

Policy News & Monthly Review

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Volcano early warning and monitoring bill discussed in Senate hearing

Date: Saturday, September 17, 2016

On September 17, Senate Committee on Energy & Natural Resources Chairman Senator Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) and Ranking Member Senator Maria Cantwell (D-WA) introduced their National Volcano Early Warning and Monitoring System Act (S.2056). On September 22, they discussed the bill in a hearing with the committee.



Federal Appeals Court halts construction on North Dakota Access Pipeline

Date: Friday, September 16, 2016

On September 16, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit ordered a complete freeze on construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline near Lake Oahe, North Dakota.



Bipartisan coalition of Senators endorse Earth Science Week resolution

Date: Thursday, September 15, 2016

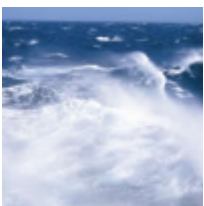
On September 15, Senator Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) introduced a resolution (S.Res.562) officially designating the week of October 9-15, 2016, as Earth Science Week (ESW). The resolution successfully passed the Senate by unanimous consent on September 28.



House Subcommittee discusses U.S. energy security

Date: Thursday, September 15, 2016

The House Energy and Commerce Committee's Subcommittee on Energy and Power held a hearing this September to discuss the Department of Energy's (DOE) role in national, economic, and energy security.



President Obama designates the first marine national monument in the Atlantic Ocean

Date: Thursday, September 15, 2016

September 15, 2016



Secretary of the Interior approves Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan

Date: Wednesday, September 14, 2016

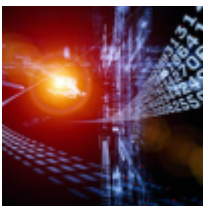
Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell approved Phase I of the Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan (DRECP) this September.



Conference Committee Meeting held on the Energy Policy Modernization Act

Date: Thursday, September 8, 2016

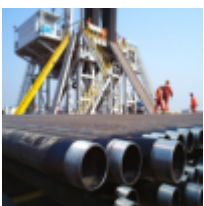
House and Senate conferees for the Energy Policy Modernization Act met this September to discuss the progress they had made on reconciling the House (H.R. 8) and Senate (S. 2012) versions of the bill.



House Subcommittee on Space holds hearing on commercial remote sensing

Date: Wednesday, September 7, 2016

The House Science, Space, and Technology Committee's Subcommittee on Space held a hearing on September 7, which assessed how previous legislation has impacted the private sector's ability to obtain licenses and data for commercial remote sensing purposes.



California Court Orders Obama Administration to Conduct Fracking Review

Date: Tuesday, September 6, 2016

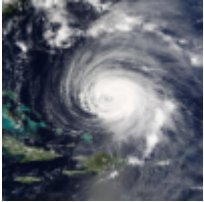
On September 6, the U.S. District Court for the Central District of California issued an order to the Obama Administration calling for further environmental review of the effects of hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, in California.



Happy 100th Birthday to the National Park Service!

Date: Thursday, August 25, 2016

The National Park Service celebrated its centennial on August 25, 2016.



NOAA launches new computer model for flood forecasting

Date: Tuesday, August 16, 2016

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) recently launched its National Water Model (NWM), a new hydrologic model that the agency claims will yield the “biggest improvement in flood forecasting the country has ever seen.”



Wildfire funding issue may be solved in energy conference

Date: Monday, August 15, 2016

Senators Mike Crapo (R-ID), Jim Risch (R-ID), and Ron Wyden (D-OR) spoke optimistically that a House-Senate conference committee can work to resolve differences on the North American Energy Security and Infrastructure Act of 2016 (S. 2012 & H.R. 8).



BLM, industry, and interest groups spar over public land lease sales

Date: Friday, August 12, 2016

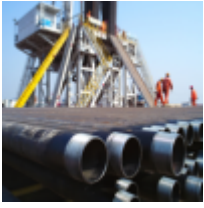
The Western Energy Alliance (WEA) filed a lawsuit in the U.S. District Court for New Mexico to challenge the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) for not holding quarterly oil and gas lease sales.



Thirteen states sue over EPA methane rule

Date: Thursday, August 11, 2016

Thirteen states have sued the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) over three new updates to the New Source Performance Standards (NSPS) under the President's Climate Action Plan: Strategy to Reduce Methane Emissions and the Clean Air Act.



