

## 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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### **Senate moves legislation to address harmful algal blooms**

**Date:** Wednesday, September 27, 2017

The Senate unanimously passes the Harmful Algal Bloom and Hypoxia Research and Control Amendments Act of 2017, introduced on May 4 by Senators Bill Nelson (D-FL), Gary Peters (D-MI), and Rob Portman (R-OH).



### **Congress considers presidential nominations to key agency positions**

**Date:** Wednesday, September 27, 2017

The Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation held a hearing on September 27 for four presidential nominations, including Howard “Skip” Elliott to head the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration, and Rear Admiral Timothy Gallaudet, an oceanographer and climate expert, to be Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere.



### **Hardrock mining reform bill introduced in Senate**

**Date:** Tuesday, September 19, 2017

Senator Tom Udall (D-NM), along with four Democratic cosponsors, introduced the Hardrock Mining and Reclamation Act of 2017.



### **Bipartisan legislation introduced to curb carbon pollution**

**Date:** Thursday, September 14, 2017

Representative Mike Conaway (R-TX-11) introduced the Carbon Capture Act (CCA). This legislation incentivizes Carbon Capture and Sequestration (CCS) projects, which use technologies to capture up to 90 percent of carbon dioxide emissions produced from industrial processes, including electricity generation.



### **White House issues plans for prompt National Environmental Policy Act reviews**

**Date:** Thursday, September 14, 2017

On September 14, the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) published a list of actions that it will take to revise the federal environmental review process and authorization for infrastructure projects.



### **Bill introduced to reauthorize geologic mapping program through 2023**

**Date:** Thursday, September 14, 2017

Senators Murkowski (R-AK) and King (I-ME) introduced a bill (S.1787) to reauthorize the National Cooperative Geologic Mapping Program (NCGMP) through 2023.

House chamber

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### **House passes 8 remaining appropriations bills**

**Date:** Thursday, September 14, 2017

The House passed 8 remaining appropriations bills in a single package on September 14 to provide all discretionary funding for the Federal Government in fiscal year (FY) 2018.



### **Bill introduced to reauthorize geologic mapping program through 2023**

**Date:** Monday, September 11, 2017

On September 11, Senator Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) introduced a bill to reauthorize the National Cooperative Geologic Mapping Program through 2023.



### **Bill to reauthorize National Earthquake Hazards Reduction Program introduced in Senate**

**Date:** Wednesday, September 6, 2017

Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-CA) introduced a bill to permanently reauthorize the National Earthquake Hazards Reduction Program (NEHRP).



### **Bill to reauthorize National Earthquake Hazards Reduction Program introduced in Senate**

**Date:** Wednesday, September 6, 2017

Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-CA) introduced a bill to permanently reauthorize the National Earthquake Hazards Reduction Program (NEHRP). The bill calls for the creation of a set of maps showing active faults and folds, liquefaction risk, landslide risk, and susceptibility to seismically induced hazards.



### **House discusses 3 bills on energy and mineral development**

**Date:** Wednesday, September 6, 2017

The House Natural Resources Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources discussed three bills introduced before the August recess. Two of these bills seek to amend to the Mineral Leasing Act of 1920, while the third bill proposes a new method for state onshore oil and gas leasing on federal lands.



### **Jim Bridenstine nominated to NASA Administrator**

**Date:** Saturday, September 2, 2017

President Donald Trump announced his intent to nominate Representative Jim Bridenstine (R-OK-1) to serve as the next Administrator for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). If confirmed by the Senate, Bridenstine would be the first NASA Administrator to be appointed with a professional background in politics, rather than a science and engineering background.



### **Legislative deadlines loom as August recess comes to an end**

**Date:** Thursday, August 31, 2017

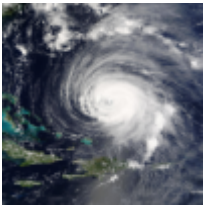
After Congress returns from the August recess, the Senate will have 17 legislative days and the House will have 12 legislative days remaining before the September 30 deadline to agree upon and pass all discretionary appropriations legislation in order to avoid a government shutdown.



### **Hurricane Harvey puts additional strain on the federal appropriations process**

**Date:** Wednesday, August 30, 2017

Hurricane Harvey made landfall on the Gulf coast of Texas as a category 4 storm on August 25, dumping massive amounts of rain on southeast Texas and surrounding areas. The projected disaster relief costs may put a large financial strain on Congress when it returns to session after the August recess.



### **Federal science agencies help prepare and respond to Hurricane Harvey**

**Date:** Tuesday, August 29, 2017

In anticipation of Hurricane Harvey making landfall on the Gulf Coast, several federal science agencies prepared for the massive storm by monitoring its development and helping direct FEMA's resources to the likely hard-hit areas.



