

## FEDERAL UPDATE

### **The National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Refused To Provide Climate Change Documents**

NOAA has refused to provide House Republicans with detailed information included in a controversial study on climate change, citing “confidentiality concerns and the integrity of the scientific process.” House Science Committee Chairman Lamar Smith disagreed with the study’s conclusion and issued a subpoena for the communication information among the scientists and the data used to arrive at the conclusion. Democrats believe this is an attempt to intimidate the researchers. NOAA spokeswoman Ciaran Clayton said, “We stand behind our scientists who conduct their work in an objective manner.”

### **NRECA Board Names Connor as Interim CEO**

On November 3, the NRECA Board appointed Jeffrey Connor, the association’s chief operating officer and chief of staff, as interim chief executive officer. Connor has served as acting CEO since August, when Jo Ann Emerson suffered a medical emergency while traveling. NRECA President Mel Coleman said, “Jeffrey and NRECA’s senior leadership have the confidence and trust of the Board of Directors to continue the good work of this organization on behalf of its members.”

### **EPA Touts Biomass as a Way for States to Comply with the Clean Power Plan**

The EPA is promoting biomass as a way for states to comply with its climate rule for power plants. EPA assistant administrator Janet McCabe said the Clean Power Plan “creates a pathway for states to use biomass as part of their plans to meet their emission reduction guidelines, and we expect many states to include biomass as a component in their state plans.”

### **OSHA Fines Set to Rise by Up to 80 Percent**

A provision in the budget bill signed by President Obama on November 2 could raise the fines for violating Occupational Health and Safety Administration rules by up to 80 percent to account for inflation since they were first set. Safety analysts indicated OSHA fines for repeat or willful violations could increase from a current maximum of \$70,000 per violation to about \$125,000 per violation. Additionally, fines for lesser violations could increase from \$7,000 per violation to approximately \$12,500 per violation.

### **Former DOE Official Says Both Fossil Fuels and Renewables Needed for Energy Sustainability**

Former assistant secretary of energy Charles McConnell called for an end to “the immature name-calling and...being so strident about causes” in the energy debate. He argued that energy must be secure, reliable, affordable and cost-competitive, as well as environmentally responsible. To meet these criteria, both fossil fuels and renewables require an ongoing investment in transformative technology. McConnell said the carbon dioxide emissions of fossil fuels must be addressed, and that renewables do not meet the sustainability test unless there is also base load fossil fuel generation.

## STATE UPDATE

### Iowa Area Development Group (IADG) Receives National Award

IADG received a national award on November 5 for its efforts to promote rural economic development opportunities. The U.S. Department of Agriculture gave the organization its Abraham Lincoln Honor Award. IADG has been involved in more than 200 projects that have received \$82 million in USDA Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant program funding. These projects have leveraged \$635 million in capital investment, created 15,000 jobs in rural Iowa and established nearly 50 revolving loan funds for rural businesses and organizations to access across the state.

### Iowa Utilities Board Suspends Its Review of the Rock Island Clean Line

The Iowa Utilities Board (IUB) suspended review of the Rock Island Clean Line at the developers' request. The proposed 500-mile electrical transmission line would carry wind-generated energy from northwest Iowa to Illinois and other states to the east. The IUB said it has stopped active review of the project and has not scheduled a hearing but will accept comments.

### Governor Branstad Halts Syrian Refugee Resettlements by State Agencies

Governor Branstad ordered all state agencies to halt any work on Syrian refugee resettlements immediately in order to ensure the security and safety of Iowans. The Governor indicated that in light of the Paris attacks, resettlement of Syrian refugees in Iowa should cease until a thorough review of the process can be conducted by the U.S. intelligence community and the safety of Iowans can be assured.

### Iowa Rises in Use of Solar Power

Iowa ranks above most of its neighboring states in installed solar power, according to data released by the Energy Information Administration. Between September 2014 and September 2015, Iowa's solar capacity rose to 24.3 megawatts from 16.8 megawatts.

## Upcoming Activities in 2015

IAEC Legislative Welcome Back Reception – Des Moines, IA  
ABI Legislative Reception – Des Moines, IA

January 12, 2016  
January 13, 2016

## Consumer Price Index

Month	Seasonally Adjusted Change from Previous Month
Oct. 2015	0.2%
Sept. 2015	-0.2%
Aug. 2015	-0.1%
<b>Unadjusted Rolling 12 Month Average - 0.2%</b>	