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Power Finance & Risk

Exclusive Insight on Power M&A and Project Financing

PFR OFFSHORE WIND ROUNDTABLE 2021. *Page 10*

MERGERS & ACQUISITIONS

Swiss PE shop markets California peaker

Partners Group is preparing to take first round bids for its minority stake in a contracted gas-fired peaking power plant in California. *Page 7.*

PROJECT FINANCE

Plus Power finances Hawaiian storage

Plus Power has closed a $219 million debt package for a standalone energy storage project in Hawaii. *Page 8.*

PEOPLE & FIRMS

Citi's Stuart Murray resurfaces in new role

Citi's head of Americas project and infrastructure finance has joined the infrastructure debt team at **BlackRock**. *Page 19.*

All eyes turn to Build Back Better as House passes bipartisan infra bill

Taryana Odayar

Now that the US **House of Representatives** has passed the Biden administration's long awaited $1.2 trillion bipartisan infrastructure bill, renewables market participants are eyeing a $3.5 trillion reconciliation bill containing a host of federal tax credit incentives and a direct-pay option that could be voted on as soon as next week.

The bipartisan infrastructure bill was passed by the Senate on August 10 and made its way past the House in a 228-206 vote on November 5, with 13 Republicans voting in favor and six Democrats against. It is headed next to the president's desk, where it will be signed into law.

The deal provides for more than $65 billion in transmission and electric grid upgrades, as well as the creation of a new Grid Deployment Authority.

"This is largely in re- PAGE 8»

First Energy scores $3.4bn equity injection

Alfie Crooks

First Energy Corp has secured about $3.4 billion of equity commitments from a pair of private equity firms, one of which will acquire a minority stake in three of the company's transmission businesses.

The investments are split between **Blackstone Infrastructure Partners**' $1 billion investment in First Energy and **Brookfield Super-Core Infrastructure Partners**' $2.4 billion purchase of a 19.9% stake in FET, the holding company for three of FirstEnergy's regulated transmission subsidiaries.

"With these financings and, as importantly, long-term partnerships, FirstEnergy will PAGE 6»

Blackstone offloads thermal portfolio in the Lonestar state

Taryana Odayar

The Blackstone Group has sold its quasi-merchant fossil-fuel fired Lonestar II portfolio in Texas after striking a bilateral deal.

The asset manager has sold the three hedged thermal power plants to **Armadillo Power**, a developer based out of Austin which was established last year. The company could not be reached for comment.

The deal closed on PAGE5»

MPC forays into Mexican renewables mart

Carmen Arroyo

MPC Energy Solutions has entered the Mexican renewables market by purchasing a 15.8 MW (DC) solar project in the country.

The sponsor has agreed to acquire the Los Santos Solar I park in Ahumada, Chihuahua, from local developer **Buenavista Renewables** (BRV). The deal is expected to close during the first quarter of 2022.

MPC plans to expand PAGE 18»

IN THIS ISSUE

COP26 COVERAGE

IDB JUMPS ON THE COP26 BANDWAGON

The **Inter-American Development Bank** (IDB) has thrown its weight behind the shift towards loans and projects being fully aligned with the Paris climate agreement, timing its announcement for COP26.

This change in strategy will take effect by 2023 and will impact transactions throughout Latin America and the Caribbean.

The announcement comes as world leaders gathered at COP26, the annual **United Nations** climate change conference being staged this year in Glasgow, Scotland.

"We are also pushing past the Paris Agreement objectives to help address this truly global challenge," said IDB's president, **Mauricio Claver-Carone**. "We know that if we prioritize smart investments today, the cornerstone of our global fight against climate change can mutually reinforce our pandemic recovery efforts and we can speed up our responses."

"Aligning our work to Paris Agreement objectives furthers our commitment to limit the temperature rise to well below 2° Celsius and build climate resilience," he added. "But this alone is not enough."

IDB also took the COP26 opportunity to announce another ambitious climate target – to provide $24 billion for climate and green finance over the next four years.

"We are pushing the envelope on our financing, improving our internal structure to prioritize climate action, and increasing our engagements and external partnerships," said Claver-Carone. "Our role, as the region's leading development bank, is to help our 26 borrowing member countries mitigate and adapt to climate risks. We are ready to help seize an unprecedented opportunity to achieve a decarbonized and climate-resilient future in the region." ■

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.

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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
8minute	Southern Bighorn (300 MW Solar, Storage)	Nevada	OnPeak Capital	Second round bids are being taken as of late October (PFR, 11/01).
Actis	Echoenergia	Brazil	XP Investimentos, Credit Suisse, BTG Pactual	Equatorial inked an agreement to buy the firm on October 29 (PFR, 11/8).
AES Corp	Mountain View (67 MW Wind, 25%)	California		AIMCo has struck a deal to buy the interests as of early November (PFR, 11/8).
	Laurel Mountain (125 MW Wind, 25%)	West Virginia		
Basalt Infrastructure Partners, DCO Energy	Project Diamond	US	TD Securities	The sponsors launched the sale process the third week of August (PFR, 8/30).
● Belltown Power	Prairie Dock (360 MW Solar)	Illinois		Competitive Power Ventures has acquired both assets as of early November (see story, page 6).
	Stonecrop (100 MW Solar)	Kentucky		
● BlackRock	Crockett Cogeneration (240 MW Gas, 91.78%)	US	Guggenheim Securities	Hull Street Energy has agreed to buy the asset as of early November (see story, page 6).
● Blackstone Group	Bastrop (552 MW Gas)	Texas	BNP Paribas	Armadillo Power purchased the projects on November 5 (see story, page 1).
	Paris (248 MW Gas)			
	Major Oak (308 MW Gas)			
Biwo Renewables, LatSolar Energy Investments	Portfolio (200 MW Solar)	Chile		SUSI Partners has agreed to acquire the portfolio as of late October (PFR, 11/01).
● Buenavista Renewables	Los Santos I (15.8 MW [DC] Solar)	Mexico		MPC Energy Solutions has agreed to buy the asset as of early November (see story, page 18).
Castleton Commodities International	Granite Shore Power (1,110 MW, fossil fuel)	New Hampshire		The seller has agreed to sell its share in the fossil fuel joint venture to Atlas Holdings as of October 20 (PFR, 10/25)
Clearway Energy	Clearway Community Energy	US	Bank of America, TD Securities	KKR & Co has struck a deal to purchase Clearway Energy's thermal power business as of late October. It will close in mid-2022 (PFR, 11/01).
Connecticut Municipal Electric Energy Cooperative	Al Pierce Generation (84 MW Gas)	Connecticut		Hull Street Energy has agreed to buy the asset as of mid-October (PFR, 10/18).
Copenhagen Infrastructure Partners	Mitchell (122 MW Solar)	North Carolina	KeyBanc	A subsidiary of TransAlta Corp agreed to buy the portfolio as of the first week of September (PFR, 9/13).
● EverPower Wind Holdings	Howard (55.35 MW Wind)	New York		Greenbacker Renewable Energy has agreed to buy the project as of November 3 (see story, page 5).
esVolta	Project Monarch (900 MWh Storage)	California	Citi	Teasers were distributed in early October (PFR, 11/01).
Global Infrastructure Partners	Freeport LNG (Gas, 25%)	Texas	Rothschild & Co	The sponsor mandated the bank to sell its minority stake in the project as of early June (PFR, 6/7).
Harbert Management Corp	Calhoun Generating Station (632 MW Gas, Oil)	Alabama		Alabama Power has agreed to buy the asset as of early November (PFR, 11/8).
Macquarie Capital	Savion	US	Guggenheim Securities	The sponsor has asked bidders to re-evaluate their offers by November (PFR, 11/01).
● NextSun Energy	Portfolio (19.5 MW [DC] Solar)	US		Greenbacker Renewable Energy has purchased the portfolio as of early November (see story, page 5).
● OneEnergy Renewables	Fillinona (11.3 MW Solar)	Minnesota		Greenbacker Renewable Energy has purchased the project as of early November (see story, page 6).
Otter Tail Power Co	Coyote Station (420 MW Coal, 35%)	North Dakota		The company plans to sell its stake in the asset (PFR, 9/13).
● Partners Group	Sentinel (850 MW Gas, 25%)	California	BNP Paribas	The sponsor will take first round bids in late November (see story, page 7).
Prospect14	Project Anthracite (1.3 GW Solar, Storage)	Pennsylvania, Virginia	Jefferies	Marketing materials for the sale process circulated during the week of April 26 (PFR, 5/3).
● ReneSola Power	Portfolio (6.6 MW [DC] Solar)	Maine		Greenbacker Renewable Energy has purchased the projects as of early November (see story, online).
● Rialma Administracao e Participacoes	Rialma Transmissora de Energia III	Brazil		Argo agreed to buy the company as of November 4 (see story, page 18).
Rockland Capital	Rabun Gap (18 MW Biomass)	Georgia	Thorndike Landing	Teasers were distributed earlier this month (PFR, 10/25)
● Sowitec Operation	Wimke (76 MW Solar)	Colombia		Engie agreed to acquire the project as of early November (see story, page 18).

