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New Energy For America Might Be In Israel: Top US Energy Leaders In Israel Now

Feb 17th, 2009 by [Green Prophet](#)



The Obama administration has committed to supporting renewable energy sources and to mitigate domestic and international climate initiatives.

At the dawn of Obama's new presidency, influential energy leaders from America visit Israel to expand their worldviews to learn about the country's unique technological opportunities.

Among the American guests in Israel now are top energy officials from the U.S. Government, the business world and the not-for-profit sector.

While in Israel, the guests will meet similar leaders to share information, such as how to take action towards a post-fossil fuel economy.

Hosted by [Project Interchange](#), an Institute of the American Jewish Committee, the hand-picked group of 11 American specialists, include Adam Zellner, the Former Director of Policy of New Jersey; Gregory Fox, the Director of Business Development at Constellation Energy; Geoffrey Brown, the Legislative Director of Pew Charitable Trusts; Seth Portner, the energy representative from the office of the Governor of Colorado, as well as Tamra Spielvogel, the national Energy Director from the National Conference of State Legislators, and several more.

A Look-See At High-Priority Field

"Timed to coincide with the [Eilat Energy Conference](#), this special Project Interchange seminar gives our guests an opportunity to interface with those attending the conference on possibilities for future collaboration," says Ida Singelenberg, the U.S. program director for Project Interchange. "This group is coming for a look-see at Israel at the dawn of a new U.S. administration that has established energy and sustainability as a high priority. Some are already attracted to the clean technology opportunities in Israel; this seminar might take their involvement to another level."

The 6-day visit of these policy makers, business leaders, and NGO directors will take advantage of one of the most important energy events of the year, the Eilat-Eilat International Renewable Energy Conference, from February 17-19. During the conference, a \$20 million U.S.-Israeli Energy Cooperation Act, passed two years ago by the U.S. Congress, will be launched, and U.S. guest Zellner, is expected to deliver a talk to Israel and nations around the world, eager to save the environment and cut dependence on foreign oil.

Known for its advances in solar energy, wind, and creative renewable energy technologies, an Israeli company BrightSource is now building the world's largest solar energy project in California; Israeli companies such as Ormat are already working in America to create clean energy from geothermal sources, with more cooperation in store.

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In Israel, the visitors will meet with a number of policy makers, and business entrepreneurs, as well as tour the new Environmental Education Park at Kibbutz Lotan, and learn about the Dead Sea-Red Sea Peace Canal, at the Dead Sea. Project Interchange will also introduce the American guests to representatives from Better Place, the electric car initiative, now signed on in the States of California and Hawaii.

Project Interchange brings an average of 24 delegations of "influentials" to Israel annually from around the world. Muslim leaders from France came to a seminar in Israel in December, meeting Israeli President Shimon Peres and the President of the Palestinian Authority, Mahmoud Abbas. In November, women executives from the U.S. construction business enjoyed a weeklong seminar. Before that, European environment leaders were in Israel. Each group of guests enjoy tailor-made seminars, adapted to their interests and expertise.

"As with all of our seminars," says Singelenberg, "our goal is to educate people about Israel in all of its complexities. For this group in particular we want them to see developments in energy, meet with business people and open a dialogue on best practices."

Biographies of American energy leaders in Israel

Glen Andersen

Program Principal, National Conference of State Legislatures

Glen Andersen is an energy policy specialist at the National Conference of State Legislature's Energy Project. He conducts legislative outreach on issues such as climate change, energy efficiency and renewable energy. Glen has worked for over 8 years assisting state legislators in their efforts to address energy and environmental concerns, providing them policy information and analysis and facilitating communication between legislators, regulators, industry and advocates. Mr. Andersen has testified on a variety of topics before legislative committees and authored many publications on environmental and energy policy.

Mr. Andersen received his Master's of Science degree in Environmental Health from the University of Michigan's School of Public Health, and his bachelor's degree in International Relations from the University of Minnesota.

Geoffrey Brown

Senior Government Affairs Officer/Legislative Director, Pew Charitable Trusts

Geoffrey Brown is currently the Senior Government Affairs Officer/Legislative Director for the Pew Environment Group of the Pew Charitable Trusts. Pew, a public charity, has a significant presence in a number of fields, including commitments to work to change public policy and actions around global warming, conserving ocean life, and protecting wilderness.

Geoffrey spent ten years working in the U.S. Senate on a range of environment, energy, and economic development issues. In the Senate, he served as Senior Policy Advisor on the Environment and Public Works Committee and as Senior Legislative Assistant for former Senator Jim Jeffords (I-VT). He also served as the Legislative Director of the Northeast-Midwest Senate Coalition for former Senators Daniel Patrick Moynihan (D-NY) and Jeffords. Before his employment in the Senate, Geoffrey worked in the Air office of the Environmental Protection Agency and as a reporter in New York and Washington, D.C. for The Journal of Commerce newspaper.

He earned a Master of Science in Resource Policy and Behavior from the University of Michigan's School of Natural Resources and a Bachelor of Arts in American Studies from Yale University. He is married, has two children, and can see the U.S. Capitol dome from his bathtub.

