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## Government agencies make plans to reduce federal carbon footprint in next decade

By LISA REIN

WASHINGTON — The Pentagon says it will design energy-efficient weapons systems -- and the Navy will build a carrier strike group of nuclear ships powered by biofuel.

The Army Corps of Engineers is putting in solar panels on nine dams in California.

The Department of Homeland Security will put in rain gardens and other green landscaping around its headquarters under construction on the grounds of the former St. Elizabeths Hospital.

These are some of the strategies that 56 government agencies will use to reduce the federal carbon footprint in the next decade to reach President Obama's goal of a 28 percent emissions reduction. As Congress wrangles over a new energy policy for the country, the White House is quietly implementing its strategy for the government, which started last fall with an executive order from the president.

The plans, released by the White House on Thursday, target the nation's single-largest energy consumer. The federal government, with 500,000 buildings and 600,000 vehicles, had a \$24 billion bill last year for utilities and fuel -- 1.5 percent of the country's total energy spending.

"These actions [by agencies] will have an economic return for the American taxpayer," said Michelle Moore, the federal environmental executive, who is helping lead the greening of government for the White House Council on Environmental Quality. Many of the ideas come from federal employees, who generated more than 5,000 ideas in a challenge from the White House.

"Ultimately, there will be efficiencies and cost savings," Moore said. "Our buildings, for example, will consume less power and pay a smaller utility bill."

The 28 percent reduction will be compared with 2008 emissions levels.

The greening of government will include agencies as diverse as the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and the National Archives and Records Administration. Their energy-saving ideas include installing solar panels, recycling, using less water, telework, reducing fleets of government cars and trucks or committing to use carbon-free, alternative fuel in those vehicles.

The State Department will eliminate hundreds of printers and scanners and expand video-conferencing technology. The Peace Corps is reducing waste with an exchange for unused office supplies. The National Endowment for the Arts is reducing energy use in its data center.

Many of the strategies will not bust budgets; other will cost hundreds of millions of dollars, mostly from grants from the economic stimulus. The Department of Veterans Affairs, for example, will use some of its \$144 million stash to install wind and solar energy facilities in its medical centers scattered across the country. The General Services Administration, the government's landlord, is spending \$5.5 billion to make its buildings energy efficient.

President George W. Bush issued several executive orders to reduce energy use in government buildings and require responsible disposal of computers and other hard-to-recycle items, among other initiatives. But Obama officials and environmental groups say the president has gone further by setting goals and requiring agencies to meet them.

"It's not the entire economy, but bringing the federal government into better harmony with nature is a huge step," said Frank O'Donnell, president of Clean Air Watch, a nonprofit environmental watchdog. "People can raise Cain if they don't do it."

Agencies will be monitored for progress by the Office of Management and Budget, which will release an annual scorecard starting next year. A greenhouse gas inventory will publish the targets and who is meeting them, Moore said.

The environmental council is finalizing its instruction manual for how to measure emissions reductions. Agencies that don't meet their goals will not face penalties, but Web sites will disclose low performers to the public.

*National Archives* plans to install solar panels on the roof of its 16 main offices.

*Department of Homeland Security* is committing to using the Sustainable Sites Initiative for environmentally beneficial landscaping at its St. Elizabeths headquarters, which is under construction.

*Justice Department* has awarded 17 Energy Service Performance Contracts that will help the department meet its greenhouse gas, energy and water goals.

*Transportation Department* has established an awards program to highlight intra-agency best practices in waste prevention, recycling and green procurement that complements its Green Procurement Plan.

*State Department* is reducing personal IT equipment such as printers and scanners, acquiring fuel-economy vehicles and expanding its use of video conferencing technologies.

*Environmental Protection Agency* has completed a nationwide survey of its facilities to identify the best opportunities for onsite renewable energy generation. EPA has a strategy in place to meet its greenhouse gas reduction targets that incorporates building operations and fleet management.

***National Capital Planning Commission* has more than 90 percent of its employees using public transit to commute to work, and the agency intends to encourage walking and biking. It also utilizes the Zipcar car-share program in place of agency-owned vehicles.**

*Peace Corps* has developed an agency Green Team that is creating an exchange for unused office supplies. The agency also has reduced its paper consumption by 25 percent by using both sides of all office paper.

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### A Sampling of Agency Initiatives

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*Education Department* is developing an environmental management system for its Washington area locations that will commit the agency to aggressive goals in regional and local planning, water use and eliminating waste.