost of capital, according to **Guido Liniado**, a partner at **Latham & Watkins**, one of the law firms that advised Goldman Sachs on the deal.

"We are delighted to once again represent Goldman Sachs and to work with IDB Invest and the major Chilean generation companies in the creation of this innovative financing structure," he said, noting that the debt was issued as a 144A/Reg S bond, a 4(a)(2) private placement, and in the form of loans.

"As the first tariff stabilization securitization in Latin America, we expect this will shape the way complex financial products are deployed to address social and developmental goals," added **Fabricio Longhin**, a partner at **Clifford Chance**, which advised Goldman Sachs and IDB Invest.

**Moody's Investors Service** and **Fitch Ratings** have rated the bonds Baa3 and BBB.

The parties and advisers involved in the deal included:

- **Citibank** – offshore collateral agent and indenture trustee
- **Banco de Chile** – onshore collateral agent
- **TMF Chile Esesorias Empresariales** – verification agent and services provider to CEP
- Clifford Chance – counsel to Goldman Sachs and IDB Invest
- Latham & Watkins – counsel to Goldman Sachs
- **Holland & Knight** – counsel to CEP and TMF

The financing emerged in response to the Tariff Stabilization Law introduced by the government in fall 2019 in an effort to quell protests.

Although the gencos' assets are largely contracted under dollar-denominated power purchase agreements with local regulated utilities, known as distribution companies or "discos," the law included a measure to defer payments under such contracts for two years (PFR, 11/6/19).

The gencos involved in the deal are:

- **AES Gener** and **Guacolda Energia** (both subsidiaries of **AES Corp**)
- **Colbún**
- **Enel Green Power**
- Enel Generación Chile
- Engie Energia Chile and Eólica Monte Redondo (both subsidiaries of **Engie**)

The companies will receive the following from the receivables for a total of $547.11 million, according to filings with Chile's Comisión para el Mercado Financiero, on January 20.

- Engie Energia Chile and Eólica Monte Redondo: $162 million
- AES Gener: $90.11 million
- Enel Generación Chile: $200 million
- Colbún: $95 million

The issuer of the bonds, CEP, will finance the acquisition of the generators' receivables "through the allocation of future surpluses payable by the distribution companies," wrote Moody's in its report on the transaction on January 20 (PFR, 1/20).

The surpluses will arise as a result of lower wholesale power costs, as renewable energy projects come online, and the recovery of the deferred payments. Solar and wind projects with PPAs awarded in 2016 were due to begin commercial operations either this past January or in January of 2023.

The **Ministry of Energy** will determine the value of the receivables every six months. By 2023, when all the receivables are accounted for, their total value is expected to reach $1.35 billion.

The receivables are expected to be paid in full by December 31, 2027. ■

LATIN AMERICA MERGERS & ACQUISITIONS

# Ecopetrol enters exclusive talks to buy ISA stake

Oil company **Ecopetrol** has begun exclusive negotiations to acquire the Colombian government's majority stake in international transmission company **Interconexión Eléctrica** (ISA), after making a bid in January.

The **Colombian Ministry of Finance and Public Credit** wrote to Ecopetrol on February 5 to inform the company that the government would sign an exclusivity agreement with a view to consummating the transaction in the first half of 2021.

Ecopetrol is working with **HSBC** and **Bancolombia** on its takeover proposal, which it intends to finance with a mixture of balance sheet cash, share issuances and asset sales, as previously reported (PFR, 1/27).

If the company's bid is successful, the Colombian government would still indirectly control ISA, as it has an 88.49% stake in the bidder.

Other companies that had been considering a bid for ISA included **Grupo Energía Bogotá** (PFR, 1/7).

PEOPLE & FIRMS

## Riverstone's co-head of power, renewables departs

**Riverstone Holdings**' managing director and co-head of power and renewables, **Carl Williams**, has left the private equity firm after almost 13 years.

Williams joined Riverstone in 2008, based out of Houston, and has sourced and managed the company's energy investments since, with a focus on equity transactions in the power sector.

He also served as a member of **Riverstone Power**'s investment committee.

Prior to joining Riverstone, Williams was a New York-based member of the global natural resources investment banking group at **Goldman Sachs**.

He started his career at **Lyondell Chemical Company** (now **LyondellBasell**), where he held various positions in engineering, operations and procurement.