### **White House releases research and development budget priorities for FY 2019**

**Date:** Thursday, August 17, 2017

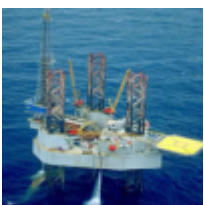
The White House issued guidance for research and development priorities for fiscal year 2019, focusing on shifting projects to private industry and supporting basic research that can best serve the American people.



### **USGS provides information for partnering with 3DEP in 2018**

**Date:** Thursday, August 17, 2017

The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) hosted two informational webinars about partnering with the 3-Dimensional Elevation Program (3DEP) for fiscal year (FY) 2018, and changes for this year's Broad Agency Announcement.



### **Federal agency declares Gulf of Mexico safe for seismic surveys**

**Date:** Tuesday, August 8, 2017

Four years after beginning an Environmental Impact Survey, the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) declared that the

Gulf of Mexico is safe for seismic surveys.



### **Scientific societies question red team/blue team climate debate**

**Date:** Thursday, August 3, 2017

Sixteen scientific societies sent a letter to EPA Administrator Pruitt questioning the need for a red team/blue team debate on climate science in light of the decades of peer review done on the subject.

House chamber

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### **Senate confirms Federal Energy Regulatory Commission nominees**

**Date:** Thursday, August 3, 2017

The Senate confirmed two new members for the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) on August 3. Neil Chatterjee, former aide to Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY), and Robert Powelson from the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission have joined Commissioner Cheryl LaFleur, bringing the number of empty FERC seats down to two.



### **Wildfires emerging as a hot topic on the Hill**

**Date:** Thursday, August 3, 2017

As the U.S. endures another fire season, legislators on the Hill are seeking to address some of the challenges associated with managing wildland fires on federal land. A hearing held by the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources on August 3 tackled the complex challenges in reducing wildland fire risk, focusing primarily on wildfire management programs and technologies.



### **House and Senate committees approve five appropriations bills for DOE, CJS, and Interior and Environment**

**Date:** Thursday, July 27, 2017

The House of Representatives has been moving Fiscal Year (FY) 2018 budget bills out of committee more quickly than the Senate. The full House has passed one bill, for the Department of Defense; no appropriations bills have reached the Senate floor yet. Congress and the President must agree a budget or a Continuing Resolution by September 30 to avoid a government shutdown. More detail on agency budgets is available [here](#).



### **DOI announces Craters of the Moon, Hanford Reach, and Canyons of the Ancients no longer under review**

**Date:** Friday, July 21, 2017

On July 13, Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke announced that Craters of the Moon National Monument in Idaho and Hanford Reach National Monument in Washington are no longer under review by the Department of the Interior (DOI). The announcement of another unaltered monument, the Canyons of the Ancients in Colorado, came days later.



### **Zinke defends DOI budget proposal to Senate ENR Committee**

**Date:** Thursday, July 20, 2017

On June 20, Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke met with the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources to defend the President's proposed fiscal year (FY) 2018 budget for the Department of the Interior (DOI).

House chamber

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### **President Trump announces nominations for key positions**

**Date:** Thursday, July 20, 2017

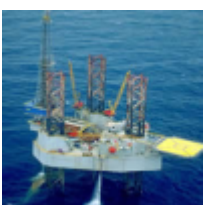
On July 20, the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources held a hearing to consider nominations for key positions at the Department of Energy (DOE) and Department of the Interior (DOI).



### **House holds oversight hearing on hardrock mining**

**Date:** Thursday, July 20, 2017

On July 20, the House Natural Resources Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources held an oversight hearing to discuss the future of hardrock mining in the United States. Streamlining the permitting process, royalties reform, and reclamation concerns were among the topics discussed at the hearing.



### **Atlantic offshore oil and gas development discussed in House**

**Date:** Wednesday, July 12, 2017

The House Natural Resources Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources held an oversight hearing on July 12 to evaluate the potential development of offshore drilling on the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS).



#### **White House OSTP remains understaffed following recent departures**

**Date:** Wednesday, July 12, 2017

The White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) continues to operate without a director and has recently lost some science division staff.



#### **President Trump reestablishes National Space Council**

**Date:** Friday, July 7, 2017

On July 7, the Executive Office of the President published Executive Order 13803, which was signed by President Trump on June 30 reestablishing the National Space Council.



#### **Secretary Zinke signs order to streamline permitting for onshore resources development**

**Date:** Thursday, July 6, 2017

Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke signed Secretarial Order 3354 on July 6 to promote energy exploration and development through better management of leasing programs for onshore oil and gas resources and solid mineral resources on federal lands.



#### **Appropriations subcommittee holds EPA budget hearing**

**Date:** Thursday, June 15, 2017

The House Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies held a hearing on June 15 to evaluate President Trump's budget proposal for the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).





### **BLM postpones compliance deadlines for methane emissions**

**Date:** Thursday, June 15, 2017

On June 15, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) posted a notice in the Federal Register indefinitely postponing certain compliance dates within the Methane Waste Prevention Rule.