Mark Burger

President, Illinois Solar Energy Association

Mark Burger is a Principal at Kestrel Development Company, a firm providing consulting services on renewable energy policy and market development. Mr. Burger has more than 20 years of experience in renewable energy and building energy applications.

Previously, he was a sales and marketing manager for Spire Solar, a firm manufacturing solar electric panels and designing systems. Prior to that, Mr. Burger worked for the US Department of Energy, last heading the Strategic Assistance Team for the Chicago Regional Office. He is also the President of the Illinois Solar Energy Association, a Life Member of the American Solar Energy Society, a member of the Illinois Governor Advisory Council on Global Climate Change, and the Illinois Wind Working Group.

The mission of the Illinois Solar Energy Association is to provide energy education to the Illinois public and promote the widespread application of solar, renewable and sustainable energy methods and technologies. A primary goal of the association is to educate their members on clean energy issues and support them in adopting clean energy use in their homes and businesses.

Craig Cox

Executive Director, Interwest Energy Alliance

Craig Cox is executive director of the Interwest Energy Alliance, a trade association representing the nation's leading companies in the renewable energy industry, bringing them together with non-governmental organizations in the West (Arizona, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah and Wyoming). Interwest performs outreach and representational activities and works to build collaborative, consensus-based approaches to new project development and transmission siting throughout the West.



Featured Podcast



Craig has been active in renewable energy public policy development since working for Congressman Dan Schaefer in Washington, where he formed the U.S. House Renewables and Energy Efficiency Caucus on Schaefer's behalf in 1996.

Craig participates in Western Governors' Association energy task forces, and in other governmental and non-governmental energy policy and advocacy organizations throughout the West. In 2005, he received the American Wind Energy Association's "Wind Advocacy Award" and in 2008 received the first annual "Governor's Excellence in Renewable Energy" individual award from Colorado Governor Bill Ritter.

Greg Fox

Director - Business Development, Constellation Energy

Greg is a Director of Business Development for Constellation Energy Projects & Services Group, Inc. which develops energy conservation and renewable energy projects. He has been in the energy field with Constellation Energy for 20 years. During that time he has worked on developing utility conservation and load management programs, was instrumental in the development of a district cooling system that utilizes ice thermal storage, developed numerous energy conservation projects, was key in the effort to securing the largest direct wind energy purchase by a local government entity and was the lead developer in the first solar project for the State of Maryland Government utilizing a power purchase agreement. He previously served on the Maryland's State Task Force for Facility Energy Management.

Greg is also a policy maker as he has served as a councilman in Howard County since 2006. Prior to that, he served Howard County on its Public Works Board for five years, the final one as Vice Chairman.

He received his bachelor degree in mechanical engineering from Georgia Tech and his MBA Fellows from Loyola College of Maryland's Executive Program where he was inducted into the Beta Gamma Sigma Honor Society for business students. Greg is a graduate of Leadership Howard County's Class of 2006. Greg and his wife, Ilene, have been married for 18 years and have two children, Delaney (12) and Dylan (10).

Christopher Gadomski

CEO, SMI Direct

Chris Gadomski joined the faculty at New York University's Center For Global Affairs in September 2005 where he teaches graduate courses on Energy and the Environment, and the Economics and Financing of Energy. Current research interests include financial, social, technological and institutional obstacles to renewable and nuclear energy technology development.

As a business development consultant in the energy sector, Gadomski has advised leading multinational firms and institutions including the United Nations Development Program, World Bank, U.S. Department of Energy, and UNDP/Global Environment Facility. Current assignments include solar thermal power project development, and energy efficiency and conservation consulting in California.

Chris Gadomski also directs the nuclear energy research team at New Energy Finance, a leading provider of financial information, analysis and services to investors in renewable energy and low carbon technologies. There he is developing a robust methodology for forecasting global nuclear investment in new build and innovative technologies and tracking expenditures in O&M, fuel cycle and decommissioning activities.

Gadomski has published on energy and power generation topics in: Modern Power Systems, EuroMoney/ Institutional Investor's Project Finance Magazine, Nuclear Engineering International, World-Generation, The China Business Review, and Independent Energy Magazine. Gadomski is a member of the United States Energy Association and the American Nuclear Society.

Alden Hathaway

Sr. VP for Business Development, Sterling planet, Inc.

Tailors customized solutions for carbon neutrality that combine White Tags Energy Efficiency Certificates, renewable energy and direct carbon offsets. With a dedication to practical, economical and meaningful applications of clean energy technologies, Mr. Hathaway has extensive experience in clean energy policy, market development and application of leading-edge technology.

Previously as Director of EcoPower Programs for the Environmental Resources Trust (ERT), Mr. Hathaway coordinated renewable energy certification, as well as energy and environmental consulting services for national accounts, utilities and government agencies. He also provided input for development of EPA's Green Power Partnership Program.

