



## Swedish University Students Reach Climate Agreement

In 2013, Warsaw, Poland hosted the annual UN-FCCC climate negotiations that brought together the international community to discuss how to curb greenhouse gas emissions and to deal with the effects of global warming. The negotiations run for two weeks at the end of every year.

On November 5-6, U.S. Ambassador to Sweden Mark Brzezinski joined Stockholm University Vice Chancellor Astrid Söderbergh Widding to open the 2013 Model Conference of the Parties (COP) Conference, a simulation of the United Nations Climate Negotiations.

For two days, fifty-one students from 17 universities across Sweden assumed the roles of government representatives and managed to reach an agreement. The conference was sponsored by the U.S. Embassy in Sweden in cooperation

with the think tank FORES and Stockholm University.

A copy of the agreement is available [here](#). Click [here](#) to read Ambassador Brzezinski's remarks.



*Photos: Peter Schlyter/Stockholm University*



## Scientists Gather in Abisko in the Swedish Arctic



On October 30, U.S. Ambassador Mark Brzezinski and the chairman of the Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board, Tom Healy, kicked off a two-day workshop titled "Shaping Arctic Change through Conscious Choices" in Abisko, Sweden.

Approximately forty Fulbright students, scientists, government officials and representatives from think tanks and NGOs convened in Abisko -- located 125 miles above the Arctic Circle -- to discuss how to solve challenges pertaining to climate change, security, and governance in the region. The findings from the workshop are to be presented in a scientific article in 2014.



The U.S. Embassy hosted the workshop in partnership with the Fulbright Commissions, the Government of Sweden and environmental NGOs/think tanks WWF and the Stockholm Environment Institute. The importance of Arctic issues is increasing as shrinking ice caps are opening up new shipping routes for oil and gas exploration and the effects of climate change are influencing regions far beyond the Arctic.

The executive directors from the Fulbright Commissions in Iceland, Norway, Finland and Sweden participated in the workshop to hammer out how Fulbright can shed further light on these challenges. Norway has been engaged in this field by instituting a Fulbright chair dedicated to Arctic issues.

*Photos: U.S. Embassy Stockholm*

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## Swedish Space Shower Recycles Water

CNN recently ran a story about a Swedish innovation originally designed for space travel, that is now being used to save energy and money. Swedish industrial designer Mehrdad Mahdjoubi is the brains behind the OrbSys Shower -- a high-tech purification system that recycles water while you wash.

According to CNN, the invention is similar to space showers in that it works on a "closed loop system:" hot water falls from the tap to the drain,

is instantly purified to drinking water standard, then pumped back out of the shower head. As the process is quick, the water remains hot and only needs to be reheated very slightly.



As a result, the OrbSys shower saves more than 90 percent in water usage and 80 percent in energy every time you shower,

while also producing water that is cleaner than your average tap.



## Renewable Energy Made up 100% of New Power in the United States

According to numbers from the U.S. Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), all new power that was added in the United States in November came from renewable energy sources.

The statistics reveal that 14 new solar units, 8 biomass units, 4 wind mills, one geothermal, and one hydro unit went online in November. At the same time no new fossil-fuel plants were added to the grid.

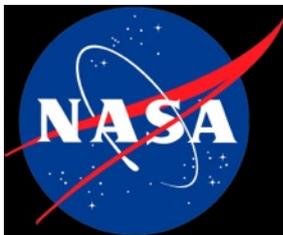


## IKEA Plugs In 3 Electric Vehicle Charging Stations in Texas

IKEA has plugged in three Blink electric vehicle (EV) charging stations at its Dallas-area store as part of its partnership with U.S. company Car Charging Group, the new owner of the Blink charging stations, and the largest provider of EV charging services in the United States with more than 13,430 charging points in 35 states.

This initiative represents the tenth such project for IKEA in the United States, with installation underway at seven other locations. In total, completion of the units currently planned will bring the total number of Blink charging stations available at IKEA locations to 55.

## NASA: Ozone Hole Is No Longer Expanding



New research by NASA scientists reveals that while the hole in the ozone layer is stabilizing, it will still take until 2070 to completely recover.

two decades ago in an effort to ban chlorofluorocarbons and other compounds -- but have yet to drop below the threshold for them to have an effect on the ozone hole.

Although the ozone hole is not expanding, it is too early to say it is healing.

The levels of chlorine in the atmosphere have fallen due to the Montreal Protocol treaty -- passed

## 150,000 Plug-In Cars on U.S. Roads

Plug-in electric vehicle sales in the United States hit the 100,000 marker in May last year. Approximately six months later the 150,000 marker was passed, according to Plug In America and Clean Technica.

According to Clean Technica, the United States is currently seeing a 361 percent year-over-year sales growth

of electric vehicles and 34 percent year-over-year sales growth of plug-in hybrid electric vehicles.



*Photo: Then-U.S. Secretary of Energy Steven Chu inspecting the first Chevy Volt to arrive in Sweden in 2011. U.S. Embassy Stockholm.*

## Forbes Highlights Swedish Company Generating Electricity from Tidal Currents



Photo: [minesto.com](http://minesto.com)

*Forbes* is featuring a story on a Swedish start-up company Minesto that is generating electricity from low-velocity tidal currents with a system of underwater kites called “Deep Green.” The kites are equipped with turbines tethered to the ocean floor and move through the current in an 8-shaped trajectory, *Forbes* reports.

Based in Gothenburg, Minesto claims to have developed the only cost-effective tidal power plant capable of operating in low velocity currents. A prototype of Deep Green is currently producing electricity in the waters off Strangford Lough, Northern Ireland.

Minesto was founded in 2007 with investment backing from the Saab Group, BGA Invest, and Midroc New Technology. Last fall, the company received the Industry Pioneer Award at the International Tidal Energy Summit in London for demonstrating that electricity can be harvested from low velocity currents.

## Volvo Initiates Pilot Project with Self-Driving Cars



Photo: [media.volvocars.com](http://media.volvocars.com)

Volvo Cars is launching a large-scale autonomous driving pilot project in which 100 self-driving vehicles will use public roads around the City of Gothenburg. The project ‘Drive Me – Self-driving cars for sustainable mobility’ is a joint initiative between Volvo, the Swedish Transport Administration, the Swedish Transport Agency, Lindholmen Science Park and the City of Gothenburg.

The aim is to pinpoint the societal benefits of autonomous driving. The pilot will involve self-driving cars using approximately 50 kilometres (31 miles) of selected roads in and around Gothenburg.

These roads are typical commuter roads and include motorway conditions and frequent queues. The project will commence in 2014 with customer research and technology development, as well as the development of a user interface and cloud functionality. The first cars are expected to be on the roads in Gothenburg by 2017.

## Coal Power Plants Shutting Down in the United States

National Public Radio reports that the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA), the United States' largest public utility, has decided to close six coal-fired power plants in Alabama and replace two others in Kentucky with a single new natural gas station. CEO Bill Johnson made the announcement in November citing stricter environmental regulations and flat demand for power.

Right now, coal accounts for 38 percent of TVA's generating capacity. The TVA "has shut down a half-dozen units in the past two years ... and expects to generate more power from nuclear plants than coal within the next three years," Johnson says.