

Policy News & Monthly Review

AGI policy news briefs summarize geoscience policy activities and related events in Washington, D.C. as part of an effort to keep AGI member societies and other audiences informed about relevant federal policy and legislative updates.

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Please note that as of April 2019, the publication of news briefs and the monthly review has been suspended. Policy news from April 2019 back to 2010 is available below; to browse Monthly Reviews from 1996 through 2010, please visit the Monthly Review Archive.

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Córdova reveals nine big ideas for the National Science Foundation

Date: Tuesday, June 14, 2016

France Córdova, Director of the National Science foundation (NSF), recently released a research vision for NSF centered on nine ‘big ideas’ after a two-day offsite planning retreat for the agency’s leadership in April.



Women chosen to lead National Science Board

Date: Friday, June 10, 2016

The National Science Board (NSB) recently announced the election of Dr. Maria Zuber as chair and Dr. Diane Souvaine as vice chair.



Hearing highlights implications of Supreme Court stay of the Clean Power Plan

Date: Thursday, June 9, 2016

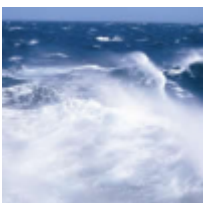
The Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works held a hearing on the implications of the U.S. Supreme Court stay of the President’s Clean Power Plan (CPP).



Encouraging private sector partnerships with NOAA in weather forecasting

Date: Wednesday, June 8, 2016

The House Science, Space and Technology Committee, Subcommittee on Environment held a hearing to discuss how partnerships between the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the private sector can be strengthened to improve weather forecasting.



CHOW 2016 includes a panel on changing offshore energy portfolios

Date: Wednesday, June 8, 2016

Inspired by recent milestones in domestic offshore wind energy and persistently low oil and gas prices, Capitol Hill Ocean Week

(CHOW 2016) included a panel on potential changes to U.S. offshore energy portfolios.



U.S. and China embark on a R2ZE

Date: Friday, June 3, 2016

U.S. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx and China's Minister of Transport Yang Chuantang announced new efforts to reduce emissions from city bus fleets.



Federal Register - May 2016

Date: Wednesday, June 1, 2016

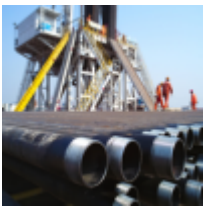
A list of notices from the federal register for May 2016 from agencies including the Department of the Interior, Department of Energy, USGS, NOAA, NASA, and more.



Senate passes Energy and Water appropriations bill, House unable to do so

Date: Thursday, May 26, 2016

The Senate passed their fiscal year (FY) 2017 Energy and Water Development appropriations bill this May. The House, however, was unable to pass its version of the bill due to a controversial rider on LGBT rights included within it.



National Academies Roundtable holds workshop on use of flowback and produced waters from the oil and gas industry

Date: Wednesday, May 25, 2016

The National Academies' Unconventional Hydrocarbon Roundtable held a two-day workshop on "Use of Flowback and Produced Waters: Opportunities and Challenges for Innovation".



House Appropriations Committee approves funding for NASA, NSF, NIST, NOAA and OSTP

Date: Tuesday, May 24, 2016

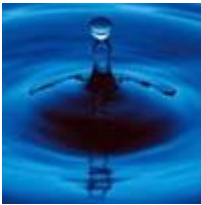
This May, the House Appropriations Committee approved their fiscal year (FY) 2017 Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies (CJS) appropriations bill.



EPA releases final rule on curbing methane emissions

Date: Tuesday, May 24, 2016

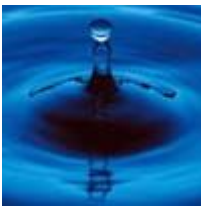
The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued three final rules earlier this month to reduce emissions of methane, volatile organic compounds (VOCs), and other air pollutants from new and modified existing oil and gas production sources.



DOE awards \$4 million in R&D projects to recover critical materials from geothermal fluids

Date: Tuesday, May 24, 2016

The Department of Energy (DOE) has awarded \$4 million to 4 R&D projects at the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory in California, the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory Washington, the University of Utah, and the University of Wyoming.



Briefing highlights need for investment in water infrastructure

Date: Thursday, May 19, 2016

The National League of Cities (NLC) and Value of Water Coalition (VWC) held a briefing on water infrastructure and security across the United States on May 19, 2016, with examples of solutions from multiple cities.