### **Secretary Zinke recommends reduction of Bears Ears**

**Date:** Monday, June 12, 2017

An interim report by Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke released on June 12 provides preliminary recommendations regarding the review of the Bears Ears National Monument in Utah.



### **House committee questions Secretary Zinke about DOI FY2018 budget**

**Date:** Thursday, June 8, 2017

On June 8, Department of Interior (DOI) Secretary Ryan Zinke testified before the House Committee on Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies at a hearing on the DOI Fiscal Year (FY) 2018 budget.



### **NSF budget hearing for FY 2018**

**Date:** Wednesday, June 7, 2017

On June 7, the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies held a hearing to discuss the President's fiscal year (FY) 2018 budget request for the National Science Foundation (NSF).



### **House holds oversight hearing on Abandoned Mine Lands Program**

**Date:** Wednesday, June 7, 2017

On June 7, the House Committee on Natural Resources Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources held an oversight hearing about the Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSMRE) Abandoned Mine Lands (AML) Program. The AML Program is set to expire in 2021.



### **President Trump withdraws U.S. from the Paris Climate Agreement**

**Date:** Thursday, June 1, 2017

President Trump announced his intent to withdraw the U.S. from the Paris Climate Accord on Thursday, June 1.



### **DOE seeks public feedback on limiting regulatory costs**

**Date:** Tuesday, May 30, 2017

The Department of Energy (DOE) requests public comments and information regarding the implementation of President Donald Trump's Executive Order 13771, "Reducing Regulation and Controlling Regulatory Costs."



### **Senate passes Digital Coast bill authorizing NOAA's Digital Coast program**

**Date:** Thursday, May 25, 2017

On May 25, the Senate passed the Digital Coast Act (S.110) to help coastal communities prepare for storms, adapt to rising sea levels, and strengthen economic planning efforts.



### **Good Samaritan cleanup bill receives positive feedback from committee**

**Date:** Thursday, May 25, 2017

The House Natural Resources Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources held a legislative hearing on a discussion draft of the Community Reclamation Partnerships Act (H.R.\_\_\_\_) to be introduced by Representative Darin LaHood (R-IL-18).

Badlands Topography, Drumheller

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### **House Natural Resources Committee reviews long-standing federal land laws**

**Date:** Wednesday, May 24, 2017

The House Natural Resources Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations held a hearing on May 24 to examine three major laws affecting the management of federal and tribal lands, as well as designated wilderness areas.



### **President Trump releases FY 2018 Budget Request**

**Date:** Tuesday, May 23, 2017

On May 23, President Donald Trump unveiled his full budget request to Congress for fiscal year (FY) 2018.



### **FY 2018 budget request seeks to eliminate NASA Office of Education**

**Date:** Tuesday, May 23, 2017

The President's budget request seeks to completely eliminate NASA's Office of Education (OE) and its portfolio of programs and projects.



### **FY 2018 budget request would cut USGS programs severely**

**Date:** Tuesday, May 23, 2017

President Trump proposed a budget of \$922.2 million for the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) in his request for fiscal year (FY) 2018, which is a 15% cut from the FY 2017 enacted level.



### **DOI is conducting a review of 27 national monuments**

**Date:** Thursday, May 11, 2017

As directed by the President's Executive Order 13792, the Department of the Interior (DOI) is conducting a review of certain national monuments designated or expanded since 1996 under the Antiquities Act.

Louisiana, Mississippi, Florida Coast

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### **Senator Rubio introduces bill to extend drilling suspension off Florida's coast**

**Date:** Thursday, May 4, 2017

On May 4, Senator Marco Rubio (R-FL) introduced the Florida Shores Protection and Fairness Act (S.1041).



#### **Climate resolutions bill re-introduced in the House**

**Date:** Wednesday, May 3, 2017

Representative John Delaney (D-MD-6) introduced the Climate Solutions Commission Act (H.R.2326), which aims to accelerate the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, on May 3.



#### **Space Weather Research and Forecasting Act passes the Senate**

**Date:** Tuesday, May 2, 2017

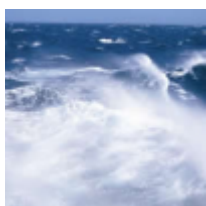
The Senate passed the Space Weather Research and Forecasting Act (S.141) on May 2 to develop an integrated strategy for the coordination of federal government activities to improve the nation's ability to prepare for, mitigate, and respond to the impacts of space weather events.



#### **Congress reaches final agreement on FY 2017 funding**

**Date:** Monday, May 1, 2017

On May 1, Congress agreed to advance an omnibus appropriations bill for the current fiscal year (FY) 2017, which will fund the government through September 30, 2017.



#### **DOI reconsiders seismic surveying in the Atlantic**

**Date:** Monday, May 1, 2017

On May 10, the Department of the Interior (DOI) announced that it will reconsider applications from ocean seismic survey companies to carry out geological and geophysical activities off the Atlantic coast.