● **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

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
Ares Management Corp	Stonewall (778 MW Gas)	Virginia	Investec	Term loan B	$450m	5-yr	The refinancing was kicked off on September 16 (PFR, 9/27).
				Revolving Credit	$50m		
Avangrid Renewables, Copenhagen Infrastructure Partners	Vineyard Wind (800 MW Wind)	Massachusetts	Bank of America, JP Morgan, BBVA, NatWest, Santander, Crédit Agricole, Natixis, BNP Paribas, MUFG	Construction loan	$2.4b	C+7yr	The syndication was launched on October 7 (PFR, 10/18).
Castleton Commodities International	Riverview Power (1.4 GW Gas)	New York, Texas	Morgan Stanley	Term loan B	$205m	7-yr	The deal, which will refinance the portfolio, was launched in mid-April (PFR, 5/3).
Celsia	Tesorito (198.7 MW Gas)	Colombia	SMBC, Santander		$140m-$150m		The sponsor has mandated the banks as of early May (PFR, 5/17).
Cox Energy America	Sol de Vallenar (308 MW (DC) Solar)	Chile					The sponsor is looking for debt for the asset as of February 12 (PFR, 2/22).
Daroga Power, Bloom Energy	Portfolio (33 MW Fuell cell)	US	Silicon Valley Bank, ING Capital, Rabobank	Construction-to-back-leveraged term loan	$225m		The sponsor is raised financing over the summer (PFR, 10/25).
● Enel Green Power	Wsyra I (132 MW Wind)	Peru	IDB Invest	Construction loan	$85m	15-yr	IDB Invest is expected to review the financing on December 7 (see story, page 19).
● GreenYellow do Brasil	Energy efficiency	Brazil	Santander, Itau BBA	Debentures	$29.23m	7-yr	The sponsor issued the bonds in early November (see story, page 19).
Intersect Power	Radian (420 MW (DC) Solar)	Texas	Bank of America				The sponsor is preparing to raise debt for its development-stage projects, as of early June (PFR, 6/14).
	Aramis (100 MW Solar, Storage)	California					
InterEnergy, AES Panama, Panamanian government	Gatun (656 MW Gas)	Panama	SMBC, Natixis	Construction loan	$780m	7-yr	The syndication for the debt launched on October 6 and is expected to close in mid-November (PFR, 10/18).
I Squared Capital	Atlantic Power portfolio (1,160 MW Gas, Biomass, Coal)	US	RBC Capital Markets, MUFG	Term loan B	$360m	6-yr	The banks met on March 18, with commitments due on April 1 (PFR, 3/22).
				Ancillary facilities	$45m		
Lucayas Solar Power	Grand Bahama (11 MW (DC) Solar)	Bahamas	IDB Invest	Construction loan	12m		The sponsor is looking for debt for the asset as of September 21 (PFR, 10/25).
Macquarie Infrastructure and Real Assets	Wheelabrator Technologies, Tunnel Hill Partners	US	Credit Suisse	Term loan	$1bn	7-yr	The sponsor is combining and refinancing the portfolio companies, with commitments taken on March 19 (PFR, 3/15).
				Ancillary facilities	$400m	5-yr	
Matrix Renewables	Portfolio (154 MW (DC) Solar)	Chile	BNP Paribas				The sponsor mandated the bank for a financing in February (PFR, 5/17).
NextEra Energy Resources	Sky River (77 MW Wind)	California					The sponsor was arranging financing for the asset as of the third week of May (PFR, 5/31).
NextEra Energy Partners	Portfolio (1,260 MW Wind, Solar, Storage)	US	Apollo Global Management	Convertible equity	$824m	10-yr	NextEra is dropping the portfolio into its yieldco, which will finance the assets once the purchase closes (PFR, 11/8).
● Osaka Gas, Summit Ridge Energy	Portfolio (24 MW Solar)	Maine	Live Oak Bank	Construction loan			The sponsor secured the financing as of early November (see story, page 8).
			Foss & Co	Tax equity			
● Plus Power	Kapolei (185 MW/565 MWh Storage)	Hawaii	Mizuho, KeyBank, Cobank, Silicon Valley Bank	Construction loan	$188m		The sponsor has closed the deal as of early November (see story, page 8).
				Ancillary facilities	$31m		
Repsol, Ibereolica	Odessa (Wind, Solar)	Chile			$220m		The sponsors were nearing financial close on the deal as of the first week of August (PFR, 8/9).
Soleco Energy	Jamaican DG solar portfolio (11.25 MW)	Jamaica	IDB Invest		$25m		The sponsor is looking for debt for the asset as of August 27 (PFR, 10/25)
Soventix Guayana	Portfolio (2.5 MW [DC] Solar, Storage)	Guyana	IDB Invest	Construction loan	$5m		The sponsor requested the debt as of late August (PFR, 11/8).

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NORTH AMERICA MERGERS & ACQUISITIONS

Blackstone offloads thermal portfolio in the Lonestar state

«FROM PAGE 1 November 5 and is the result of discussions initiated between Armadillo and Blackstone in the second quarter of this year, *PFR* has learned.

"Blackstone is getting a clean exit for a portfolio they've been in for some time, and Armadillo is getting their footprint in ERCOT which they didn't have before," says a source close to the situation.

BNP Paribas acted as financial adviser to Armadillo on the sale, while **King & Spalding** provided legal counsel. **Kirkland & Ellis** acted as legal adviser to Blackstone. The assets changing hands are:

- The 552 MW gas-fired Bastrop plant in Cedar Creek, near Austin
- The 248 MW gas-fired Paris peaking facility in Lamar County, near the Oklahoma border
- The 308 MW Major Oak coal-fired project, which is also known as Twin Oaks, in Robertson County

Armadillo will also own all of Lonestar II's subsidiaries, including the guarantors of the projects' capital structure, which includes:

- A $20 million undrawn revolving credit facility due 2024
- A $285 million senior secured term loan B due 2026
- A $37.2 million senior secured term loan C due 2026

S&P Global Ratings' and **Moody's Investors Service**'s previously assigned B and B1 ratings for the senior secured debt remain unchanged, according to reports issued by both agencies on November 5.

"There will be no changes to Lonestar's debt structure or any additional holding company debt," reads an excerpt from the Moody's report. "The purchase price will be financed with equity, and requires no regulatory approval."

The report adds that the portfolio's credit profile reflects its exposure to volatile power prices in ERCOT, but notes that hedges for about 80% of Bastrop's gross margin for the rest of this year "mitigate the reliance on onpeak and scarcity pricing."

Kindle Energy will continue to manage and operate the assets.

LONESTAR II

Blackstone originally assembled the Lonestar II portfolio through a series of acquisitions in 2014, when it acquired Bastrop, Paris and the 526 MW gas-fired Frontera project from **Direct Energy** in a term loan B-financed deal (PFR, 2/19/14).

Citi and **Deutsche Bank** arranged the $515 million seven-year term loan, which was priced at 375 basis points over Libor (PFR, 2/6/14).

Blackstone tacked on Major Oak, an acquisition from **Optim Energy**, later the same year through a bankruptcy court-run sale (PFR, 11/10/14). The add-on was financed by increasing the size of the loan by $160 million and repricing it at 425 bp.

In 2018, Blackstone removed Frontera from the group in order to refinance and sell it separately (PFR, 4/17/18), while mandating Citi on the sale of Paris, Bastrop and Major Oak in a process codenamed Project Matador (PFR, 10/11/18).

At the start of this year, Blackstone reached a restructuring deal to hand over the keys to the Frontera project to the plant's creditors, as previously reported (PFR, 2/8). ■

Greenbacker lands New England solar portfolio

Greenbacker Renewable Energy has acquired a 19.5 MW (DC) portfolio of operational solar projects in New England from **NextSun Energy**.

All 15 projects are contracted with utilities, municipalities and businesses and came online between 2013 and 2017. Each of the assets is between 0.6 MW (DC) and 5 MW (DC) in size.

The portfolio includes the 1.1 MW (DC) North Smithfield solar facility, which is Greenbacker's first project in Rhode Island.

"With the recent sale of our operating portfolio to Greenbacker, we now have the ability to focus all of our bandwidth directly on developing future solar and battery energy storage systems," said **Jake Laskin**, president of NextSun. "We couldn't be happier with the partnership we have created with the folks at GREC and certainly look forward to working together again." ■

"We couldn't be happier with the partnership we have created with the folks at GREC."

Jake Laskin, president, **NextSun**

BlackRock-backed sponsor to offload New York merchant wind farm

A **BlackRock**-backed wind developer has found a buyer for a merchant wind farm located in New York state.

EverPower Wind Holdings has struck a deal to sell its 55.35 MW Howard wind project in Steuben County to **Greenbacker Renewable Energy**, according to a US **Federal Energy Regulatory Commission** filing dated November 3. The parties to the deal have requested FERC approval for the sale by November 17.

The project came online in 2011 and sells its power on a merchant basis into the **NY-ISO** market. BlackRock came to own the asset as part of its acquisition of EverPower's 750 MW operational wind portfolio from UK-based private equity shop **Terra Firma Capital Partners** in 2017 (PFR, 12/8/17).

EverPower is held under BlackRock's Global Renewable Power Fund II, according to the FERC filing.

Meanwhile, the Howard project's would-be buyer, Greenbacker, also recently acquired a pair of wind projects totaling 30.8 MW in Minnesota from Minneapolis-based developer **PRC Wind** (PFR, 10/28). ■

NORTH AMERICA MERGERS & ACQUISITIONS

First Energy scores $3.4bn equity injection

«FROM PAGE 1 be even better positioned to capitalize on the growth opportunities ahead and advance our company's key business priorities," said **Steven Strah**, FirstEnergy's president and CEO.

Blackstone's investment will be made through the purchase of $1 billion worth of common equity in First Energy at $39.08 a share. As part of the agreement, a Blackstone-selected representative will sit on FirstEnergy's board of directors.

"We are excited about our strategic investment in FirstEnergy," said **Sean Klimczak**, Blackstone's global head of infrastructure. "With today's landmark announcement and FirstEnergy's rapidly expanding investment opportunities, the company is well positioned for accelerated growth."

JP Morgan acted as lead placement agent to FirstEnergy on the deal. The company's board of directors is being advised by **Moelis & Co** as financial adviser, while **Jones Day** is providing legal counsel. **Latham & Watkins** is representing Blackstone.

