Gov. Evers: Tours UW Nuclear Reactor, celebrates new partnership to explore nuclear energy and bolster Wisconsin's clean energy future

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Visit comes as governor announced his administration's new dynamic research partnership with UW-Madison's Department of Nuclear Engineering and Engineering Physics

MADISON — Gov. Tony Evers last week toured the University of Wisconsin Nuclear Reactor (UWNR) at the University of Wisconsin (UW)-Madison, where he celebrated a new dynamic research partnership agreement between the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin (PSC) and UW-Madison's Department of Nuclear Engineering and Engineering Physics, which he announced during his 2026 State of the State address. Under the new partnership, UW-Madison's Department of Nuclear Engineering and Engineering Physics will undertake a study exploring nuclear energy opportunities in Wisconsin, helping to further advance the goals of Wisconsin's Clean Energy Plan and ensure that all electricity consumed in the state is 100 percent carbon-free by 2050.

"Nuclear energy is the largest source of clean power in our country. It's a safe, reliable, carbon-free option to power our homes and businesses, yet in Wisconsin, it's seriously underutilized," said Gov. Evers. "Wisconsin is ready to be a leader in building a clean energy future, and this partnership will be a game-changer for our state. After seeing firsthand the research taking place around nuclear fission and fusion at UW-Madison, I know that the future of nuclear energy in our state is in

capable hands."

"I want to thank Gov. Evers for his clear vision and strong leadership on this issue, and the legislature for their support," said PSC Chairperson Summer Strand. "Our state is uniquely positioned to become a global leader in nuclear and fusion energy, and I am optimistic the siting study will demonstrate this potential and provide a path to achieving it. We are grateful for the opportunity to partner with UW-Madison, whose participation truly embodies the Wisconsin Idea in action. Utilizing the university's vast nuclear energy expertise and research and tapping into its dynamic stakeholder network will greatly benefit both the study and the state as a whole."

During the visit, the governor toured the UWNR and heard from students and faculty about the research surrounding nuclear fission and fusion, particularly about the Pegasus-III experiment. The UWNR, which has operated as a teaching and research reactor since 1961, is about 1/3000th the size of a commercial reactor and therefore does not produce electricity because it is a teaching and research reactor. Researchers at UW-Madison are working to increase understanding of and capacity for nuclear energy, from developing materials that are able to withstand the harsh environment of nuclear reactors to building experimental-scale reactors and more. With this critical research and new partnership with the state, UW-Madison's Department of Nuclear Engineering and Engineering Physics is working to develop the information and tools needed to expand the operating capacities of current nuclear power plants in the United States while also laying the groundwork for next-generation nuclear reactor designs.

STUDYING THE FUTURE OF NUCLEAR ENERGY IN WISCONSIN

Nuclear energy generates safe, reliable, carbon-free electricity to power Wisconsin homes and businesses and remains an important part of Wisconsin's existing energy infrastructure, accounting for 16 percent of the state's energy generation, according to the PSC's most recent Strategic Energy Assessment. Currently, Point Beach Nuclear Plant in Two Rivers is the only nuclear power plant in operation in Wisconsin.

In recent years, advancements in nuclear technology and increased demand for energy have led to renewed interest in nuclear energy nationwide, which is why, in July 2025, Gov. Evers signed 2025 Wisconsin Act 12 to launch a nuclear power siting study, supported by $2 million in funding provided by the 2025-27 Biennial Budget,

that will bolster knowledge and understanding of how Wisconsin's nuclear energy potential can help meet the state's growing need for carbon-free energy.

The overarching goal of the siting study is to provide foundational information and a thorough evaluation of potential nuclear energy development opportunities in Wisconsin to help guide future actions. The study scope encompasses traditional nuclear power, small modular reactors, and advanced technologies, including fusion energy. It will identify various siting opportunities and analyze site characteristics, suitability, regulatory, and permitting requirements, as well as impacts to local economies and the power grid. Information from industry experts at the Oak Ridge and Pacific Northwest National Laboratories will be incorporated into the study, as will feedback from recent experiences with the construction and operation of nuclear projects. Act 12 requires the study be completed by the start of 2027.

The siting study will be conducted by PSC and the UW-Madison Department of Nuclear Engineering and Engineering Physics, as UW-Madison has one of the nation's few remaining teaching and research nuclear reactors and is a national leader in fusion energy research.

In addition to the nuclear power siting study, in July, Gov. Evers also signed 2025 Wisconsin Act 11, creating a Nuclear Power Summit Board designed to help advance nuclear power and fusion technology and development, and to showcase Wisconsin's leadership and innovation in the nuclear industry through the hosting of a nuclear power summit in the city of Madison.

