
FEDERAL UPDATE

Lawmakers Say Congress Hasn't Given EPA Power to Implement Climate Rule

Lawmakers in opposition to the Clean Power Plan told a federal court that Congress hasn't given the EPA the authority to enact the rule. In an amicus brief that supports a lawsuit opposed to CPP, over 200 lawmakers contended that the EPA is overstepping its bounds with the Clean Power Plan and trying to implement a rule more wide-ranging than previous Congresses ever intended. The lawmakers, in their brief, repeated many of their long-held arguments against the Clean Power Plan, saying the EPA cannot regulate power plant emissions under the section of the law it is citing and that it has no power to impose the rule on states.

Federal Appeals Court to Review EPA's Waters of the US Rule

The US Court of Appeals for the 6th Circuit voted 2-1 to review the Environmental Protection Agency's Waters of the United States rule. Critics say the rule is overly broad and would "extend federal reach to small streams and dry creek beds." Dorothy Kellogg, NRECA senior principal, environmental issues, said, "The Waters of the U.S. rule would exert federal oversight over myriads of water bodies, including those that are dry most of the year. And that means many more expensive permits for co-ops to maintain and construct power corridors and site new generation – including renewables."

US, Canada Vow to Cut Methane Emissions

President Barack Obama and Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced "new commitments to reduce planet-warming emissions of methane," which is "a chemical contained in natural gas that is about 25 times as potent as carbon dioxide and that can leak from drilling wells and pipelines." In a joint statement, the leaders vowed the US and Canada would "play a leadership role internationally in the low carbon global economy over the coming decades." Obama and Trudeau "also pledged new cooperation in preserving the Arctic and focusing on biodiversity, science-based decision-making, indigenous people and building a sustainable Arctic economy."

DOE Funding Massive Wind Turbine Blade Project

A new design being proposed by wind turbine developers is significantly larger than previous designs: blades up to 656 feet long. The Energy Department is funding the project through its Advanced Research Projects Agency-Energy program at a cost of \$3.5 million.

Moniz Says Coal Will Continue To Play Part In US Energy Mix.

Energy Secretary Ernest Moniz recently discussed the future of coal in the United States. He said, "The administration is committed to a future with less carbon going into the atmosphere," but it doesn't "advocate ending the use of coal for electricity production in the US." In support of his position that the Obama Administration hasn't abandoned coal, he pointed to billions of dollars Obama has proposed for research on technology to remove carbon from power-plant emissions, called carbon capture and storage, or CCS. If killing off coal was a goal of the Administration, Moniz said, "We wouldn't have put \$6 billion into CCS."

STATE UPDATE

Energy Advocates Claim West Des Moines Solar Ordinance Restrictive

West Des Moines is considering new rules for solar panel installations that clean energy advocates consider too restrictive. The city is drafting an ordinance that would dictate where the panels could be located and require screening to shield their view from neighboring properties.

Vilsack Likely to Leave Ag Post at End of Obama's Term

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack seems prepared to leave his post when President Barack Obama ends his term, or shortly after. The former Iowa governor is the last remaining member of Obama's original Cabinet. He told reporters it's time to let someone else tackle issues from trade and food stamps to ethanol and home loans. Vilsack didn't give any hints about his plans for the future.

Dakota Access Gets the Green Light

A lengthy and hotly-debated state review of the Dakota Access project ended with an approval for the cross-state oil pipeline. In its decision, the Iowa Utilities Board said the public benefits of the project outweigh the private and public costs with the terms and conditions imposed by the board. It cited safety advantages of pipeline transportation of crude oil and the economic benefits, including jobs, for the project. Plenty of Iowans disagreed, including property owners who will be directly affected by construction, and environmentalists concerned that climate change will be accelerated by making oil move faster from the Bakken Shale deposits of the Dakotas.

MidAmerican, Alliant Warn About Telephone Scams

MidAmerican Energy Co. and Alliant Energy Corp. teamed up to warn customers about recurring telephone billing scams. Since the beginning of the year, customers of MidAmerican and Alliant have reported more than 400 fraudulent calls. In most scam cases, callers pose as utility employees and threaten to shut off power unless the customer makes a payment. Scammers are persistent and aggressive. They use sophisticated methods to trick customers, among them spoofing Caller ID to make the call appear as if it is coming from the utility.

Upcoming Activities in 2016

NRECA Legislative Fly-in – Washington, D.C.	May 1-4
NRECA CONNECT Conference – Portland, OR	May 10-13
NRECA Gettysburg Leadership Experience – Gettysburg, PA	May 17-19
CIPCO Board Meeting – Des Moines	May 24

Consumer Price Index

Month	Seasonally Adjusted Change from Previous Month
Mar. 2016	0.1%
Feb. 2016	-0.2%
Jan. 2016	0.0%
Dec. 2015	-0.1%
Nov. 2015	0.0%
Oct. 2015	0.2%
Unadjusted Rolling 12 Month Average: 0.9%	