EPA Science Advisory Board concerned over hydraulic fracturing conclusions

Date: Thursday, August 11, 2016

The Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Science Advisory Board (SAB) released its final report assessing EPA's recent study of potential impacts of hydraulic fracturing for oil and gas on drinking water resources.



Interior Department recommends states move away from self-bonding

Date: Tuesday, August 9, 2016

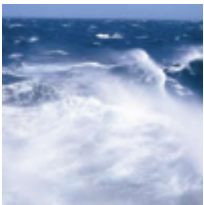
The Department of the Interior's (DOI) Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSMRE) has issued guidance suggesting that states move away from self-bonding, or the act of putting aside cash, bonds, or other securities for mining reclamation using their current financial health as collateral.



President Obama appoints new official to Arctic post

Date: Friday, August 5, 2016

President Barack Obama announced his intent to appoint Dr. Jackie Richter-Menge to the United States Arctic Research Commission (USARC).



UNESCO and IUCN issue report calling for the creation of oceanic World Heritage Sites

Date: Friday, August 5, 2016

The United National Education, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Heritage Centre and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) are calling for the creation of the first oceanic World Heritage Sites.



Webinar explores proposed nuclear waste storage solutions

Date: Tuesday, July 26, 2016

The Council of State Governments' (CGS) Southern and Midwestern Legislative Conferences hosted a webinar to explore nuclear waste storage solutions.



House Natural Resources panel considers renewable energy on public lands

Date: Wednesday, July 13, 2016

The House Natural Resources Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources held a hearing to discuss the Public Land Renewable Energy Development Act (H.R.2663), a bipartisan bill with 67 cosponsors that was introduced by Rep. Paul Gosar (R-AZ) in 2015.



Hearing to revise Superfund implementation for first time since enactment

Date: Wednesday, July 13, 2016

The House Environment and the Economy Subcommittee held a hearing to examine implementation of the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA), commonly known as Superfund.



Solving western water supply problems remains an ongoing debate

Date: Tuesday, July 12, 2016

The House Natural Resources Committee on Water, Power, and Oceans Subcommittee met to discuss conflicting proposals between the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) on water release from the Shasta Dam.



Hearing calls for investment in Coast Guard capabilities in the Arctic

Date: Tuesday, July 12, 2016

The House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee held a hearing on the Coast Guard's Arctic capabilities led by Chairman Duncan Hunter (R-CA) and Ranking Member John Garamendi (D-CA).



Briefing highlights role of geoscience in reducing lahar hazards

Date: Tuesday, July 12, 2016

The Hazards Caucus Alliance, a network of organizations that promotes nationwide natural disaster resilience, held a briefing to highlight the role that science plays in protecting communities that are vulnerable to lahars.



Senator introduces bill to promote energy research and cut wind tax credits

Date: Tuesday, July 12, 2016

Senator Lamar Alexander (R-TN) introduced a bill (S. 3169) that would authorize new basic energy research funding for the Department of Energy (DOE) Office of Science programs by eliminating the long-standing wind production tax credit (PTC) that has helped to expand wind power production in recent years.



House passes two energy research bills

Date: Monday, July 11, 2016

The Solar Fuels Innovation Act (H.R.5638) and the Electricity Storage Innovation Act (H.R.5640) passed the House by voice vote this July. The bills, which require the Department of Energy (DOE) to carry out two new basic research initiatives, received bipartisan support.



Obama Administration releases new set of rules to govern offshore exploratory drilling in the Arctic

Date: Thursday, July 7, 2016

The Department of the Interior (DOI) released their final Arctic Rule regulating exploratory drilling on the Arctic Outer Continental Shelf (OCS).



House approves bill to help clean up abandoned mines

Date: Thursday, July 7, 2016

With supermajority approval, the House Chamber passed the Bureau of Land Management Foundation Act (H.R. 3844) to address the issue of acid mine drainage from an estimated 500,000 abandoned mine operations in the U.S.



House Science Committee hearing focuses on NOAA and DOD satellites

Date: Thursday, July 7, 2016

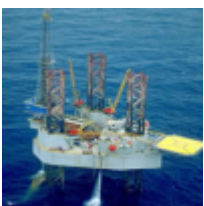
The House Committee on Science, Space, & Technology held a hearing to discuss the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and Department of Defense's (DOD) current and future satellite missions.