ADDITIONAL EFFORTS TO BUILD A CLEAN ENERGY FUTURE IN WISCONSIN

In addition to the new partnership between the PSC and UW-Madison, Gov. Evers also announced in his 2026 State of the State address that the state is taking the first steps to continue efforts to purchase renewable energy certificates (RECs) from Wisconsin utilities and renewable energy projects for the next two decades, continuing the state's long-standing practice of leading by example and ensuring Wisconsinites have access to in-state renewable electricity and building on his administration's efforts to help bolster clean energy in Wisconsin. The state plans to purchase approximately 225,000 RECs every year for the next 20 years, representing 225,000 megawatt-hours (MWh) of renewable electricity each year, which is enough energy to power more than half a million Wisconsin homes.

Since 2007, the state of Wisconsin has purchased over 1.8 million RECs from Wisconsin utilities. Each REC represents the equivalent of about one MWh of

renewable energy. By purchasing RECs, state agencies support Wisconsin-based jobs, local economic development, clean air, and clean water, while offsetting their net greenhouse gas emissions. The RFP seeks proposals capable of delivering RECs starting in January 2031 for a 20-year term, helping position state agencies and universities to achieve Wisconsin's goal of 100-percent carbon-free electricity by 2050.

In accordance with Gov. Evers' Executive Order #38, which created the Office of Sustainability and Clean Energy (OSCE), the state's first-ever Clean Energy Plan was released in 2022, providing a roadmap for the state to lower energy bills and prices at the pump for Wisconsin families, promote energy independence by reducing reliance on out-of-state energy sources, create an estimated more than 40,000 jobs by 2030, and invest in job training and apprenticeship programs in innovative industries and technologies. The order also established the state's goal to reach 100 percent carbon-free electricity consumed in Wisconsin by 2050 and charged the OSCE with ensuring the state is fulfilling the carbon reduction goals of the Paris Agreement. Consistent with the values outlined in Wisconsin's Clean Energy Plan, this RFP prioritizes renewable energy projects that:

- Reduce the disproportionate impacts of energy generation and use on low-income and at-risk communities:
- Maximize the creation of, and opportunities for, clean energy jobs, economic development, and stimulus; and
- Retain energy investment dollars in Wisconsin.

Through this procurement, the state is continuing its commitment to advancing a cleaner energy future and strengthening Wisconsin's economy and communities. Interested bidders should register on Wisconsin's e-Supplier Portal at https://esupplier.wi.gov/. The solicitation can be found under solicitation reference number AD271160.

EFFORTS OF EVERS ADMINISTRATION TO ADVANCE CLIMATE RESILIENCE AND CLEAN ENERGY

- In February 2019, Gov. Evers joined the U.S. Climate Alliance, a bipartisan coalition of 24 governors representing nearly 57 percent of the U.S. economy and 54 percent of the U.S. population. The U.S. Climate Alliance is committed to securing a net-zero future in America by advancing state-led, high-impact climate action solutions and collectively achieving the goals of the 2015 Paris

Agreement to combat climate change.

- In August 2019, Gov. Evers signed Executive Order #38, creating the OSCE, charged with developing the Wisconsin Clean Energy Plan to promote the development and use of clean and renewable energy across the state, advance innovative sustainability solutions that improve the state's economy and environment, and diversify the resources used to meet the state's energy needs. The order also established the state's goal to reach 100 percent carbon-free electricity by 2050 and charged the OSCE with ensuring the state is fulfilling the carbon reduction goals of the Paris Agreement.
- In October 2019, the governor signed Executive Order #52, creating the Governor's Task Force on Climate Change, which advised and assisted the governor in developing strategies to mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change for the benefit of all Wisconsin communities.
- In April 2021, Gov. Evers signed Executive Order #112, joining the global Trillion Trees Pledge and committing to plant 75 million new trees in rural and urban areas and conserve 125,000 acres of forest in Wisconsin by the end of 2030 in collaboration with public, private, and non-governmental partners.
- On April 19, 2022, Gov. Evers announced the state's first-ever Clean Energy Plan, which outlines strategies to lower energy bills for families, reduce reliance on out-of-state energy sources, invest in job and apprenticeship training, and create more than 40,000 jobs by 2030.
- In April 2022, Gov. Evers signed Executive Order #161 to create the Office of Environmental Justice at DOA, as recommended by the Governor's Task Force on Climate Change and again by the OSCE in the Clean Energy Plan. The Office of Environmental Justice works in collaboration with the OSCE to facilitate collaboration across state agencies to provide strategies to promote environmentally just policies and prevent disparate outcomes in communities across the state while engaging with farmers and rural communities, communities of color, Tribal Nations, state and local partners, and low-income populations, among other key stakeholders.
- In April 2023, Gov. Evers signed Executive Order #195, which created the Green Ribbon Commission on Clean Energy and Environmental Innovation to advise on creating the state's first-ever Green Innovation Fund. Both the Governor's Task Force on Climate Change and the state's Clean Energy Plan recommend that the state of Wisconsin evaluate options for a "green bank" to support the development and deployment of next-generation environmental and clean energy technologies and projects in Wisconsin, helping to create

