

Obama stresses clean energy, sets ambitious goals in State of the Union address

In his State of the Union address, President Obama called for increased investment in clean energy technology, with a goal of 80% of America's energy coming from clean energy sources by 2035. The president's budget for fiscal 2012 will propose increasing clean energy technology funding by a third compared to 2010, according to a White House fact sheet. In setting the 80% by 2035 goal, Obama said "clean energy breakthroughs will only translate into clean energy jobs if businesses know there will be a market for what they're selling."

The added spending on clean energy technology would be financed by ending approximately \$4 billion per year in tax subsidies to oil, gas and other fossil fuel producers.

The upcoming budget also will call for more than doubling investments in energy efficiency and a more than 85% increase in renewable energy investment, the White House said. "These investments will support the '\$1 a Watt' initiative to make solar energy cost-competitive, increased funding for 24-hour geothermal renewable energy, and industrial efficiency to keep U.S. manufacturing competitive." The White House plans to release its budget for fiscal 2012 on Feb. 14.

The White House was more vague about the 80% clean energy by 2035 goal. The president "is proposing new standards that will help create a market to unleash innovation across a range of energy sources, from renewable sources to nuclear power, clean coal, and natural gas," the fact sheet said. "This standard would be coupled with new efforts to promote energy efficiency ... including a new initiative to catalyze private sector investment and upgrade commercial buildings."

"With more research and incentives, we can break our dependence on oil with biofuels, and become the first country to have a million electric vehicles on the road by 2015," the president said in his Jan. 25 speech. "We're telling America's scientists and engineers that if they assemble teams of the best minds in their fields, and focus on the hardest problems in clean energy, we'll fund the Apollo projects of our time."

To meet the goal of putting 1 million advanced technology vehicles on the road by 2015, the budget will propose "a new effort to support electric vehicle manufacturing and adoption in the U.S. through improved consumer rebates, investments in R&D, and competitive programs to encourage communities that invest in electric vehicle infrastructure," the White House said.

"Within the next five years, we'll make it possible for businesses to deploy the next generation of high-speed wireless coverage to 98% of all Americans," the president said.

The upcoming budget will include a National Wireless Initiative to provide 98% of Americans access to high-speed Internet, the White House said. Among other things, the initiative will enable "public safety officials to access state-of-the-art, secure, nationwide, and interoperable mobile communications." It also will nearly double the amount of wireless spectrum available for mobile broadband (through incentive auctions and other mechanisms to ensure spectrum is used more efficiently), the fact sheet said. —[ROBERT VARELA](#)

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