Meanwhile, Brookfield is investing a further $2.4 billion in First Energy through its acquisition of a 19.9% stake in the company's transmission subsidiaries that are held under FET, namely:

- **American Transmission Systems**
- **Mid-Atlantic Interstate Transmission**
- **Trans-Allegheny Interstate Line**

First Energy will hold on to the remaining stake in the businesses.

That deal is due to close in the first half of 2022, subject to regulatory approvals, including from the US **Federal Energy Regulatory Commission** and the **Committee on Foreign Investments in the US**, as well as customary closing conditions.

"Brookfield believes FET is a very attractive investment given the high-quality and long-term stability of the business," said **Eduardo Salgado**, a managing partner in Brookfield's infrastructure group and head of Brookfield Super-Core Infrastructure Partners. "FET is uniquely positioned to capture significant capital investment opportunities driven by the modernization of the grid, decarbonization and general electrification of the economy."

JP Morgan and **Citigroup Global Markets** acted as financial advisers to FirstEnergy on the deal. Jones Day acted as legal adviser to the company, while **Skadden** advised Brookfield.

The funds will be used to support the modernization of FirstEnergy's transmission system and to prepare it to integrate more renewables and distributed energy resources.

First Energy also plans to use the equity investment to build an advanced distribution platform that would improve grid reliability.

"Our strong operational momentum and increased financial strength reinforce our confidence in our ability to enhance shareholder value and serve the best interest of all our stakeholders," said Strah. "That confidence is reflected in our 6-8% long-term growth rate, as well as our significantly expanded investment plan."

The company announced a $2.2 billion increase to its capital investment plan through 2025, which now totals $17 billion from 2021 to 2025, including $10 billion in sustainable energy investments. ■

CPV takes bite out of Kentucky, Illinois solar

Competitive Power Ventures (CPV) has acquired a pair of solar projects in Kentucky and Illinois from Texas-based developer **Belltown Power**.

The assets are the 360 MW Prairie Dock solar project in Illinois and the 100 MW Stonecrop solar project in Kentucky. Construction is slated to start on both projects in the second half of 2023.

"This acquisition builds on CPV's strategy to rapidly expand our renewable footprint as we lead America's transition to a clean, responsible energy future," said CPV's CEO, **Gary Lambert**.

The deal adds more assets to CPV's 3 GW portfolio of renewable energy projects under development. The company has sought to expand its renewables project pipeline since it was bought by a consortium of Israeli investors at the beginning of this year, as previously reported (PFR, 1/27). ■

Greenbacker scoops up Minnesota solar

Greenbacker Renewable Energy has purchased a distributed solar project that is spread across four separate sites in the North Star State.

The developer has bought the 11.3 MW (DC) Fillinona solar project, which is sited in Stockton, Fountain, Hazel and Rushford Village, from **OneEnergy Renewables**. The project is due online by the end of this year.

Once online, electricity from each of the four sites will be sold to **MiEnergy Cooperative** under a long-term power purchase agreement. Two of the sites will also sell renewable energy credits to **Stonyfield Organic**, a national yogurt brand that has committed to running its dairy supply chain on 100% renewable electricity by 2025.

"In cooperation with Dairyland Power Cooperative, we've been able to enter into this PPA for local, renewable energy within our electric service territory," said **Brian Krambeer**, MiEnergy's president and CEO. "The strategic location of the arrays will provide wholesale power cost savings that will benefit all members of our cooperative."

Stockton and Fountain will both have pollinator-friendly vegetation planted beneath their solar arrays, while nearby farmers' sheep will be allowed to graze at the solar farms at Hazel and Rushford Village.

The deal marks Greenbacker's second investment in Minnesota's renewables market over the last two weeks, having also bought a pair of wind projects totaling 30.7 MW (DC) from **PRC Wind** at the end of October (PFR, 10/28). ■

BlackRock finds buyer for California cogen

A buyer has emerged for **BlackRock**'s Global Energy & Power Infrastructure Fund I's majority stake in a 240 MW gas-fired cogeneration plant in California.

Hull Street Energy has agreed to purchase the 91.7% stake in the Crockett Cogeneration facility, which is located at the **C&H Sugar Co** sugar refinery in Crockett, about 25 miles north of San Francisco. **Osaka Gas USA** will retain the remaining equity in the facility.

The project will be housed under Hull Street's power infrastructure business unit, **Milepost Power**.

The sale is the result of an auction process kicked off by **Guggenheim Securities** on behalf of the sponsor in June, as previously reported (PFR, 7/7). **Troutman Pepper** acted as legal counsel to Hull Street on the acquisition.

The Crockett plant has been online since 1996. It sells its output to **Pacific Gas & Electric Co** (PG&E) under a 30-year power purchase agreement and its steam to C&H under a steam sales agreement. Both contracts are due to expire in 2026.

On September 14, **Moody's Investors Service** downgraded the plant's $54.4 million senior secured notes from B3 to B2, with a negative outlook. **S&P Global Ratings** also downgraded the notes from B+ to B- on August 16, citing "weak liquidity."

Hull Street Energy has agreed to purchase the 91.7% stake in the Crockett Cogeneration facility

The decline in liquidity stems from "a large outflow of cash during the year associated with the project's requirement to purchase and deliver greenhouse gas emission allowances by November 2021," according to the Moody's report.

In order to meet the bonds' "true-up" mechanism, the project had to dip into its debt service reserve in June 2021. Crockett has already drawn $2 million and expects to draw another $8 million by the end of the year, which would leave about $3.8 million remaining, according the Moody's report.

BlackRock came into ownership of the Crockett facility in 2017, as part of its acquisition of **First Reserve Energy Infrastructure Funds**, the infrastructure equity arm of First Reserve (PFR, 2/7/17, 4/17/17).

The plant's rating was upgraded from B2 to B3 by Moody's on July 8, 2020 to reflect PG&E's emergence from bankruptcy and assumption of its PPA obligations with Crockett. ■

Swiss PE shop lines up bids for California peaker

A Swiss private equity firm is preparing to take first round bids for its minority stake in a contracted gas-fired peaking power plant in the Golden State.

Zug-based **Partners Group** is aiming to take bids at the end of November for its 25% stake in the 850 MW simple-cycle Sentinel Energy Center in Riverside County.

BNP Paribas has been mandated as auctioneer on the traditional two-stage process, which kicked off in September under the codename Project Mallard.

The auction is expected to draw interest from infrastructure funds and global strategics, *PFR* understands.

The remaining ownership interest in the plant is split between **Diamond Generating** (50%), which is a subsidiary of Japan's **Mitsubishi Corp**, and a Cayman Islands-based group of private investors called **Voltage Finance** (25%), which is backed by **Guggenheim Partners**.

About 75% of the plant's capacity is contracted through 2025 with seven separate offtakers, including **Southern California Edison**, which has a power purchase tolling contract expiring in August 2023 (PFR, 10/9/19). Three of the other counterparties – a municipality and two community choice aggregators – are unrated, according to marketing materials seen by *PFR*.

Last year, the plant was upgraded to increase its output from 802 MW to 850 MW. The additional capacity has already been contracted with a local utility customer, according to the teaser.

The project is fitted with eight **General Electric** LMS100 aeroderivative combustion turbines, allowing Sentinel to sell its capacity in tranches to its various offtakers.

"Sentinel has successfully begun to re-contract [resource adequacy] capacity through 2026 with multiple investment grade counterparties, through bilateral capacity awards at premium rates and emergency procurements," adds the teaser.

Meanwhile, the plant's owners are weighing various decarbonization strategies at the facility. An agreement was recently inked with an undisclosed turbine manufacturer to conduct a beta test to power the plant with hydrogen by 2023, while options to source renewable natural gas or add on-site battery storage capacity are also being explored.

Sentinel

The $900 million project was brought online in May 2013 (PFR, 8/21/13). It was refinanced in 2019 with a $429.1 million term loan with a tenor of four years, matching the remaining length of the project's 10-year PPA with SoCalEd (PFR, 10/9/19).

Mizuho and **Norinchukin** led on the deal, which included an $11.4 million revolving credit facility and letters of credit totaling $159.4 million.

At the time, Diamond Generating owned 50% of the project while **GE Energy Financial Services** and **Competitive Power Ventures** each owned 25%.

GE EFS sold its stake to Voltage Finance shortly thereafter (PFR, 10/7/13), while a consortium led by Partners Group bought out CPV's stake in 2015 (PFR, 9/28/15).

The sponsors repriced the project's roughly $800 million debt in late 2014, cutting the margin from 225 basis points over Libor to 162.5 bp.

MUFG, **ING Capital**, **Natixis** and **SMBC** were co-lead arrangers on the 2014 deal, which comprised a $643.12 million seven-year term loan, $151.52 million in letters of credit and a $10 million revolver.

Diamond Generating provides operations and maintenance services to the plant. ■

NORTH AMERICA PROJECT FINANCE

Osaka Gas, Summit Ridge finance Maine solar portfolio

A joint venture between **Summit Ridge Energy** (SRE) and **Osaka Gas USA** has clinched debt and tax equity financing for a community solar portfolio in Maine.

Live Oak Bank is providing debt financing for the 24 MW portfolio, while **Foss & Co** is committing tax equity. Details on the size of the debt and tax equity financings could not be learned by press time.

The sponsors have already completed construction on the portfolio's first project, a 6.3 MW (DC) solar array in Hermon. The construction timetable for the remaining projects was not disclosed.

The portfolio is part of a larger 200 MW community solar portfolio that the SRE and Osaka Gas JV is developing in Maine.

"SRE's culture of execution relies on financial partners who are as committed to community solar as we are," said **Adam Kuehne**, chief investment officer at SRE. "SRE and our JV partners at OGUSA are excited that both Foss & Company and Live Oak Bank are motivated to deploy capital into the rapidly growing community solar sector alongside us."