BOEM five-year OCS plan meets opposition in Senate hearing

Date: Thursday, May 19, 2016

The proposed program calls for 10 lease sales in the Gulf of Mexico, 3 in the Arctic, and none in the Pacific or Atlantic OCS regions.



RFF and Duke University hold seminar on impacts of oil and gas development on local governments and communities

Date: Wednesday, May 18, 2016

Resources for the Future (RFF) and Duke University co-hosted a seminar on how oil and gas development impacts local governments and communities, highlighting several recently released reports.



Five Senate bills focus on western water

Date: Wednesday, May 18, 2016

The Senate Energy and Natural Resources Subcommittee on Water and Power held a hearing this May to discuss a suite of water bills aimed at addressing the drought across the West.



AES holds briefing on offshore energy in the United States

Date: Monday, May 16, 2016

The Advances in Earth Science Coalition (AES), a consortium of professional geoscience societies and federal agencies, held a briefing on offshore energy (oil, gas, and wind) in the United States.



New World Bank report outlines how water scarcity could impact us in the future

Date: Wednesday, May 4, 2016

The report projects that water scarcity will increase globally and impact economies, migratory patterns of populations, and create geopolitical conflict.



COAST Act would help protect Houston from flooding

Date: Monday, May 2, 2016

After floods hit the Houston area hard on April 17 and 18, forcing road and school closures and causing the death of eight people, Texas Senator John Cornyn (R-TX) recognized the need for better emergency preparedness in the region.



KY and WV tapping into new hydroelectric power

Date: Monday, May 2, 2016

Along the Ohio River in Kentucky and West Virginia, 4 dams originally built for passage of large ships in the 1960s and 70s are being retrofitted for hydroelectricity production.



Federal Register - April 2016

Date: Sunday, May 1, 2016

A list of notices from the federal register for April 2016 from agencies including the Department of the Interior, USGS, NOAA, NASA, and more.



New House and Senate bills would advance nuclear energy technology

Date: Friday, April 29, 2016

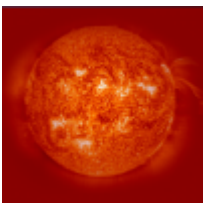
Two new bipartisan bills have been introduced in both chambers of Congress in an effort to expand the use of nuclear energy.



House committee debates BLM natural gas flaring rule

Date: Wednesday, April 27, 2016

The House Committee on Natural Resources, Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources held a hearing this week regarding the proposed rule issued in January 2016 by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to reduce natural gas, or methane, emissions via venting, flaring, and leaks on federal lands.



Senate committee passes the Space Weather Research and Forecasting Act

Date: Wednesday, April 27, 2016

The Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee passed the Space Weather Research and Forecasting Act (S. 2817) on April 27.



Senate hopes to pass WRDA to support aging water infrastructure

Date: Tuesday, April 26, 2016

Senators James Inhofe (R-OK) and Barbara Boxer (D-CA), Chair and Ranking Member of the Environment and Public Works Committee (EPW), introduced the bipartisan Water Resources Development Act of 2016 (WRDA) today.



Sec. John Kerry signs landmark climate agreement on behalf of US

Date: Friday, April 22, 2016

The Paris Agreement, a multilateral agreement on the mitigation, adaptation, and financing of green house gas (GHG) emissions worldwide, was adopted during the 21st Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP 21) held in Paris, France, in 2015.



LWCF reauthorization passes the Senate

Date: Thursday, April 21, 2016

On April 20, the Senate voted to permanently reauthorize the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) within bipartisan energy reform legislation (S. 2012) sponsored by Energy and Natural Resources Committee Chairwoman Lisa Murkowski (R-AK).



AWRA releases second volume of report on flood and drought management in the US

Date: Thursday, April 21, 2016

The American Water Resources Association (AWRA) Policy Committee released the second volume of their report, "Proactive Flood and Drought Management".



Senate Committee passes bill funding NASA, NIST, NSF, NOAA

Date: Thursday, April 21, 2016

The Senate Appropriations Committee passed the Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies (CJS) spending bill for fiscal year (FY) 2017 on April 21.



New bipartisan climate change caucus

Date: Thursday, April 21, 2016

The new House bipartisan Climate Solutions Caucus held its first meeting this week.



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

Date: Wednesday, April 20, 2016

The Energy Policy Modernization Act of 2015 (S. 2012) passed the Senate with overwhelming support on April 20.



FAA reauthorization allows for UAVs to help monitor oil and gas facilities

Date: Tuesday, April 19, 2016

The Senate has approved an amendment to streamline the permitting process for unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs).



