

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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Executive order undoes much of Obama’s climate legacy

Date: Tuesday, March 28, 2017

President Donald Trump issued an executive order “Promoting Energy Independence and Economic Growth” on March 28.



Senate hearing examines U.S. reliance on foreign sources of minerals

Date: Tuesday, March 28, 2017

Industry and agency experts examined the United States’ increasing dependence on foreign sources of minerals on March 28.



Bill introduced to prepare northwest for next earthquake

Date: Monday, March 27, 2017

The Pacific Northwest Earthquake Preparedness Act (H.R.654) moved a step closer to becoming law when the bill passed the House on March 27.



Workshop on wildfire management highlights areas for improvement

Date: Monday, March 27, 2017

The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine held a workshop on long-term approaches for wildfire management on March 27.



Senate and House introduce landslide bills to promote research and save lives

Date: Wednesday, March 22, 2017

Senators Maria Cantwell (D-WA) and Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) introduced the bipartisan National Landslide Preparation Act (S.698) on March 22.



Science committee hearings delve into NSF priorities

Date: Tuesday, March 21, 2017

The House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, Subcommittee on Research and Technology held two oversight hearings on funding priorities for the National Science Foundation (NSF).



President's FY 2018 budget blueprint cuts science agency funding

Date: Thursday, March 16, 2017

President Trump released his fiscal year (FY) 2018 budget blueprint outlining funding priorities and top-line spending levels for federal agencies.



Bill introduced to help at-risk water systems

Date: Thursday, March 16, 2017

Representative Scott Peters (D-CA-52) introduced the Secure and Resilient Water Systems Act (H.R.1579) on March 16.



Bill to stimulate investment in offshore energy development

Date: Wednesday, March 15, 2017

On March 15, Senator Bill Cassidy (R-LA) introduced a bill that would authorize more lease sales on the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS).



House Republicans introduce resolution on climate change

Date: Monday, March 13, 2017

House Republicans introduced a resolution (H.Res.195) on March 13 that expresses commitment to environmental stewardship.



Senate Science Committee submits budget recommendations for FY 2018

Date: Friday, March 10, 2017

The Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee submitted its Views and Estimates for Fiscal Year (FY) 2018 to the Senate Budget Committee on March 10.



House passes bills to change EPA science methods

Date: Wednesday, March 8, 2017

On March 8, two members of the House Science, Space, and Technology Committee introduced bills addressing scientific research and review practices at the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).



Soda ash producers may receive royalty cut

Date: Tuesday, March 7, 2017

Soda ash, also known as sodium carbonate, which is used in products such as glass, detergent, and other industrial goods, may receive a royalty cut.



Bills introduced to permanently authorize Land and Water Conservation Fund

Date: Tuesday, March 7, 2017

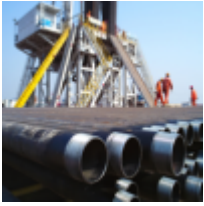
Two bills introduced in the Senate and House would permanently authorize the Land and Water Conservation Fund.



Domestic supply of critical materials would be boosted by new bill

Date: Tuesday, March 7, 2017

Representative Duncan Hunter (R-CA-50) introduced the "Materials Essential to American Leadership and Security (METALS) Act" (H.R.1407) to ensure the U.S. has access to a sustainable and secure supply of materials to safeguard our national security on March 7.



Interior Secretary proposed 73-million acre lease sale for Gulf of Mexico

Date: Monday, March 6, 2017

The Department of the Interior (DOI) will offer 73 million acres, including all available areas in the Gulf of Mexico, for oil and gas exploration and development, according to an announcement from Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke on March 6.



House passes Regulatory Integrity Act

Date: Thursday, March 2, 2017

The House passed the Regulatory Integrity Act of 2017 (H.R.1004) on March 2.



Nuclear energy bill introduced in Senate

Date: Thursday, March 2, 2017

A bipartisan group of senators introduced the Nuclear Energy Innovation and Modernization Act (S.512) on March 2.