Mr. Hathaway manages a 10-year-old operation called Solar Light for Africa. This not-for-profit organization installs solar power in rural villages across sub-Saharan Africa, bringing light, power and solar-pumped water to some of the poorest regions of the world. Over the past decade, the organization has installed more than 2,400 lighting systems in Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda, Ethiopia, Sudan and Congo.

Seth Portner

Deputy Director, Governor's Energy Office of Colorado

Seth Portner is the Deputy Director of the Colorado Governor's Energy Office (GEO). Mr. Portner was intimately involved with the initial planning and design of the office and its programs and currently directs operations. GEO works in all 64 Colorado counties and is responsible, in part, for implementing Governor Bill Ritter, Jr.'s New Energy Economy.

Mr. Portner came to GEO with nearly 20 years of management experience from a combination of entrepreneurial activities and corporate and non-profit management. Most recently he worked as Operations Director for the Colorado based non-profit the Center for ReSource Conservation. Mr. Portner holds a BA from the University of Colorado, Boulder in Religious Studies. Mr. Portner sits on the PLAN Boulder County Board of Directors, the Colorado Commission on Low-Income Energy Assistance, the Colorado Pollution Prevention Advisory Board, and serves as Treasurer of Historic Boulder.

Tamra Spielvogel

Committee Director, National Conference of State Legislatures

Tamra Spielvogel is a Committee Director with the State-Federal Relations program of the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL). Her work with the Agriculture & Energy Committee and Environment Committee is concentrated on the energy and environment areas of the committees' jurisdiction.

Issues she has worked on include air quality and multi-pollutant strategies, climate change, environmental regulations, water quality strategies, waste management, state revolving funds, electronic waste, the Energy Policy Act, energy supply and demand activity, alternative fuels, energy efficiency, renewable energy, and the intersection of energy and environment issues. She is involved with NCSL lobbying activities in those areas, representing state positions and concerns to Congress and the Administration.

During her more than nine years with NCSL she has previously staffed the NCSL Education, Labor and Workforce Development, Human Services, Health, and Law & Criminal Justice committees at NCSL.

She holds a Masters degree in Public Policy and a Bachelor's degree in Environmental Studies from the American University in Washington, DC.

Deborah Spiliotopoulos

Sr. Environmental Planner, Northern VA Regional Commission

Debbie is a Senior Environmental Planner with Northern Virginia Regional Commission. At NVRC, Debbie leads the development and execution of NVRC's solid waste, recycling, energy efficiency, toxics, bicycle, pedestrian and alternative transportation programs, stream restoration and urban revitalization. Debbie developed Northern Virginia's first toxics education and outreach program and website "Know Toxics." In addition, Debbie has developed and works to implement "Cool Schools." Debbie also manages NVRC's trail development initiatives. In addition to project management, Debbie tracks state legislation and regulatory changes relevant to regional environmental management.

Spiliotopoulos has fifteen years of professional experience in environmental analysis and planning. Prior to her work at NVRC, Debbie was a Senior Policy Analyst at The National Governors' Association (NGA), working on Brownfield redevelopment, environmental justice, oil spill prevention and response, groundwater management, hazardous waste, and environmental data management.

Prior to NGA, Ms. Spiliotopoulos, worked at ICF International, an environmental consulting firm, and as a field microbiologist for a small research firm, The Traverse Group, in Michigan. Debbie graduated from the University of Michigan's School of Engineering with a Masters degree in Water Resources Science. She has an undergraduate degree in Biology from the University of Virginia.

Adam Zellner

President, Greener by Design

Adam Zellner was appointed policy director in January 2008 of the Office of the Governor of the State of New Jersey. He came to the Governor's Office from the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, where he served as deputy commissioner for policy and legislative affairs.

Prior to joining DEP, Zellner served as executive director of the New Jersey Highlands Council and is a former executive director of the New Jersey Office of Smart Growth. He also served as chief of staff to U.S. Rep. Steve Rothman.

Zellner is also the president of Greener By Design, a company that is in direct operation and sales for Environmental Asset Management and Energy Investment Company. The company also manages large mixed portfolios of renewable energy and energy efficient projects, and monitors various green and energy trading desks.

Zellner was born in Brooklyn, N.Y., and graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in economics from Rowan University in 1992.

More about renewable energy technology in Israel:

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For more about Project Interchange and how it is connecting leaders worldwide, to Israel, please visit: www.projectinterchange.org.

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1 Tal Ater

on 17 Feb 2009 at 1:47 pm

"While in Israel, the guests will meet similar leaders to share information"

Who are our energy leaders? Binyamin Ben-Eliezer?

2 Ceylan

on 17 Feb 2009 at 10:36 pm

I just discovered your website and find it interesting how you look at US renewable energy developments from a Middle Eastern angle. CleanTechies is writing on clean technologies and alternative energy from San Francisco, and there are great discussions on their site. I really liked Ian's series called "What is CleanTech... and, is it really an 'industry'?"

<http://blog.cleantechies.com/2009/01/05/what-is-cleantech-and-is-it-really-an-industry/>

It would be great to see some readers' comments from the Middle East.

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