

Policy News & Monthly Review

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Senate Energy and Natural Resources holds Arctic Opportunities Hearing

Date: Thursday, March 5, 2015

The Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources held a hearing to evaluate opportunities for the United States to build on its status as an Arctic nation.



Ocean Leadership Consortium Public Policy Forum focuses on Arctic issues

Date: Wednesday, March 4, 2015

The 2015 Consortium for Ocean Leadership Public Policy Forum on Predicting and Preparing for a Changing Arctic took place on March 4.



House Science, Space, and Technology Committee: NSF, NIST FY 2016 budget hearing

Date: Friday, February 27, 2015

On February 27, the House Science, Space, and Technology Committee held a hearing on the President's proposed fiscal year (FY) 2016 budget for both the National Science Foundation (NSF) and the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST).



Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee: USFS FY 2016 budget hearing

Date: Thursday, February 26, 2015

The Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee held a hearing to examine the President's proposed fiscal year (FY) 2016 budget for the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) on February 26.



Obama renominates Kimball as USGS Director

Date: Thursday, February 26, 2015

President Obama renominated Dr. Suzette Kimball as Director of the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) on February 26, following the lapse of her nomination at the beginning of the 114th Congress in January.



Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee advances tsunami warning bill

Date: Thursday, February 26, 2015

The Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee marked up and passed the Tsunami Warning, Education, and Research Act of 2015 (H.R.34) on February 26.



Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee: DOI FY 2016 budget hearing

Date: Tuesday, February 24, 2015

On February 24, the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee held a hearing on the President's proposed fiscal year (FY) 2016 budget for the Department of the Interior (DOI).



President Obama vetoes Keystone XL pipeline legislation

Date: Tuesday, February 24, 2015

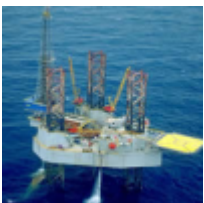
President Obama vetoed legislation authorizing construction of the Keystone XL pipeline on February 24, following passage of the House and Senate bills.



NASA names new Associate Administrator

Date: Monday, February 23, 2015

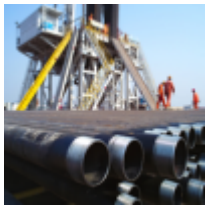
Steve Jurczyk is the new Associate Administrator for the Space Technology Mission Directorate at NASA, replacing Michael Gazarik who left NASA earlier in February.



Obama Administration proposes new Arctic offshore drilling rules

Date: Friday, February 20, 2015

On February 20, the Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement (BSEE) in conjunction with the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) proposed rules for future oil and gas drilling on 128 million acres in the Beaufort and Chukchi seas as allocated in the BOEM's 2017-2022 Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Plan.



USGS releases report on 60 years of hydraulic fracturing

Date: Tuesday, February 17, 2015

The United States Geological Survey (USGS) released a report on February 17 that examines trends in the spatial distribution, treatment fluids, additives, proppants, and water volumes for nearly 1 million hydraulically fractured wells and 1.8 million fracturing treatments during the period 1947 through 2010.



Grijalva introduces legislation to reform hardrock mining industry

Date: Friday, February 13, 2015

Representative Raul Grijalva (D-AZ), Ranking Member of the House Natural Resources Committee, introduced legislation this February that would overhaul the non-coal mining industry.



Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee: DOE FY 2016 budget hearing

Date: Thursday, February 12, 2015

On February 12, the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources held a hearing to discuss the fiscal year (FY) 2016 budget proposal for the Department of Energy (DOE).



Bureau of Ocean Energy Management moves forward on Arctic leasing

Date: Thursday, February 12, 2015

On February 12, the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) released their final environmental review for oil and gas leases in the Chukchi Sea off the coast of Alaska.



DSCOVR begins its journey to monitor solar wind

Date: Thursday, February 12, 2015

NASA's Deep Space Climate Observatory (DSCOVR) satellite launched February 12, beginning its nearly million mile journey to Lagrange Point L1, 932,000 miles from Earth between the Earth and the Sun.



House, Senate question gaps in satellite weather data

Date: Thursday, February 12, 2015

Concerns stemming from a recent Government Accountability Office (GAO) report on weather satellites have caught the attention of the House Science, Space, and Technology (SST) Committee and Senate appropriators.