House chamber

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House passes bill to increase regulatory oversight

Date: Wednesday, March 1, 2017

The House passed the OIRA Insight, Reform, and Accountability Act (H.R.1009) on March 1, 2017.



Republican Party maintains Senate and House majority after election

Date: Friday, December 2, 2016

The Republican Party has maintained its majority in the Senate and House of Representatives after the 2016 Congressional

Election.



Congress passes outdoor recreation bill

Date: Monday, November 28, 2016

Congress successfully passed the Outdoor Recreation Jobs and Economic Impact Act of 2016 (H.R.4665).



Secretary of the Interior presents plan to block future mining outside Yellowstone

Date: Monday, November 21, 2016

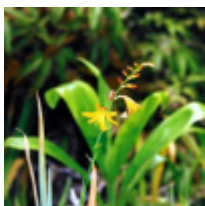
Secretary of the Interior, Sally Jewell, announced a plan to block mining development outside of Yellowstone National Park.



International Energy Agency releases 2016 World Energy Outlook

Date: Friday, November 18, 2016

The International Energy Agency released its 2016 World Energy Outlook on November 18.



EESI holds briefing on future environmental actions to be taken in China

Date: Thursday, November 17, 2016

The Environmental and Energy Study Institute held a briefing to address the actions China plans to take to achieve its goals under the Paris Climate Agreement.



White House releases Mid-Century Deep Decarbonization Strategy

Date: Wednesday, November 16, 2016

The White House released its Mid-Century Strategy for Deep Decarbonization, which identifies key actions the United States must take to reduce its carbon footprint by 2050.



Department of the Interior passes methane emission reduction rule, faces lawsuit

Date: Tuesday, November 15, 2016

The Department of the Interior released a final rule to cut methane emissions from oil and gas operations on federal and tribal lands.



USGS announces grant program to support National Groundwater Monitoring Network

Date: Thursday, November 10, 2016

The U.S. Geological Survey has announced a new grant program that will award up to \$2 million in cooperative agreements for new state and local water resource agencies participating in the National Groundwater Monitoring Network.



National Academy of Sciences hosts Cascadia Subduction Zone panel

Date: Thursday, November 10, 2016

On November 10, the National Academy of Sciences hosted a panel discussion on the Cascadia Subduction Zone and its potential for large scale fault rupture.



Donald Trump elected 45th President of the United States

Date: Wednesday, November 9, 2016

Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump received 279 electoral votes on November 9, defeating Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton and securing his presidency.

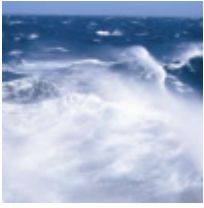


NASA and FEMA hold asteroid emergency planning exercise in El Segundo, California

Date: Friday, November 4, 2016

NASA and the Federal Emergency Management Agency hosted an asteroid emergency planning exercise on October 25 in El

Segundo, California.



BOEM Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body submits Ocean Action Plan

Date: Thursday, November 3, 2016

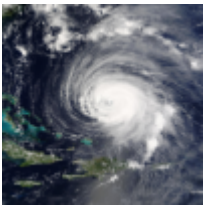
The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management's Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body submitted its Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Action Plan to the National Ocean Council for certification on November 3.



Obama Administration releases Resilience Opportunities report

Date: Monday, October 31, 2016

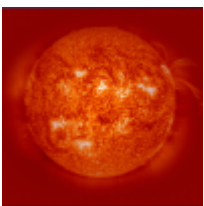
The White House Council on Climate Preparedness and Resilience recently released a report entitled Opportunities to Enhance the Nation's Resilience to Climate Change.



NSF and NOAA partner to promote weather hazards response

Date: Thursday, October 27, 2016

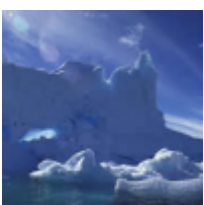
The The National Science Foundation (NSF) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) are partnering to study how to improve communications during severe weather events and to encourage people to respond appropriately.



