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## Bipartisan energy bill passes Senate, includes provisions for minerals and data preservation

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The Energy Policy Modernization Act of 2015 (S. 2012) passed the Senate with overwhelming support on April 20. The bipartisan bill, introduced by Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee Chairman Lisa Murkowski (R-AK), is the first piece of comprehensive energy legislation to pass the Senate since 2005.

The bill focuses on improving and modernizing energy efficiency and infrastructure in the United States. If enacted, the bill would update the nation's electric grid, expedite natural gas exports, provide subsidies for hydropower and geothermal energy, and permanently reauthorize the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF).

In addition to energy policy, S. 2012 also includes provisions for critical minerals and data preservation. Subtitle D—Critical Minerals recognizes the need for greater federal investments in minerals science and information, including provisions to strengthen our mineral forecasting capabilities, develop a methodology for criticality, and promote the responsible recycling of mineral materials. Subtitle D also includes a section reauthorizing the National Geological and Geophysical Data Preservation Program (NGGDPP), which expired in 2010.

The bill had previously been held up due to a series of controversial policy riders, including a proposal to expand offshore oil and gas development and another to provide an aid package to Flint, Michigan.

Members of Congress from both chambers will now go to conference to try to combine S. 2012 with its counterpart in the House, the North American Energy Security and Infrastructure Act, (H.R. 8), which passed the House in December 2015.

Sources: E&E News, [Congress.gov](http://Congress.gov), [Govtrack.us](http://Govtrack.us)

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