

PUBLIC POLICY REPORT

FEDERAL UPDATE

WOTUS Regulations Published in Federal Register

The final Waters of the U.S. (WOTUS) rule appeared in the *Federal Register* on June 29 and will be effective August 28, 2015.

Climate Change and NAFTA

On July 16, the U.S. along with Canada and Mexico made combating climate change a formal part of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). The three countries agreed to a new five-year plan that promotes clean energy and the reduction of emissions. The plan calls for “emission control zones” to limit the use of fossil fuels.

House Passes Coal Ash Bill

The House of Representatives passed the Improving Coal Combustion Residuals Regulations Act of 2015 on July 23. Supporters of the bill indicate it will provide greater stability to the utility industry related to coal ash and will allow states to establish their own coal ash permitting systems. The bill passed the House with bipartisan support.

Appliance Industry Opposes Efficiency Regulations

Appliance manufacturers are fighting the Energy Department on proposed regulations which require greater efficiency in dishwashers. The plan limits water usage to 3.1 gallons a load which manufacturers indicate is not enough to adequately clean the dishes. Manufacturers suggest this would require consumers to wash dishes more than once, effectively using more water and electricity than current models.

STATE UPDATE

Governor Branstad’s Federal Disaster Request Denied

The governor sought a major disaster declaration from President Obama for the four counties most impacted by the Bird Flu Virus. The letter from federal authorities rejecting the request stated the damage was “not of such severity and magnitude” that it could not be handled by the state. The virus has infected more than 31.5 million birds in Iowa, mostly egg-laying chickens, making the state the hardest hit in the nation. The Governor’s Office is reviewing options for an appeal.

Governor Branstad Issues Disaster Proclamation for Jefferson and Wayne Counties

Governor Branstad issued a proclamation of disaster emergency for Jefferson and Wayne counties in response to recent severe weather. The governor’s proclamation allows state resources to be utilized to respond to, and recover from, the effects of severe storms and flooding that significantly impacted the two counties beginning on June 20.

Governor Branstad Issues Additional Disaster Proclamation for 18 Counties

The governor's proclamation allows state resources to be utilized to respond to and recover from the storms and an EF 1 tornado that impacted portions of Wapello County on June 20. The proclamation also allows state resources to be utilized for response and recovery related to severe storms and flooding that significantly impacted the following 17 counties beginning on June 24: Adair, Allamakee, Appanoose, Butler, Clayton, Dallas, Des Moines, Guthrie, Henry, Howard, Lee, Lucas, Marion, Mitchell, Polk, Warren and Winneshiek. The proclamation activates the Iowa Individual Assistance Program in the following 10 counties: Adair, Appanoose, Dallas, Guthrie, Henry, Lucas, Marion, Polk, Wapello and Warren.

Iowa Creating a Statewide Energy Plan

The Iowa Economic Development Authority will serve as the project lead for developing the statewide energy plan. It is designed to establish state priorities and provide strategic guidance with decision-making. The Iowa Energy Plan will include an assessment of current and future energy supply and demand, examine existing energy policies and programs, and identify emerging challenges and opportunities.

Report: Iowa Could Get 41 Percent of Its Electricity from Wind

Wind energy could provide 41 percent of Iowa's electricity by 2020, and 133 percent by 2030, the American Wind Energy Association stated in a report released in July at a Des Moines Area Community College roundtable. Iowa could produce enough wind to power the equivalent of 6.3 million average American homes by 2030, the group added. In 2014, Iowa generated about 28 percent of its electricity from wind power.

Interstate Power to Pay \$1.1 Million Fine

Iowa's second largest power company will drastically cut pollution at coal-fired power plants under a Clean Air Act settlement. Interstate Power and Light will operate cutting-edge pollution controls at its biggest Iowa plants in Ottumwa and Lansing. In addition, the company will retire or convert to natural gas its plants in Cedar Rapids, Dubuque, Burlington, Clinton and Marshalltown. When fully implemented, the changes are expected to cut annual emissions of sulfur dioxide by tens of thousands of tons. The company will also pay a \$1.1 million fine and spend \$6 million on environmental mitigation projects. This settles a federal complaint alleging the company violated the act when making modifications at Ottumwa and Lansing.

Upcoming Activities in 2015

NRECA 2015 Accounting, Finance & Tax Conference/ HR Conference – August 2-8	Denver, CO
IAEC District 3 Meeting – August 4	Charles City, IA
IAEC Districts 4 & 6 Meeting – August 5	West Des Moines, IA
IAEC Districts 5 & 7 Meeting – August 6	Storm Lake, IA
IAEC Districts 1 & 2 Meeting – August 7	Coralville, IA
Iowa State Fair – August 13-23	Des Moines, IA
NRECA 2015 INTERACT Conference – August 22-26	Boston, MA
CIPCO Board Meeting – August 25	Des Moines, IA