BOEM announces new chief for renewable energy

Date: Wednesday, February 11, 2015

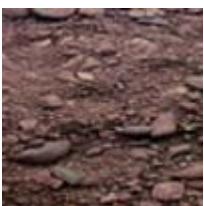
Jim Bennett is the new chief of the Renewable Energy Programs Office at the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM), a position left empty since Maureen Bornholdt retired last year.



National Academies reports urge geoengineering to counter climate change

Date: Tuesday, February 10, 2015

A National Academy of Sciences panel called for more research into geoengineering as a method to combat climate change in two reports released on February 10.



DOI distributes \$50 million for Western drought response

Date: Friday, February 6, 2015

On February 6, Interior Secretary Sally Jewell announced that \$50 million allocated by Congress for Western drought relief will be used by the Bureau of Reclamation, water districts, and other water users to increase efficiency and conserve water in drought-

stricken areas.



Obama announces his FY 2016 budget request

Date: Monday, February 2, 2015

President Obama released his fiscal year (FY) 2016 budget request on February 2, possibly indicating a return to normal fiscal order on Capitol Hill.



NASA launches Soil Moisture Active Passive satellite

Date: Saturday, January 31, 2015

On January 29, NASA launched the Soil Moisture Active Passive (SMAP) instrument, a satellite that will collect soil moisture data to enhance climate modeling and improve lives by predicting floods and droughts.



New committee members in House and Senate

Date: Saturday, January 31, 2015

Congressional committees in both the Senate and the House of Representatives welcome new members and say farewell to others in the 114th Congress. Although Republicans have finalized the majority of their committee assignments, Democrats are still working to place members.



Executive order creates new flood requirements for federal projects

Date: Friday, January 30, 2015

President Obama signed an executive order on January 30 requiring that federal projects be built two feet higher than the previous standard to protect against floods that may worsen as a result of climate change.



President and federal agencies propose new restrictions, leases in Arctic

Date: Thursday, January 29, 2015

In late January, the Obama administration and federal agencies proposed new policies governing Arctic oil and gas exploration.



Leasing for offshore wind farms sells half of allotments

Date: Thursday, January 29, 2015

On January 29, the Department of the Interior (DOI) held the largest sale of federal waters for offshore wind development with 742,000 acres open for bidding.



NOAA chooses Craig McLean as Assistant Administrator

Date: Tuesday, January 27, 2015

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) picked Craig McLean to be the next Assistant Administrator for the Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research (OAR).



Atlantic Ocean opened for outer continental shelf oil and gas leasing

Date: Tuesday, January 27, 2015

The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) announced its 2017-2022 Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing program which includes plans to open the Atlantic Ocean for oil and gas leasing.



NASA and NOAA declare 2014 the warmest year on record

Date: Monday, January 26, 2015

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and NASA released reports (NOAA, NASA) showing that 2014 was the warmest year on record for temperatures of both land and ocean surfaces. Japan's Meteorological Agency confirmed that their records also show 2014 as the warmest year.



Wildfire funding bill reintroduced by Sen. Wyden and Crapo

Date: Monday, January 26, 2015

Senators Ron Wyden (D-OR) and Mike Crapo (R-ID) reintroduced a bill to help fund wildfire suppression operations. If enacted, the bill would allow budget overruns incurred from fighting wildfires to be paid for with money earmarked to natural disasters rather than non-fire allocated accounts or fire prevention funding.



National Research Council reports on priorities in ocean research for next decade

Date: Friday, January 23, 2015

The National Research Council (NRC) issued a report on January 23 detailing eight priorities for the next decade for ocean research and laying out the difficult financial decisions the marine science community faces.



New director for USGS Earthquake Science Center

Date: Monday, January 12, 2015

On January 12, the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) named Dr. Steve Hickman as the new director of the Earthquake Science Center.



Senate amends, passes bill approving Keystone XL

Date: Friday, January 9, 2015

A bill approving Keystone XL passed out of committee, underwent the amendment process in the Senate, and was approved by the full Senate by a vote of 62-36 on January 29.



House passes bills on tsunami and windstorm research

Date: Wednesday, January 7, 2015

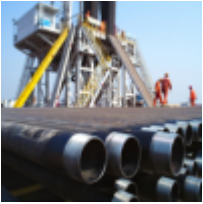
On January 7, the House passed two bills that focus on research and preparedness for tsunami and windstorm hazards.