He has served on the boards of **Talen Energy Corp**, where he also was chairman of the nuclear oversight committee, as well as **Enviva**, **TrailStone Group**, **ReEnergy Holdings**, **Crimson Resource III** and **U.S. Oil & Refining**. ■

# NRG's CFO heads to Evergy

**NRG Energy**'s CFO **Kirkland Andrews** has stepped down from his role and is headed to **Evergy** where he will take up the same title.


Kirkland Andrews

Andrews' departure from NRG is effective February 4, and he is set to start at **Evergy** on February 22, replacing **Tony Somma**, who announced his plans to depart on January 8 (PFR, 1/12).

Andrews will remain at NRG in an advisory capacity through February 19. Meanwhile, NRG will carry out a search for a successor, considering both internal and external candidates.

During this time, **Gaetan Frotte**, NRG's senior vice president and treasurer of the last six years who first joined NRG in 2006, will act as interim CFO.

"Kirk's leadership and counsel helped achieve the financial foundation and simplicity that underpins the compelling strategic and financial flexibility that we enjoy today," said **Mauricio Gutierrez**, NRG president and CEO. "I would like to thank Kirk for his dedicated service and partnership over the last decade, and wish him well in his new role."

Andrews joined NRG in 2011 from **Deutsche Bank Securities**, where he had been co-head of the bank's power and utilities group in the Americas (PFR, 8/18/11). Prior to that, he headed the North American power investment banking group at **Citigroup Global Markets**.

At NRG, he formulated the company's financial and capital allocation strategies, executed its portfolio and balance sheet restructuring, and oversaw the financing strategy for renewable energy development and the creation of **NRG Yield**.

Andrews has been a member of Evergy's board of directors since March 2020, and a member of its strategic review and operations committee which worked on the company's Sustainability Transformation Plan (STP) introduced in August 2020.

"Over the last year, I have had the opportunity to work closely with Evergy's leadership team and board," he said. "I am excited to join Evergy's leadership team to help bring this plan to life in a way that creates value for all of Evergy's key stakeholders."

Andrews will vacate his Evergy board position when he assumes his CFO role.

"Kirk clearly stands out as the best person for this role," said **David Campbell**, Evergy's president and CEO. "I am very excited for Kirk to join our executive team and help us to successfully execute the STP and advance the interests of all stakeholders and the communities we serve." ■

# IFC appoints new LatAm director

The **International Finance Corporation** (IFC) has appointed **Martin Spicer** as its new director for Latin America and the Caribbean, following a more than 20-year-long career with the institution.

Spicer assumed his new role overseeing IFC's investments in the region in February, based out of Bogotá, Colombia. He most recently served as director of blended finance in Washington DC.

"In my new capacity, I look forward to deepening relationships with our long-term partners while forging new ones to mobilize private capital in the region, thus driving a sustainable and inclusive growth trajectory," said Spicer.

Spicer joined the IFC in 1999 as an investment officer. Since then, he has moved up the ladder, holding positions such as chief credit officer for power and manufacturing deals worldwide and regional head of manufacturing, agribusinesses, and service industries in Latin America and the Caribbean. ■

## LatAm addition for Shearman

**Shearman & Sterling** has hired **Gabriel Salinas** in Houston to advise on private equity deals related to the energy sector in Latin America.

He moves to Shearman this month after four years as the general counsel at **Avant Energy**, a portfolio company owned by **Riverstone Holdings**, where he worked on the development of renewable and midstream energy projects.

Salinas previously worked at **Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe** for a year until 2017. He started his career at **Thompson & Knight** in 2008 and has also worked for five years at **Mayer Brown**, where he oversaw cross border M&A.

"Gabriel has a solid record advising on M&A and joint ventures, project development and financing, fund formation and deployment, and other complex transactions in renewable and conventional power, infrastructure, midstream and other energy assets," said Shearman partner **Alexandro Padrés**. "His cross-border experience, especially in connection with Latin America, will allow us to further strengthen our deep relationships in the region."

Shearman has been active in LatAm in the past six months, recently advising **Citigroup Global Markets** on **InterEnergy Group**'s bond issuance in Panama, and working with the lenders on **Mainstream Renewable Power**'s Huemul project financing in Chile (PFR, 1/28, 10/1/20). ■