Osaka Gas and SRE launched their JV in July 2021 with the aim of owning, building and operating 120 MW of community solar projects across Maine (PFR, 7/7). ■

Plus Power secures Hawaii storage financing

The 185 MW / 565 MWh Kapolei Energy Storage project

Plus Power, an independent battery energy storage developer, has closed a debt package for a standalone energy storage project in Hawaii.

The sponsor has clinched a $219 million financing for the 185 MW/565 MWh Kapolei Energy Storage project, located on the island of Oahu. **Mizuho** and **KeyBank** led the deal, with **Silicon Valley Bank** and **CoBank** also joining in as lenders.

KeyBank acted as coordinating lead arranger, joint bookrunner, and syndication agent on the financing, which is split between a $188 million construction loan and a $31 million letter of credit.

The project has a contract with **Hawaiian Electric**, won in 2020 following a request for proposals launched by the utility (PFR, 5/27/20).

The Kapolei project received approval from the **Hawai'i Public Utilities Commission** in May 2021 and is expected to come online next year. ■

NORTH AMERICA LEGAL & REGULATORY

All eyes turn to Build Back Better as House passes bipartisan infra bill

«FROM PAGE 1 sponse to weather-driven events that have resulted in debilitating power outages across the US – notably the events of this past winter in Texas," said **Will Marder**, head of project finance at **Wilmington Trust**.

The package also includes $7.5 billion to build out a national network of electric vehicle charging stations across the US. "You'll be able to go across the whole darn country, from East Coast to West Coast, just like you'd stop at a gas station now," said Biden during a November 6 press briefing.

Other highlights include the deployment of funds in demonstration projects and research hubs for advanced nuclear reactors, carbon capture and clean hydrogen.

However, the bill leaves out federal tax credit extensions for wind and solar projects and a previously proposed investment tax credit for standalone storage, as previously reported (PFR, 4/1). As a result, the nearly 100-member Progressive Caucus, a group of the most left-leaning House Democrats, are aiming to push through these incentives in a separate $2 trillion budget reconciliation bill that will be voted on during the week of November 15.

If passed, the reconciliation bill, dubbed the Build Back Better (BBB) Act, would also include a direct-pay option in lieu of federal tax credits for renewables projects that come online after December 31.

"Sponsors may find themselves electing direct pay, even if they have a track record of tapping the tax equity market, due to the tremendous demand for tax equity the BBB will trigger by expanding various types of tax credits," said **David Burton**, a partner at **Norton Rose Fulbright** in New York.

However, some market participants have already expressed trepidation over certain labor and wage requirements that would be tied to the credits, as reported by *PFR* (PFR, 9/17).

"Some in the renewable energy industry view it as a panacea for the challenges of the tax equity market," noted Burton. "The optimism of some may be based on less than a full understanding of what the direct pay process would be."

It will also be some time before the refunds make their way into project sponsors' coffers. Under the proposed language, direct-pay elections cannot be doled out for the first 270 days after the legislation is enacted.

"For instance, if congressional Democrats manage to stop squabbling and pass the BBB on November 15, 2021 and President Biden signs it on November 16, 2021, the earliest any project owner year could hypothetically make a direct pay election is August 13, 2022," explains Burton.

"The IRS will have nine months to build a process for direct pay," he continues. "That process must have guardrails to prevent abuse, but for direct pay to serve its intended purpose it must work better than the section 1603 cash grant program did at the end of its life when "haircuts" in the amount paid and delays made it unusable for many sponsors." ■

PPA PULSE

PPA PULSE: AES INKS PPA FOR MICROSOFT DATA CENTERS

AES Corp has inked a power purchase agreement with **Microsoft Corp** that will power the tech giant's data centers in Virginia.

The 15-year contract will source electricity from a 576 MW portfolio of contracted renewable energy projects, including wind, solar and energy storage assets, located in the **PJM Interconnection** market.

The structure of the agreement utilizes both existing renewables projects under a long-term contract to Microsoft, while also adding additional renewables projects in the region.

"By leveraging AES' capability and presence in the PJM market, we are able to both secure additional renewable supply in support of meeting our commitment to use 100% renewable energy by 2025, and also take a meaningful step toward having 100% of our electricity matched by zero-carbon resources all of the time in the region," said **Brian Janous**, general manager of energy and renewables at Microsoft. "We believe innovative commercial structures like this with AES and integrating new technologies will be key as we continue to move toward our 100/100/0 commitment."

NEOENERGIA CLINCHES BRAZILIAN PPA

Iberdrola-owned **Neoenergia** has inked a 10-year power purchase agreement with the energy arm of a local holding company in Brazil.

The sponsor will sell 30 MW of wind power to **Ambar Energia**, which is owned by investment holding firm **J&F investimentos**. The offtaker will buy the output from two under construction wind facilities through the free market, starting in 2023.

The projects are part of the 471.2 MW Chafariz complex in Sertão da Paraíba and are expected to come online this year.

The sponsor already started operations on a portion of the facility this summer, bringing online a 34.65 MW chunk of the 15-project wind complex in Sertão da Paraíba as of July 29 (PFR, 8/2).

"Access to clean energy sources is strategic for the J&F group, with its companies moving faster and faster to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in production chains," said **Marcelo Zanatta**, president of Ambar Energia, in a statement on November 9.

J&F owns businesses such as pulp manufacturing firm **Eldorado Brasil Celulose**, cosmetics company **Flora**, digital wallet app **PicPay** and digital bank **Banco Original**.

CASA DOS VENTOS INKS WIND PPA

Brazilian developer **Casa dos Ventos Energias Renovaveis** has secured an offtaker for a portion of the output of a 360 MW wind farm in Brazil.

Under the terms of the 15-year contract, agricultural processor **Archer Daniels Midland** (ADM) will use the power generated by the Babilonia Sul wind farm to supply seven of its processing plants across the country (see list below).

The wind farm also sells a chunk of its output to petrochemical firm **Unigel** under a 20-year PPA, as previously reported (PFR, 10/4).

Located in Bahia, the Babilonia Sul complex is under construction and is due online in 2024.

ADM's processing plants that will be powered by the wind farm are located in:

- Campo Grande, Mato Grosso do Sul
- Rondonópolis, Mato Grosso do Sul
- Santos, São Paulo
- Joaçaba, Santa Catarina
- Porto Franco, Maranhão
- Três Corações, Minas Gerais
- Uberlândia, Minas Gerais

WINNING PROJECTS ID'D IN COLOMBIAN RENEWABLE POWER AUCTION

Further details have been revealed on three of the power projects that secured power purchase agreements in Colombia's renewable power auction held in late October.

On October 26, nine sponsors secured 15-year Colombian peso-denominated PPAs with local utilities for 11 solar projects totaling 796.3 MW (see list below), as previously reported (PFR, 10/27).

Since then, **Solarpack** has revealed itself as one of the big auction winners, having clinched PPAs for 252 MW (DC) across two solar parks in the Cesar and Cordoba departments. The pair will generate 450 GWh of electricity per year (PFR, 3/25).

The third project is **Canadian Solar**'s Caracoli facility in the Atlantico region, which has won a PPA for 52 MW (DC) of its output. Construction on the asset is expected to start by the second quarter of 2022.

"We seek to expand our diversified portfolio of solar PV and battery storage projects in this region and will continue to support the Colombian government's targets to accelerate the deployment of clean, renewable energy," said **Shawn Qu**, Canadian Solar's chairman and CEO.

Canadian Solar is also developing a 45 MW battery storage unit adjacent to the 34.5 kV Silencio substation in Barranquilla, after securing the contract through a tender process in July (PFR, 7/6). The asset is anticipated to be the country's first battery storage system once it comes online.

COLOMBIAN POWER AUCTION

The PPAs for the recently concluded October auction will kick in around January 2023 with an average price of Ps155.8/kWh (($0.041/kWh). The contracts must be signed by December 20.

Apart from Solarpack and Canadian Solar, the other sponsors that won contracts are:

- **Enel Green Power Colombia**
- **Celsia**
- **Empresas Publicas de Medellin**
- **Empresa Urra**
- **EDF Energy**
- **Fotovoltaico Arrayanes**
- **Genersol**

COLOMBIAN UTILITY SETS TIMELINE FOR PRIVATE POWER AUCTION

Colombian utility **Air-e** has published a rough timeline for its first private power auction in the country.

The company, which was created as a result of the privatization of Caribbean utility **Electricaribe**, intends to buy 850 GWh of renewables-generated electricity annually, making up about 10% of the power it procures each year (PFR, 10/15). The power will come from wind and solar projects owned by local generating firms.

Air-e has asked interested bidders to submit their comments by November 9, with final terms to be published on November 19. Offers are due by December 7 and contracts will be awarded in January 2022.

Winning solar projects must start fulfilling their power purchase agreements by January 2023, while wind farms must come online a year later.

Air-e supplies electricity to customers in the departments of Atlantico, Magdalena and La Guajira in Colombia. ■

Power Finance & Risk

PFR OFFSHORE WIND ROUNDTABLE 2021

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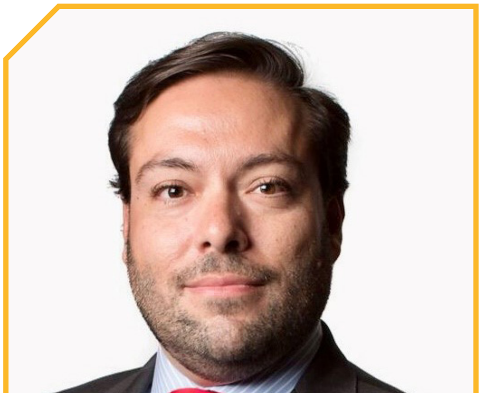
PARTICIPANTS:

Álvaro Ortega, CFO, **Vineyard Wind**



Alberto Garcia, Managing Director, Head of Energy, Project & Acquisition Finance North America, **Santander**

Martha Kammoun, Partner at **Bracewell**

Gary Durden, Managing Director at **CohnReznick Capital**

Philippe Delleville, Global Head of Project and Development Finance at **Siemens Gamesa**

Taryana Odayar, Editor, **Power Finance & Risk** (moderator)

Taryana Odayar, PFR: What have been some of the key developments in the US offshore wind market over this past year? From the financing side, the project development side, equipment supply chains, legal and regulatory?