New subcommittees announced for the House Natural Resources Committee

Date: Tuesday, January 6, 2015

The newly appointed Chair of the House Natural Resources Committee, Rep. Rob Bishop (R-UT), has changed the organizational structure of the subcommittees for the 114th Congress.



Process of hydraulic fracturing linked to Ohio earthquakes

Date: Monday, January 5, 2015

A report released January 5 by the Seismological Society of America (SSA) links hydraulic fracturing to earthquakes experienced in Ohio in 2014.



China ends export quotas on rare earth elements

Date: Wednesday, December 31, 2014

According to a statement released on December 31, China has ended export quotas they previously placed on rare earth elements (REEs) after the World Trade Organization (WTO) declared the quotas illegal in August 2014.



Draft World Ocean Assessment available for review

Date: Saturday, December 20, 2014

A draft of the first World Ocean Assessment (WOA) opened for review by registered experts on December 20.



Interior Secretary names new director of Bureau of Ocean Energy Management

Date: Thursday, December 18, 2014

Interior Secretary Sally Jewell named Abigail Ross Hopper as Director of the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) on

December 18.



New York bans hydraulic fracturing; Maryland reinstates it

Date: Wednesday, December 17, 2014

Following the results of two reports that assessed public health risks associated with hydraulic fracturing, New York Governor Andrew Cuomo upheld his state's moratorium on the practice while Maryland's outgoing-Governor Martin O'Malley plans to overturn their moratorium, allowing hydraulic fracturing in the state.



NOAA releases annual Arctic report card

Date: Wednesday, December 17, 2014

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) released its annual Arctic report card on December 17, which analyzes climatic trends in the region.



Department of the Interior announces updated scientific integrity policy

Date: Wednesday, December 17, 2014

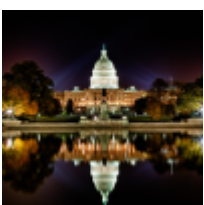
On December 17, the Department of the Interior (DOI) announced an updated version of its current scientific integrity policy, which was introduced in 2011.



President Obama prohibits offshore drilling in Bristol Bay

Date: Tuesday, December 16, 2014

On December 16, President Obama enacted an indefinite moratorium on offshore oil and gas development in Bristol Bay, Alaska.



Senate confirms energy nominees

Date: Tuesday, December 16, 2014

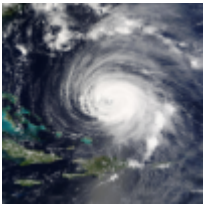
On December 16, the Senate unanimously confirmed by voice vote several of President Obama's long-standing nominees for energy advisory posts in one of the final actions of the 113th Congress.



New data measure water losses across the Western U.S.

Date: Tuesday, December 16, 2014

On December 16, NASA and U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) scientists released separate studies reporting significant declines in groundwater in the Western U.S.



GAO report: NOAA likely to experience gap in satellite weather data in 2016

Date: Tuesday, December 16, 2014

On December 16, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) released a report on the status of the Joint Polar Satellite System (JPSS), which will replace the current polar orbiting satellite, Suomi-National Polar-orbiting Partnership (S-NPP).



Joint SR 530 Landslide Commission releases final report on Oso Landslide

Date: Monday, December 15, 2014

On December 15, the Washington State Joint SR 530 Landslide Commission released its final report in response to the tragic March 2014 Oso landslide that destroyed homes and roads and claimed 43 lives.



Lima climate negotiations create road map for 2015 Paris negotiations

Date: Monday, December 15, 2014

United Nations (UN) climate negotiations in Lima closed on December 15 with an agreement that could lead to a global climate accord in Paris next year.



Congress passes fiscal year 2015 spending bill

Date: Saturday, December 13, 2014

After passing a 2-day extension of the existing continuing resolution (CR), which funded the federal government through December 11, Congress passed a fiscal year (FY) 2015 omnibus spending bill on December 13 and avoided a government shutdown.



Senate passes public lands bills with defense authorization

Date: Friday, December 12, 2014

On December 12, the Senate passed a group of public lands bills as part of the 2015 defense authorization that include expansions of wilderness and park lands as well as changes to energy, mining, and logging policy on public lands.



Los Angeles Mayor proposes seismic retrofit for riskiest buildings

Date: Monday, December 8, 2014

Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti released a report on December 8 that proposes new, stricter building codes aimed at the structures mostly likely to collapse in an earthquake.