jobs and reduce energy costs for families and businesses.

- In April 2024, on Earth Day, the governor announced that the state is increasing its Trillion Trees Pledge planting goal from 75 million trees by the end of 2030 to planting 100 million trees by the end of 2030. Wisconsin has planted more than 42 million trees since Gov. Evers signed Executive Order #112, bringing the state more than 40 percent towards its goal.
- In May 2024, Gov. Evers announced he would be joining the U.S. Climate Alliance's executive committee, which oversees the strategic direction of the bipartisan coalition of governors. Gov. Evers will be the first governor from the Midwest to join the Alliance leadership since its inception.
- In August 2024, Gov. Evers announced the launch of the Home Efficiency Rebate (HOMES) Program. Wisconsin is the first state in the nation to launch the HOMES Program to deliver rebates to households undertaking whole-home, energy-saving improvements under the new program.
- In September 2024, Gov. Evers highlighted the launch of the U.S. Climate Alliance Governors' Climate-Ready Workforce Initiative, which aims to expand the clean energy workforce nationwide and support job and apprenticeship training in innovative industries and technologies by training 1 million new registered apprentices by 2035 across the Alliance's member states and territories.
- In January 2025, Gov. Evers celebrated the opening of the first EV charging stations in Wisconsin funded by the National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (NEVI) Formula Program.
- Following federal threats to freeze or delay funding for critical infrastructure projects across Wisconsin, in May, Gov. Evers announced Wisconsin joined a multi-state lawsuit against the U.S. Department of Transportation challenging the Trump Administration's efforts to block NEVI Formula Program funding the state expected to receive to support EV infrastructure projects across the state. Thanks to these efforts, in June, a federal judge blocked the Trump Administration's action, and now, 15 already-approved EV infrastructure projects for private entities, utilizing approximately $7 million in NEVI funding, that were initially blocked are now able to move forward in Wisconsin. However, federal threats to the future of this impactful program remain.
- In May 2025, Gov. Evers was appointed co-chair of the U.S. Climate Alliance, along with California Gov. Newsom.
- In July 2025, Gov. Evers signed two bills to advance the state's nuclear energy innovation by requiring a study of nuclear energy opportunities and potential nuclear power and fusion sites in Wisconsin and creating a Nuclear Power

Summit Board designed to help advance nuclear power and fusion technology and development and showcase Wisconsin's leadership in the nuclear industry.

- A few days later, Gov. Evers signed the 2025-27 Biennial Budget, which lowers out-of-pocket energy and utility costs for Wisconsinites by eliminating the sales tax on household energy bills, saving Wisconsin households over $178 million over the next two years.
- The 2025-27 Biennial Budget signed by Gov. Evers also directs $2 million to conduct the nuclear feasibility study, which will help assess the potential of future nuclear generation facilities in the state.
- In August 2025, Gov. Tony Evers celebrated the one-year anniversary of the launch of the Home Energy Rebate Programs in Wisconsin, which have helped residents statewide reduce energy use and lower utility bills. Wisconsin was the very first state to make energy efficiency upgrades available under the Home Efficiency Rebate (HOMES) Program and remains one of only five states in the country to offer both the HOMES Program and the Home Electrification and Appliance Rebate (HEAR) Program. Since launching the programs, over $2 million in rebates have been paid to Wisconsin households to install popular energy-efficient measures, including air sealing, insulation, heat pumps for cooling and heating, and electric panels and wiring.
- In September 2025, Gov. Evers announced that Wisconsin joined the U.S. Climate Alliance's Affordable Clean Cars Coalition, joining 12 states focused on helping America transition to cleaner and more affordable cars, supporting U.S. automotive manufacturers and workers, and improving air quality for everyone.

An online version of this release is available here.