Martha Kammoun, Bracewell: There are a couple of key developments I would focus on. One, just before the end of last year, the IRS issued Notice 2021-05 extending the continuity safe harbor for offshore wind to 10 years and citing various challenges typical to offshore wind, mainly around construction, permitting, the environment and transmission. Second, the Biden administration set an ambitious goal for offshore wind – 30 GW by 2030. We are also seeing similar goals at the state level, such as in New York for example. And finally, the Vineyard Wind financing. Vineyard Wind got their regulatory clearance and the closing of that financing is viewed by many industry players as a step forward.

Alberto Garcia, Santander: The change in the regulatory environment has been very material. Particularly having worked as an adviser on Vineyard Wind since 2018, we have gone through different stages, where we had to stop for a while and then come back. So that has been key, getting to where Vineyard Wind is today and having reached financial close and with an ongoing syndication process. We were very happy for Vineyard Wind and the terms that they were able to achieve and that we were fortunate enough to help them to get.

Odayar, PFR: Alvaro, anything to add?

Alvaro Ortega, Vineyard Wind: The three points that Martha and Alberto already mentioned. The first one being a higher and stable ITC, then our permit for Vineyard Wind I that has proven that it is possible to achieve a fully permitted commercial-scale wind farm in the US and reach financial close. This shows that an offshore wind farm can be not only permitted but also can be financed and supported by the financial community.

Philippe Delleville, Siemens Gamesa: From the OEM perspective, the name plate on the turbine continues to go up. If anything, it's been accelerating. I was presenting a project to a bank for 2022 with the 8 MW machine and now my colleagues at Siemens Gamesa sales are promoting a 14 MW machine. It does present obviously a lot of advantages in terms of the LCOE we're capable of delivering to companies such as Alvaro's. It starts to pose a challenge when it comes to the size of the equipment, obviously in transportation. Onshore is a little bit more affected than offshore by the growing size of the machines.

Gary Durden, CohnReznick Capital: From a financing perspective, the extension of the continuity safe harbor was absolutely critical and I think it's going to help ease a lot of other projects and give lenders and financing parties the confidence that the offshore wind sector is finally here and really taking off. And beyond that, it hasn't happened yet, but I'm really looking forward to what happens with the pending tax legislation.

Garcia, Santander: As Gary was saying, there are more changes coming and it seems that they should add to these tailwinds that the offshore industry is experiencing in the US. We expect changes that will be important in alleviating one of the big problems in general which is how the tax equity market is performing, particularly the ITC, where you can see that it's a constrained market, and the offshore wind farms coming to consume part of that ITC capacity will only exacerbate the problem. So, if the changes that are expected to happen can alleviate that, that would be important not only for offshore wind but also for the rest of the renewables market, particularly on the solar side.

Ortega, Vineyard Wind: The changes that Alberto is referring to are the potential direct-pay that we all expect by the end of this year and the prevailing wage requirements and local content requirements to claim tax credits.

Garcia, Santander: It's going to be critical and seems to be very similar to the cash grant program back in the day and that was something that the banks were able to get familiar with very quickly to be able to bridge those structures. So, we would anticipate something similar happening and unleashing a large amount of capital for these projects.

Odayar, PFR: With the domestic labor requirements and buy-American, build-American equipment rules, do you think that's going to pose more of a challenge for getting these types of projects across the finish line?

Delleville, Siemens: The way the bills are presented, I don't think it creates any immediate challenge because for the first few installations we're still going to have to import the equipment. We at Siemens Gamesa – and I'm pretty sure you have the same commitment from our competitors – we're committed to manufacture our offshore equipment locally down the road. So, we will have that local content. The bill's proposal is an add-on to what you already get if you have the local manufacturing, so it's a good incentive from that perspective.

But If I look at it from purely economic terms, I don't really like this type of incentive because it would have a tendency for the manufacturers to become a little lazy and maybe not be so price competitive. But as far as the dynamics that this administration is trying to create, I think we're on the right path.

Odayar, PFR: What do the cost curves look like as more and more of offshore wind equipment gets deployed?

Delleville, Siemens: Well, if you consider three dimensions, one being technology, I think the reduction of LCOE through technology is through bigger size turbines. I do see a point where you start to have some limitations on the vessels that are available and so forth. So, maybe a little less to draw from the technology dimension, but I want to highlight the operational dimension, and through digitalization we know the performance of our turbines really well. Mean time between visits to the turbines during the operation phases is really going down quite a lot. Availability numbers for every offshore project in Europe, at least within the Siemens Gamesa fleet, are really excellent.

I think where we may have a bit more challenge is with the supply chain. There's going to be a lot of growth coming, not only in the USA but also in Asia, in Europe, for offshore wind. I mentioned the size of certain components. We're seeing some specialty steel manufacturers getting challenged with the size of components we're asking them to manufacture. So, the short answer is, we're going to continue to improve LCOE, but maybe the mix of where the improvements will come from will change with technology evolution being a little prominent and with operational performance and supply chain being bigger drivers.

Odayar, PFR: We've already touched on this briefly, but of course the big announcement this year was the Vineyard Wind project getting clearance from BOEM and then reaching financial close. That project has been waiting in the wings for the last three years with tax equity and lenders on board. Alberto and Alvaro, can you take us behind the scenes and go over some of the challenges that you faced and how you overcame them?

Ortega, Vineyard Wind: The success for Vineyard Wind has not been easy. Now everyone looks at the company and says, 'Hey they got the permit, they got financing.' But it has definitely not been an easy path. I think that our success has been driven first, by being a joint venture with two really powerful sponsors in the offshore space bringing their experience to the US, but also using US knowledge about how to permit a project. And in the case of the financing, mixing a group of international banks – American, European and Asian banks.

In 2019, our project was put on hold, but we continued working on the permitting, re-negotiating with suppliers. We just stayed resilient despite not knowing what could happen with our permit and the additional environmental impact review that we were going through.

Then COVID hit and the financial markets changed. I remember Alberto and I having a lot of conversations during that time saying, 'OK, where do you see the market? What is happening?' The spreads went up and then they came back down. At the end, I think that we reached a very optimal deal for all parties. And at the same time, the ITC was changing. We were going from a 24% out to an 18% and we went up to 30%.

So, there was a lot of uncertainty for two years, but the financial community was behind Vineyard Wind at all times. All the banks were backing up our project. We still have tax equity to be to be committed but even without it, we reached financial close in September of this year, the financial community has given Vineyard Wind I strong support, and we will keep working with potential tax equity investors now.

Garcia, Santander: It's been a process full of learnings, because it's a first in many ways. The regulatory aspects on all the permitting, all the different issues that were associated with the administration, that's been a big challenge and has made us change course over this period several times, right up until the end, until we saw a clear line of sight to get to financial close. It was already a challenge with some of the peculiar rules that the US has, like the Jones Act. It adds up to the logistics issues for building a very complex asset, but on top of an industry that is not mature yet in the US. So, you need to bring a lot of materials from Europe already, and that combined with the Jones Act is a challenge for the project company to build the asset.

Vineyard Wind has very experienced people at the company and had developed a plan that has convinced the financial community that it can be achieved in an efficient way. But it has certainly been something that has been looked at with environmental permitting matters, some threatening litigation that could happen in these type of projects, and particularly because of the environmental aspects. And you have the supply chain issues that Philippe was mentioning. That's something that has been looked at very much in detail by the banks as well. You have insurance, for instance, in these types of projects where you have a lot of equipment out in the sea, in in a country that suffers from hurricanes. So that's something that has been looked at and has been extensively diligenced and has been overcome, and I think it's going to be more critical the moment that these projects start going down the East Coast.

One other factor that I will mention as being key for success, and hopefully one of the things that we brought to the table is, you need to mix offshore experience with experience with the US renewables structures, in particular tax equity-driven structures. We were able to combine both and help the sponsor from the advisory side. But that's also something that was important in all the financing parties that were involved. Because you have parties very experienced in the US dealing with tax equity, but they may be regional banks that are not used to doing offshore in Europe. Then you have a lot of players that are very well versed in offshore in Europe, but they never come to the US renewables market, so mixing our newcomers in different aspects of the transaction was also a challenge at the beginning and is a challenge now, through the syndication process that our institution is involved in as an agent. There are a lot of firsts for many involved in this project.

Odayar, PFR: Over the past year, the Biden administration has been rolling out some very encouraging policies for offshore wind. How are potential investors now thinking about these types of projects – are they still approaching them with caution? What's your assessment of the appetite for these types of deals?

Kammoun, Bracewell: From our seat, there is increased interest. We are being contacted by a lot of developers and operators who are looking to get into this space or wondering whether there are some opportunities to partner up. So, there seems to be a positive reaction to what people have been seeing from the administration.

As Alvaro mentioned, these are very capital-intensive projects, so the main players are not going to be smaller entities. They're usually big-oil-turned-energy-majors who either partner up with a large private equity fund, or form joint ventures, or both, and they are usually able to use their balance sheet to support the development phase, and that is helpful because the permitting period for offshore wind is longer.

In terms of financing, can I actually ask Alberto and Alavaro a couple of questions on Vineyard?

Odayar, PFR: Yes, now's your chance!

