

**JULY 2017**  
**PUBLIC POLICY REPORT**

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## **FEDERAL UPDATE**

### **Senate Votes to Reconfirm Svinicki as NRC Chairman**

The Senate confirmed the re-nomination of Kristine Svinicki as chairman of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission. The confirmation preserves a quorum at the agency.

### **Senate Panel Spending Bill Rejects Trump Cuts to Energy Department Programs**

The Senate Appropriations Committee voted 30-1 to approve a \$38.4 billion spending bill for the Department of Energy that rejects numerous proposals by President Trump that would have slashed programs that maintain bipartisan support. The Senate bill is \$4 billion more than Trump's proposed budget, and funds the Advanced Research Projects Agency-Energy at \$330 million, a record high funding level. Unlike the House's version of the bill, the Senate bill does not include money to restart the consideration process for the Yucca Mountain permanent waste site in Nevada.

## **STATE UPDATE**

### **Emails Show Iowa State University Officials Coordinated with State Utilities to Transfer Key Energy Center**

Iowa lawmakers approved a bill in April transferring the 27-year-old Iowa Energy Center to the executive branch, giving it a more industry-friendly mission and eliminating its funding source in 2022. Newly released emails show that Iowa State University officials worked with utility industry representatives to draft the law. Allegations have been made that this was done to give the utility industry cover to avoid the perception of a power grab. Utilities and partner organizations had questioned the center's direction and management.

### **Gov. Reynolds, Lt. Gov. Gregg Sign Pledge to Move Over, Slow Down**

Gov. Kim Reynolds and Lt. Gov. Adam Gregg signed a pledge at a weekly press conference to move over or slow down for utility maintenance vehicles on Iowa roads. Iowa's Move Over, Slow Down law was enacted in 2002 and requires drivers to move over or slow down for stopped emergency vehicles with flashing lights. On July 1, the law was expanded to include utility maintenance vehicles.

### **ISU Scientists Work on Improving Grid for Wind Power**

A \$220 million initiative backed by the U.S. Department of Energy has launched Iowa State University scientists into the task of figuring out how to make three different power grids across the country work better together. The problem is that it is not easy to get the wind energy produced by Iowa's nearly 4,000 turbines to areas that can use it during the Midwestern winters, when winds are strongest and power generation the highest. Iowa State University's James McCalley is working with researchers from national laboratories and the utility industry to study ways to tie the big eastern and western grids together.

**Iowa Conservative Activist Nominated for USDA's Top Science Post**

President Donald Trump nominated former Morningside College professor and Sioux City radio talk show host Sam Clovis to the top science position at the United States Department of Agriculture. Clovis holds an undergraduate degree in political science, an MBA, and a doctorate in public administration.

**Upcoming Activities in 2017**

IAEC District 3 Meeting – Charles City, IA	August 1, 2017
IAEC Districts 4 & 6 Meeting – West Des Moines, IA	August 2, 2017
IAEC Districts 5 & 7 Meeting – Storm Lake, IA	August 3, 2017
Team Edge Meeting – Des Moines, IA	August 3, 2017
IAEC Districts 1 & 2 Meeting – Coralville, IA	August 4, 2017
NRECA Tax, Finance and Accounting Conference – Salt Lake City, UT	August 6-9, 2017
NRECA INTERACT Conference – Washington, DC	August 12-16, 2017

**Consumer Price Index**

Month	Seasonally Adjusted Change from Previous Month
June 2017	0.0%
May 2017	-0.1%
April 2017	0.2%
March 2017	-0.3%
February 2017	0.1%
January 2017	0.6%
Unadjusted Rolling 12 Month Average: 1.6%	