Smithsonian Air and Space Museum hosts space weather panel

Date: Wednesday, October 26, 2016

The Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum hosted a panel on October 25 to discuss advances in space weather research and forecasting.



United States and United Kingdom fund research on Thwaites Glacier, Antarctica

Date: Monday, October 24, 2016

The National Science Foundation (NSF) and the U.K.-based Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) are partnering to fund \$25 million in scientific research to study the Thwaites Glacier in West Antarctica.



BOEM completed post-Hurricane Sandy initiatives

Date: Monday, October 24, 2016

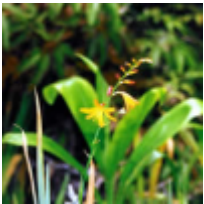
The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) recently completed two projects undertaken after Hurricane Sandy.



White House highlights small satellite technology innovation and entrepreneurship

Date: Friday, October 21, 2016

The White House announced a new initiative to identify and establish programs to drive innovation using small satellite (smallsat) technology.



Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee holds water hearing in Hawaii

Date: Tuesday, October 18, 2016

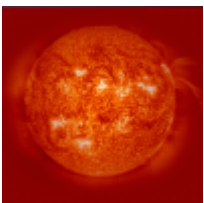
On October 18, the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources held a hearing at the Hawaiian State Capitol in Honolulu.



President Obama hosts Frontiers Conference, opens with \$300 million investment in sciences

Date: Thursday, October 13, 2016

The White House hosted the Frontiers Conference this October in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.



White House issues executive order addressing space weather

Date: Thursday, October 13, 2016

On October 13, 2016, President Obama released an executive order addressing space weather hazards in the U.S.



World Energy Council releases 2016 World Energy Resources Report

Date: Wednesday, October 12, 2016

The World Energy Council, a United Nations-accredited global energy consortium, released its 2016 World Energy Resources Report on October 12.



The current status of the Paris Climate Agreement

Date: Wednesday, October 5, 2016

The Paris Climate Agreement reached the minimum requirements necessary to enter into force this October, four years earlier than the previously anticipated 2020 target.



Five federal agencies take action to improve water and energy efficiency

Date: Tuesday, October 4, 2016

Five federal agencies are working to increase consumers' awareness of the benefits of switching to water- and energy-efficient fixtures and building codes.



Senate and House pass Water Resources Development Act

Date: Friday, September 30, 2016

On September 15, the Senate passed the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) (S. 2848), marking a major milestone in the two-year water policy bill. The bill passed with a final vote of 95-3. The House version of the bill was voted upon once an amendment authorizing funding to aid Flint, MI, was approved, and it passed on September 28 with a final vote of 399-25.



House subcommittee on research and technology holds hearing on academic research regulations

Date: Thursday, September 29, 2016

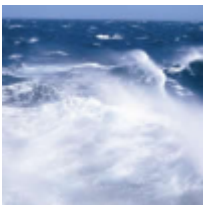
On September 29, 2016, the House Science, Space, & Technology Subcommittee on Research and Technology held a hearing on restrictive and costly academic research regulations.



Budget update for September

Date: Wednesday, September 28, 2016

The House and Senate successfully passed a short-term spending bill on September 28 that will fund the federal government through December 9, 2016.



Congressional briefing held on ocean acidification

Date: Friday, September 23, 2016

The Consortium for Ocean Leadership (COL) held a briefing on the economic impacts of ocean acidification (OA), or the process in which the ocean absorbs CO₂ from the atmosphere, making its pH slightly more acidic.



Senate committee passes two bills on women in STEM

Date: Wednesday, September 21, 2016

The Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee considered two House bills promoting women in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) fields on September 21, 2016.



President Obama signs climate change memorandum

Date: Wednesday, September 21, 2016

On September 21, 2016, President Obama signed a memorandum addressing national security concerns posed by variations in Earth's climate.



Senate meets to markup NASA reauthorization bill

Date: Wednesday, September 21, 2016

On September 21, the Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation (CST) Committee convened a full committee markup on several bills, including a bill to reauthorize NASA, known as the NASA Transition Authorization Act of 2016 (S.3346).

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