Kammoun, Bracewell: Alvaro, did you have to provide credit support for this financing or was it on a full non-recourse basis?

Ortega, Vineyard: No, it is a full non-recourse project, but obviously our capital stack right now is made out of the debt that we raised plus equity commitments from the sponsors.

Kammoun, Bracewell: And the equity has to be fully funded before the debt is available?

Ortega, Vineyard: Everything happened at the same time, so the equity commitments happened at the same time as the debt was raised and tax equity has not funded yet, but once tax equity funds, that will be part of the capital stack and the equity commitments from the sponsors will be reduced over time.

Garcia, Santander: What I can say is that it is a fully project finance transaction and it works the same way as a normal renewables deal in the US. If you have equity then you put it up first or you back it up, so it is back-ended, and there always has to be either a guarantee or an LC for equity that is not contributing. So, from that perspective I would say that it's a conventional transaction. It is just extremely large for what the renewables market is used to, and that obviously as you were saying, it affects the type of sponsors that can play in this space right now.

We've started to see more final pure financial investors interested in this space and I'm not sure if that's going to be a trend or not, but we just tend to see a little more interest and there have been some announcements recently. But right now, it's typically larger energy companies, typically a European flavor.

Kammoun, Bracewell: How did you get comfortable not getting a commitment from tax equity? Is it a market view, or was the commitment too expensive? There seems to be some concerns about what fits into the project costs for purposes of the ITC. Has that been a concern?

Ortega, Vineyard: Not from my perspective as it is very unusual to see any tax equity committed so far in advance when we are going to be reaching COD at the end of 2023. So, I think that everyone understood and there's a high cost for that commitment for the project, but we needed to complete our financing from a project debt perspective to have a construction loan and begin construction.

The banks felt comfortable with closing now without having tax equity committed but being prepared for that tax equity to be committed next year.

Garcia, Santander: From the lenders' perspective, you have to have a fully funded business plan. You need to be able to build the project. That is achieved the way that the current capital structure works right now with

● PFR OFFSHORE WIND ROUNDTABLE 2021

the current financing and the tax equity commitments will need to be added to the structure. And as Alvaro was saying, we have done all the possible work that we could to prepare for that. Will there be a lot of work when that happens? I'm sure there will and that it will be not easy and that there will be a lot of discussions, but we would have prepared the structure as much as we could for that time.

Tax equity commitments will be very large for these type of projects and things are changing as we were discussing before in Washington, so maybe in a couple of months the situation could be completely different by then. So, we would need to have another roundtable, right?

Odayar, PFR: And hopefully we'll be able to host you in our New York offices rather than virtually! Gary, there's a lot that has been covered here. Anything to add in terms of where CohnReznick is seeing opportunities in the market, or client feedback?

Durden, CohnReznick: From a tax equity perspective, the market has for the last year-and-a-half been tighter than normal because of the economic recession caused by the COVID shutdowns. I'd say that this market constriction applied through most of 2020 and the first half of 2021, but we're now starting to see the tax equity market loosen back up and investors are really interested in deploying capital and looking at projects across renewable energy and with respect to offshore wind.

For the Vineyard Wind project, the hold on the permitting back in 2019 put a chill on the offshore wind market in general. So, seeing Vineyard Wind getting fully permitted, it was almost like a starting gun going off for offshore wind. It's giving investors the confidence that that the industry is moving forward.

Offshore wind in general is very attractive to financing counterparties. The project sponsors that we've seen to date are very large, well capitalized, and experienced, so very financeable sponsors. The projects themselves are very financeable with long-term contracts and utility offtakers. So, I think offshore wind is uniquely attractive to both tax equity investors and lenders compared to many onshore wind projects, because of some of those characteristics, and also because the large check sizes allow lenders and tax equity investors to deploy capital at scale with the same amount of due diligence that they're going to do on a 100 MW onshore project.

All of those things are attractive to financing parties and we're seeing a lot of interest from folks that we're talking to for this sector. It will garner a lot of attention and CohnReznick Capital expects to see new entrants coming into the tax equity market driven by ESG goals and mandates, plus attractive returns.

So, in the coming years, we expect to see more non-traditional tax equity investors enter the market that can help with some of the demand that we will be seeing for monetizing tax benefits from offshore wind as well as some of the other onshore wind developments such as the 45Q.

Odayar, PFR: And Philippe, are we also likely to see more involvement from the OEMs and EPC contractors on the cash equity side?

Delleville, Siemens: Siemens Gamesa is a turbine manufacturer first and foremost. Through **Siemens Bank,** we're able to offer equity positions to our customers and many of our customers have taken advantage of that offer. Having said that, I think there's a lot of new entrants in the market and appetite for equity investment is such that the OEMs investing in projects is not really needed. If you look at the oil majors coming into offshore wind, most of them don't have projects in development in the US now, but will have appetite to invest in projects like Vineyard Wind. There's going to be a lot of access to cash equity.

I also actually had a question or two for Alberto – don't you think that once we manage to reduce the inflated cost of capex on the offshore projects, that maybe there's a point where we can pivot from the ITC back to PTC for offshore wind projects?

Garcia, Santander: Maybe, yes. I think there was a moment in time where it was not clear which was better. I think right now, probably the ITC will be better for most. But it depends as well on where the rules are and what is the pricing of the different markets. So, I definitely see that as a possibility in the medium-term.

I'm basing that on the fact that a few years ago, when we were doing the Vineyard Wind analysis, at some point it was not clear which one would be the best one. So, I would not rule out that it could come back to that situation at some point.

Durden, CohnReznick: Assuming the market stays the same with respect to tax equity, if suddenly you have a PTC option, tax equity investors generally like the PTC better because it's spread out over more time, there's a better accounting income profile, so it could help them in that sense to get the supply to meet the demand.

Garcia, Santander: That's particularly true with the type of checks that are going to be needed in these type of projects as they're very, very large. So, these issues that we were referring and Gary was talking about is particularly excruciating with the ITC when you're writing, say, an $800 million check.

Kammoun, Bracewell: Generally, the direct-pay mechanism may have an impact on whether investors prefer the ITC or PTCs for

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their energy investments, because they might have to make an irrevocable election for either direct-pay or the tax credit. If so, the consequences of an irrevocable election are much greater for an ITC than for PTCs, where investors may be able to toggle between direct-pay and the PTCs from year to year.

Odayar, PFR: All these proposals are trying to make their way through Congress by the end of this year – do you think they will go through by year-end or get pushed into next year?

Ortega, Vineyard Wind: You never know. They always have the ability to close out before the last day of December or the day before Christmas. With Congress, you never know.

Odayar, PFR: Lots of suspense! Martha, at the start of the conversation, you brought up the BP and Equinor offshore wind partnership that Bracewell worked on earlier this year, and there have been other oil and gas companies like Chevron partnering with Ocergy and TotalEnergies partnering with Simply Blue Group to do floating offshore wind. Apart from the oil and gas majors, and also the IPPs that Philippe mentioned, who are some potential new entrants?

Kammoun, Bracewell: From our seat, potential new entrants may include operators of renewable energy assets. They have experience with tax equity and how it works in the US generally, the power markets expertise and the regulatory expertise and so they would have value-add if they are looking to get involved in this new space.

Garcia, Santander: We're seeing the same, but I will add that we are also seeing large infrastructure funds looking into the space with much more appetite in the near future than before. And I think they will look for experienced partners on the operations side and on the development and construction side.

These large infrastructure funds were not very active in this space a few years back. They left the development, the leases, to the energy companies there were more used to this, even oil and gas companies. But now we're starting to see more interest from them.

I can link that to the debt side as well. We have been looking into debt financings for Vineyard Wind and back in the day, we did an extensive sounding in the institutional market and what we found is that probably they will need these type of assets to be built in order to get exposure to it, particularly for the way that the construction is going to work in the US is going to be a little more complicated than in Europe and because of the level of maturity that the industry has in the US. I think that's probably going to push these first assets to get to COD, start operating, have a track record and then we will probably see interest from institutional investors and that will open up another financing market. That will also make things more interesting.

Odayar, PFR: Where do you see construction debt pricing? And where do you think long-term debt will price for US offshore wind projects?

Garcia, Santander: We've been talking to a lot of people, as you would imagine. In a conventional solar or wind project in the US, you tend to see that the price of the construction is driven more by duration, and then it tends to be cheaper than the long-term debt or the mini-perm debt that will come in operations.

That's something that we haven't seen in offshore yet, and I don't think we will see it for a little while because of the level of complexity of the construction and how it's recognized both by sponsors and also by financing parties.

In terms of the long-term financing, it's difficult to speculate. We have a sample size of one. But it seems that the cost of debt is driven by the demand and the liquidity from financing parties that want to be in a strategic sector within the renewables space in the US, rather than a reflection of our direct duration or risk.

The amount of liquidity that was available for Vineyard Wind to be financed was many times the amount of debt that was needed. And obviously there were different prices and different tenors, but still the amount of liquid was very, very high and I think that's been by far the most important driver of the price rather than considerations from the actual project.

Odayar, PFR: Since Vineyard Wind would be the first commercial-scale offshore wind farm in the US, how much did you look to European offshore wind financing models as a reference point?

Ortega, Vineyard Wind: We have been using Europe as a reference when it comes to the financing models. But also, the US is such a different market in so many ways that I think combining the experience is important. That's why, in our case, we hired Santander, which is one of the leaders in the project finance space. Santander approached our deal saying, 'Yes this is offshore and we bring expertise from our bank in Europe and the offshore experience in Europe, but can adapt it to the US market.'

Obviously in the US, offshore has not been before, other than Block Island, and that's much smaller-scale. But I think that the onshore renewables project finance market was so developed that Santander has been able to use it as a reference with the specifics of offshore based on what we have in Europe. So, I think it's been the right combination of both worlds.