House Energy and Water Appropriations bill passes out of committee

Date: Tuesday, April 19, 2016

The House Committee on Appropriations met on April 19 to markup the fiscal year (FY) 2017 Energy and Water Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill, which provides funding for the Department of Energy (DOE), U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and other agencies.



BLM proposed venting and flaring rule spurs debate in Senate subcommittee hearing

Date: Thursday, April 14, 2016

The Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, Subcommittee on Public Lands, Forests, and Mining held an oversight hearing on the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) proposed rule to reduce venting, flaring, and leaks during oil and gas production on Federal and Indian lands.



Senate oversight hearing on USGS

Date: Thursday, April 7, 2016

The Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources met on April 7 to conduct an oversight hearing on programs at the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS).



EESI holds webinar on adaptations to the declining coal industry in coal-impacted communities

Date: Tuesday, April 5, 2016

The Environmental and Energy Study Institute (EESI) held a webinar entitled, "Can Coal Country Thrive in a Clean Energy Economy?" to discuss the range of adaptations, investments, and development programs underway in coal-reliant regions.



Federal Register - March 2016

Date: Friday, April 1, 2016

A list of notices from the federal register for March 2016 from agencies including the Department of the Interior, USGS, NOAA, NASA, and more.



USGS holds briefing on induced seismicity in the United States

Date: Tuesday, March 29, 2016

The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), with sponsorship from the Seismological Society of America, held a briefing on induced

seismicity in the United States.



DOI announces review of federal coal program

Date: Friday, March 25, 2016

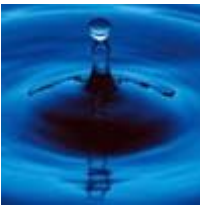
The Department of the Interior (DOI) released a notice of intent (NOI) that the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) will prepare a Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) to evaluate potential reforms to the federal coal program.



Two bills aimed at increasing diversity in STEM pass the House

Date: Tuesday, March 22, 2016

Two bills were introduced and passed in the House of Representatives, aimed at encouraging women to enter science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields.



White House holds water summit, federal agencies invest in water-research projects

Date: Tuesday, March 22, 2016

In celebration of World Water Day, The White House held a Water Summit on March 22 to highlight the need to conserve, protect, and better manage the nation's water resources.



BOEM releases proposed five-year offshore drilling plan

Date: Friday, March 18, 2016

The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) has released the second of three proposals for the 2017–2022 Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) Oil and Gas Leasing Program.



Rep. DelBene introduces legislation to reduce losses from landslide hazards

Date: Thursday, March 17, 2016

Congresswoman Suzan DelBene (D-WA) has introduced new legislation in an effort to decrease losses and damages as a result of landslides.



House Space Subcommittee discusses NASA FY17 budget

Date: Thursday, March 17, 2016

In a hearing hosted by the House Science, Space, and Technology Committee, Subcommittee on Space, Chairman Brian Babin (R-TX) lead a discussion of the fiscal year 2017 (FY 2017) Presidential Budget Request for NASA.



EESI and GEA hold briefing on the state of the geothermal energy industry

Date: Wednesday, March 16, 2016

The Environmental and Energy Study Institute (EESI) and Geothermal Energy Association (GEA) held a briefing on the state of geothermal energy on both national and global scales.



House Natural Resources Committee markup on NPS centennial bill

Date: Wednesday, March 16, 2016

The House Committee on Natural Resources marked up 14 bills today, including one titled the National Park Service Centennial Act (H.R. 4680) in honor of the National Park Service (NPS) celebrating their 100th year this August.



Senate committee discusses presidential natural resource mitigation policy

Date: Wednesday, March 16, 2016

The Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee held a hearing this week to discuss a memorandum released in November 2015 by President Obama, detailing his proposed policies for mitigating the environmental impacts of natural resource development.



Federal Register - February 2016

Date: Tuesday, March 1, 2016

A list of notices from the federal register for February 2016 from agencies including the Department of the Interior, USGS, NOAA, NASA, and more.



House committee holds hearing on California water supply

Date: Wednesday, February 24, 2016

The House Committee on Natural Resources, Subcommittee on Water, Power, and Oceans held a hearing to discuss the state of California's water supply.



DOE nuclear waste disposal study in North Dakota

Date: Monday, February 15, 2016

The Department of Energy is conducting a study to determine whether a site in North Dakota could potentially replace the Yucca Mountain Nuclear Waste Repository for storing long term, high level nuclear waste.