Garcia, Santander: Certainly the experience in Europe has been important not only for financing parties to look at the project and get comfortable with it, but also as the base for Avangrid and CIP and Vineyard Wind to establish the project. From a financing perspective, because of the tax equity dependency in the structure, we have always looked at this more like a US renewables project that happened to be offshore, rather than an offshore wind project that happens to be in the US. So, it's been a little more similar to other renewables projects or will be once the whole capital stack is complete. But it was definitely financed from a US-centric perspective.

Ortega, Vineyard: I agree with Alberto. That's a very good point. A back-leverage structure is something that obviously doesn't exist in Europe, so that's why our reference in project finance had to be the US.

Odayar, PFR: Because of the sheer size of these projects and their capital-intensive nature, do you think that hybrid financing structures could be used like a mix of project bonds and bank debt?

Garcia, Santander: We evaluated that and we think that it could be very interesting because of the nature of the PPAs as Gary mentioned before – you have very good PPAs, very long-term PPAs typically with these types of assets.

When trying to find the institutional piece of the puzzle, it doesn't seem that it could be competitive right now with the current cost of financing that you find in the bank market versus mixing banks and institutional financing. The banks will be very competitive, but I think it would be difficult to find institutional investors that are comfortable with the asset class in the US today. I am sure that when Vineyard is built and we have an operating track record, the situation will change. But it would be difficult for institutional investors to commit today to support construction. We certainly tested this when we were looking at all the potential alternatives, but it was difficult to compete with the aggressiveness of the bank market today.

Durden, CohnReznick: Maybe the bond financing would be a good option between five and seven years, when the tax equity investment is approaching the flip date purchase option and the loan is approaching it's maturity date. It could be a good time to do one big refinancing to buy out the tax equity investor and refinance the back-leverage with some long-term bond debt.

Odayar, PFR: In terms of other projects coming through the pipeline, Philippe, I know that Siemens signed an order to supply turbines for the Revolution Wind and South Fork wind projects on the East Coast. What are the next projects that we might see coming online?

Delleville, Siemens: I think for the foreseeable future, it is still going to be the Northeast. We know there is a lot of work toward the South and obviously California, but we're talking horizons of between six and 10 years. For now, there's going to be plenty of work just here in the Northeast. But as for all of us here on the panel, what's going to keep us busy the next few years is going to be in the Northeast.

Odayar, PFR: There are also project financing opportunities arising adjacent to the offshore wind sector. Earlier this year, Avangrid submitted several proposals to the Department of Energy for green hydrogen production facilities that would be powered by offshore wind. Something to look out for, not in the near-term, but perhaps over time?

Delleville, Siemens: I think it will depend on the offtake for green hydrogen. If you asked the question today to pretty much anyone in the market, 'Do you want to do green hydrogen?', everyone says 'Yes.' But is there real offtake that exists today? Not in any kind of size where you would consider investing in a large facility.

Green hydrogen is still more expensive than general gray hydrogen, so we have some ways to go. But the good news is, everyone wants to do it. I think it's great that **Iberdrola** had that DoE proposal.

As far as how it's going to happen, as a technology company, we're experimenting with what we call 'renewable hydrogen upgrades,' so that would be more for onshore wind farms that are struggling a bit with revenues and are perhaps out of PTCs, so if you find the offtake then we have that technology ready to go now. I think what Avangrid was thinking of is maybe having an electrolyzer by a big substation that's being fed by a wind farm.

We work as a technology provider, so we're working on turbines where each turbine would have their own electrolyzer and then you connect them to a pipeline, and we believe there is a big play in the future for that type of technology. But again, we're talking four to five years before it becomes a recurring reality.

Odayar, PFR: Any final thoughts on the offshore wind market in the US in terms of future projects to look out for, where the financing opportunities are?

Kammoun, Bracewell: Going back to the beginning, the new administration has set a goal of 30 GW of offshore wind by 2030. There seems to be a lot of momentum and a large number of people working towards that goal, including at the Department of Energy, and also the Department of Transportation.

BOEM also just released their Offshore Wind Leasing Path Forward map and it looks ambitious with several auctions planned in the next few years. I think the time is now. There is actually concern among people thinking, 'Are we too late?' It's not too late yet, but I would say that it is primetime offshore wind.

Durden, CohnReznick: I would just say that the pending tax legislation could have a big impact on the renewable energy industry in general, but also the offshore wind industry. If direct-pay becomes an option, I don't think that third-party tax equity will go away, but I do think that many projects will choose to use direct-pay, which will free up more tax equity capacity. I think that offshore wind sponsors may be in the best position to receive attractive terms from tax equity investors, so the ITC may be the more optimal choice as opposed to direct-pay, so it's something to look out for.

Garcia, Santander: From the Santander perspective, we are big believers in offshore wind and we think that it's key in the energy transition. We have been very active in offshore in Europe, in Asia and now in the US we want to play within that market. It's strategic for our team and it's strategic for us globally as a franchise. So, we could not be more excited for the US and we're willing to play our part.

Delleville, Siemens: Well, I work for Siemens Gamesa which is a European company, and I'm based in Orlando and am a naturalized US citizen. So, I'm really looking forward to catching up with Europe in terms of offshore wind. 30 GW is a good objective and I think it's really exciting for all of us here.

Ortega, Vineyard: I agree with Philippe. The US has traditionally been behind on offshore wind. In our case, with Vineyard, we've proven that it is possible to permit and to finance a project. Now we are under construction. Things to look at are 30 GW by 2030 like others have mentioned, and a supply chain that is able to keep up with the industry in order to achieve that.

The new leases are also on the map. Like Martha mentioned, there's an ambitious plan from BOEM so we will have to keep up. And the financial community is supporting all the ESG commitments related to renewable energy. So, we have the right mix on the table, and we just have to keep up because it's a big target. ■

LATIN AMERICA MERGERS & ACQUISITIONS

MPC forays into Mexican renewables mart

«FROM PAGE 1 the facility from 15.8 MW (DC) to 90 MW, having already signed a right of first refusal agreement (ROFR) with BRV to do so. Construction on the expansion could start as soon as 2023.

"As an operational asset, this project provides the company with immediate cash flows while securing exclusive rights on the future project extension," said **Martin Vogt**, MPC's CEO.

The $40 million asset was financed in 2015 with a 20-year debt package provided by the **US Development Finance Corp**, the **Overseas Private Investment Corp**, and the **North American Development Bank**. NADB's tranche comprised an $18.5 million loan.

BRV brought the asset online in 2017, selling its output to two corporate offtakers through US dollar-denominated power purchase agreements. The offtakers are German cable manufacturer **Leoni Cable**, which has factories in Chihuahua, Durango, Sonora and Guanajuato, and **La Salle** educational network, which has sites in Chihuahua, Coahuila, Durango, Jalisco, Nuevo Leon, Sonora and Tamaulipas.

"This deal is another confirmation that we are on track to deliver on our project pipeline, implying 177 MW installed capacity and USD 40 million of asset-level revenue by the end of 2023," said Vogt.

MPC, which has almost 11 GW of installed wind and solar capacity globally, has been growing rapidly over the last year. It recently made its debut in the Dominican Republic by striking a deal with **Soventix Caribbean** to develop a solar park there, as previously reported (PFR, 9/9).

MPC is controlled by asset manager **MPC Capital**. ■

Argo to buy transmission biz in Brazil

Argo Energia Empreendimentos e Participacoes (Argo) has inked an agreement with **Rialma Administracao e Participacoes** in Brazil to buy a local transmission platform.

Argo has inked an agreement to buy a local transmission platform

Argo, which is co-owned by Colombia's **Grupo Energia Bogota** (GEB) and Spain's **Red Electrica**, plans to acquire Rialma's subsidiary, **Rialma Transmissora de Energia III**, noted the GEB on November 4.

The platform is developing roughly 200 miles (322 km) of transmission lines across the states of Piaui, Pernambuco and Ceara. Rialma III was awarded the contracts for the projects, known as Lot 30, in an auction organized by power regulator **Aneel** in April 2017.

The closing of the deal is subject to regulatory approvals from both Aneel and Brazil's **Administrative Council for Economic Defense** (CADE).

Argo has three other concessions awarded in different auctions in the states of Ceará, Maranhao, Minas Gerais, Piauí and Rondonia for about 907 miles (1,460 km) of transmission lines and 11 substations. ■

Petrobras closes hydro, gas-fired sale

Brazil's **Petrobras** has reached financial close on the sale of interests in a pair of hydro power plants and a gas-fired project to **Global Participacoes Energia** (GPE), making the latter the sole owner of the companies controlling the assets.

The oil firm has sold a 20% stake in hydro company **Termelétrica Potiguar** (TEP) and a 40% interest in thermal plant-owner **Companhia Energética Manauar** (CEM) to two subsidiaries of the buyer, namely **GFT Participacoes** and **GFM Participacoes**, respectively.

The sales and purchase agreement, first disclosed on July 29, closed on November 5.

Petrobras received R$155.6 million ($28.05 million) for the interests – R$79.4 million ($14.31 million) for the TEP stake and R$76.2 million ($13.74 million) for CEM.

GPE already owned an 80% majority interest in TEP, while TEP, in turn, owns 60% of CEM's shares. As a result of the deal with Petrobras, GPE has come to own a 100% interest in both firms.

TEP owns stakes in **Areia Energia** and **Agua Limpia Energia**, which operate two small-scale hydro facilities in Tocantins, with capacities of 11.4 MW and 14 MW each. CEM owns an 85.4 MW gas-fired thermal plant in the state of Amazonas. ■

Engie to debut in Colombian renewables mart

Engie Colombia, the local subsidiary of French developer **Engie**, has inked an agreement to acquire a 76 MW solar park in the country, marking its entrance into Colombia's renewable market.

German developer **Sowitec Operation** developed the Wimke solar facility, in La Guajira, which is the facility expected to exchange hands.

"This new project will allow us to secure our position in Colombia, continue to attend to our clients' needs without neglecting our commitment with decarbonization, and our contribution to the sustainability goals and the energy transition designed by the government," said Engie Colombia's CEO, **Camilo Uribe**.

Sowitec is present throughout Latin America, having recently sold an up to 400 MW solar park in Brazil to an undisclosed international power utility (PFR, 8/18). ■

LATIN AMERICA PROJECT FINANCE

GreenYellow finances energy efficiency asset

GreenYellow do Brasil, owned by French developer **GreenYellow**, has arranged a debt package to finance the development of more than 380 energy efficiency facilities in Brazil.

The sponsor issued R$160 million ($29.23 million) in debentures structured as a non-recourse financing. **Santander** and **Itaú BBA** arranged the 7-year deal.

Sustainable finance consultancy firm **SITAWI Finanças do Bem** provided an independent analysis on the issuance.

The project comprises energy performance installations in 383 stores of a retailer in Brazil, bundled under a single 10-year energy performance contract which kicked in in January of 2020.

The facilities make it possible to save 183 GWh of electricity per year, which translates to a 21.5% reduction in the energy bill of the stores, noted GreenYellow. ■

Enel seeks debt for Peruvian wind

Enel Green Power Peru has requested a debt package from a development finance institution to support the expansion of a 132 MW wind farm in the country.

IDB Invest is working with the sponsor on an $85 million loan with an up to 15-year tenor to fund the expansion of the Wayra project, according to IDB Invest filings dated November 5.

Located in the province of Nazca, Ica, the Wayra I project started commercial operations in May 2018. Its expansion is expected to be completed by 2023.

Peru's **Ministry of Energy and Mines** granted the concession for Enel to expand the asset in December 2020. At the time, the expansion was expected to be roughly 108 MW in size (PFR, 12/24/20).

The DFI will review and approve the financing on December 7.

IDB Invest is working on other debt packages simultaneously, including for a solar project in the Bahamas, for distributed solar portfolios in both Jamaica and Mexico, and for a pair of small-scale solar-plus-storage assets in Guyana, as previously reported (PFR, 10/19, 10/18, 10/26, 11/4). ■

PEOPLE & FIRMS

Talen Energy appoints CFO

Talen Energy has elevated **John Chesser** to the role of CFO after the incumbent, **Alex Hernandez**, was promoted to CEO.


John Chesser

Chesser has been the company's treasurer, vice president of finance and head of M&A for the last two years. He joined in 2017 as VP of finance and supply chain and was later made divisional CFO of Talen Northeast, Montana and Texas.

The company's previous CFO, Hernandez, was appointed CEO at the start of this month, replacing **Ralph Alexander** who moved into the role of executive chairman of the board (PFR, 11/3).

"Since Talen's take-private in 2016, John [Chesser] and I have worked closely together on a variety of initiatives including the company's operational turnaround and its strategic repositioning for long-term value creation," said Hernandez. "His vast experience in finance and M&A and proven track record at Talen will help us continue to advance the Company's transformation and deliver on the significant opportunities we have to grow our enterprise value."

During his time at Talen, Chesser has played a key role in some of the company's major transactions, including as CFO of Talen's Nautilus Cryptomine joint venture with **TeraWulf** and the company's strategic partnership with **Orion Energy Partners** (PFR, 9/24).

Before joining Talen, he had held roles as treasurer and VP of finance at **TerraForm Power**, VP of finance at **iQor**, a Florida-based business process outsourcing company, and had also worked as a senior treasury analyst, capital markets and autofinance at **General Motors**.

He began his career in 1999 at **PwC**, rising to the title of tax director in 2007. ■

Citi's Stuart Murray resurfaces in new role

Stuart Murray, the head of project and infrastructure finance in the Americas at **Citi**, is leaving the bank to head up an infrastructure debt team at an asset manager.

Murray is set to join **BlackRock** as a managing director and head of North America infrastructure debt in New York in the new year, according to an internal memo obtained by *PFR*.

He will lead the team's origination efforts and investment strategy across North America, reporting to **Jeetu Balchandani**, according to the memo dated November 2. Balchandani leads BlackRock's North America operations in addition to his role as global head of infrastructure debt.

Murray, who has spent the last 17 years at Citi, most recently as a managing director heading the bank's project and infrastructure finance practice, began preparing to leave the bank last month, as previously reported (PFR, 10/21).

He joined Citi in 2004 from **AES Corp**, where he was a director of corporate finance for two years in Washington, DC. He began his career at **JP Morgan** in 1997, where he worked as a vice president, leveraged finance. ■


Stuart Murray

PEOPLE & FIRMS

Clean Capital CEO departs for Vault Energy

Vault Energy Utility, a utility-scale solar developer based out of Washington state, has recruited the CEO of renewables investment and consulting firm **Clean Capital Partners**.

Tiffany Elliott, the founder and CEO of Clean Capital, joined Vault Energy in October as a partner at the company.

In her new role, she will lead the Vault's project acquisitions and capital sourcing activities, including project evaluation and financing, corporate financing and project monetization.

A long-time power sector originator, Elliott has worked at **Recurrent Energy**, **Amerex Energy Services**, **Citi**, **Calpine Energy Services** and **Deloitte** since beginning her career 20 years ago.

She established and worked at Clean Capital between 2015 and 2016, before joining **Cypress Creek Renewables** as a vice president in its US project sales team. This was followed by a short stint as an investment director at **John Laing** at the start of 2019, before returning to Clean Capital in mid-2019 (PFR, 4/23/19). ■

Resi solar shop hires ex-Vivint exec duo to C-suite team

Vivint Solar's former chief commercial officer and head of capital markets, **Thomas Plagemann**, along with the company's former chief legal officer **Dan Black**, have joined a Louisiana-based solar developer.

Plagemann joins New Orleans-headquartered **PosiGen** as the company's CFO, while Black will work as the company's chief legal officer.

In his new role, Plagemann will oversee PosiGen's capital raising, accounting, policy and regulatory work, as well as markets and products. The executive has almost 30 years of experience building energy and infrastructure businesses and originating and executing related investments, financings and M&A.

He joined Vivint in 2013 and worked at the company until October 2020, when it was acquired by **Sunrun** in a $3.2 billion all-stock deal, as previously reported (PFR, 10/8/20).

Since leaving Vivint, Plagemann has worked as president of California-based investment bank **Grand Avenue Capital**. Before Vivint, Plagemann had been managing director and head of energy in **Santander**'s corporate and investment banking group, advising the Spanish firm's US clients on everything from "well-head to wall socket," according to his **LinkedIn** profile.

He started his investment banking career at **Deutsche Bank** in 1991, where he worked for over a decade, rising to the title of director in the bank›s Americas power project finance team. In 2002, he joined **GE Energy Financial Services** as an MD originating domestic energy investments, and in 2004 took up the same position within **AIG**'s energy group.

Over the next three years, Plagemann would work at developers **Infigen Energy** and **First Solar** as head of US M&A and vice president, project finance, respectively, before landing the top job at Santander's energy group in 2012.

The second hire, Black, will be responsible for all legal affairs for PosiGen, including compliance and enterprise risk, corporate governance, and regulatory matters.

The lawyer worked at Vivint for eight years, between 2012 and 2020. He began his career in 2007 as an associate at **Latham & Watkins** before moving on to **Durham Jones and Pinegar** in 2011.

Since its inception in 2011, PosiGen has served over 17,000 customers in the low-to-moderate (LMI) income bracket. Its lease program covers the solar installation and maintenance costs and also provides energy efficiency upgrades with no minimum credit score or minimum income requirement. ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

MERGERS & ACQUISITIONS

GREENBACKER SNAGS PINE STATE SOLAR PAIR

Greenbacker Renewable Energy has acquired a pair of distributed generation solar projects in Maine, the 3.8 MW (DC) Athens Ridge and 2.8 MW (DC) Mars Hill, from **ReneSola Power**. Construction will begin in the first quarter of next year.

LATIN AMERICA

IDB PREPS DEAL FOR MEXICAN DG SOLAR

IDB Invest is working on a debt package to finance a small-scale distributed generation solar portfolio in Mexico. The sponsor, **Fortaleza Energy**, has requested a $14.74 million loan from the bank to fund the development of solar parks, each with a capacity of 499 kW (DC), in the states of Jalisco, Campeche, Guanajuato, Nuevo León and Baja California Sur.

BRAZILIAN SPONSOR TEAMS UP WITH POWER TRADER TO DEVELOP GREEN HYDROGEN PLANTS

Brazilian developer **Casa dos Ventos Energias Renovaveis** has inked an agreement with power trader **Grupo Comerc Energia** to develop and invest in green hydrogen production facilities in Brazil. The pair plans to invest about $4 billion in green hydrogen plants over the next 10 years, with the hydrogen produced to be utilized for both local consumption and export to foreign markets.

PEOPLE & FIRMS

METLIFE APPOINTS US INFRA HEAD

MetLife Investment Management has promoted **Mansi Patel** as head of US infrastructure and project finance in its New Jersey office. Patel had been vice president of infrastructure and project finance at the insurance company, which she joined in 2006.

STROOCK ADDS PAIR TO ENERGY TEAM

Law firm **Stroock & Stroock & Lavan** has added a pair of partners to expand the firm's commodities, derivatives and energy team. **John Pierce** and **Jason Kuzma** both join the firm from **Perkins Coie**, where they worked as partners. Pierce and Kuzma will focus on the structuring, financing and development of energy and infrastructure projects globally, working out of Stroock's New York office.

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