Hearing addresses the future of the proposed Yucca Mountain nuclear waste site

Date: Thursday, July 7, 2016

The House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Environment and the Economy held a hearing led by Subcommittee Chairman John Shimkus (R-IL) and Subcommittee Ranking Member Paul Tonko (D-NY) to gather information in order to move forward with federal licensing of a nuclear waste repository at Yucca Mountain, Nevada.



Interior Department may move offshore oil and gas lease sales online

Date: Wednesday, July 6, 2016

The House Natural Resources Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources held a hearing on the Innovation in Offshore Leasing Act (H.R. 5577).

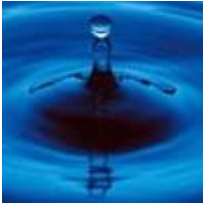


Senate committee passes COMPETES successor

Date: Wednesday, June 29, 2016

The Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation held a markup of the American Innovation and

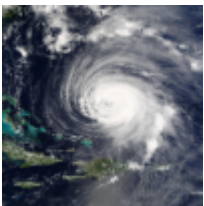
Competitiveness Act (S. 3084) and a number of other bills on June 29.



Hearing to address contentious tribal water rights issues

Date: Wednesday, June 29, 2016

The Senate Indian Affairs Committee held a hearing led by Chairman John Barrasso (R-WY) to discuss bills addressing contentious tribal water rights in Montana and Arizona (S. 3013 and S. 2959) and repealing obsolete laws relating to Native Americans (S. 2796).



National Academies Roundtable holds forum and workshop on community resilience

Date: Tuesday, June 28, 2016

The ResilientAmerica Roundtable held their State of Resilience Leadership Forum and Community Workshop, aimed at assessing the current state of resilience on a variety of scales.



Senate Subcommittee holds hearing on federal sage grouse conservation plans

Date: Tuesday, June 28, 2016

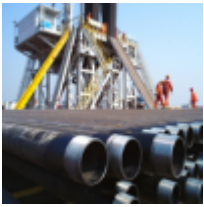
The Senate Subcommittee on Public Lands, Forests, and Mining held a hearing to evaluate the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) sage grouse conservation amendments and address concerns over the incorporation of individual state plans to the federal initiative.



Senate committee hears testimony on wildfire budgeting and management draft

Date: Friday, June 24, 2016

The Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources convened to receive testimony on the Wildfire Budgeting, Response, and Forest Management Act (S. ____) put forward by Chairman Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) and Ranking Member Maria Cantwell (D-WA).



U.S. District Court rejects BLM authority to regulate fracking on public and tribal lands

Date: Friday, June 24, 2016

The U.S. District Court for Wyoming ruled that the Department of the Interior (DOI) and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) have no authority to regulate hydraulic fracturing, commonly known as “fracking,” on public and tribal lands.



Council of Economic Advisers releases report on coal leasing on federal lands

Date: Wednesday, June 22, 2016

The White House Council of Economic Advisers (CEA) released a report entitled, "The Economics of Coal Leasing on Federal Lands: Ensuring a Fair Return to Taxpayers".



Committee questions science and accountability at EPA

Date: Wednesday, June 22, 2016

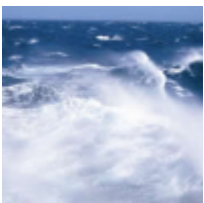
The House Science, Space, and Technology Committee held an oversight hearing this June to examine the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) scientific integrity and accountability.



Briefing underscores the importance of earth science data in decision making

Date: Wednesday, June 22, 2016

The Advances in Earth Science Coalition, a group of professional geoscience societies and federal agencies, held a briefing to discuss how earthquake, air quality, and environmental data can inform policy making on natural resource management and disaster preparedness.



CBO reports cost of Senate Water Resources Development Act

Date: Tuesday, June 21, 2016

The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) has released a report outlining the projected costs of the Senate's reauthorization of the

Water Resources Development Act (WRDA). CBO projects the bill will cost an estimated \$10.6 billion over the next decade.



White House press release on Obama and Holdren's science legacy

Date: Tuesday, June 21, 2016

Nearing the end of President Obama's second term, the Office of Press Secretary has released an impact statement listing 100 Examples of President Obama's Leadership in Science Technology and Innovation.



Proposed BLM planning rule faces criticism in Senate

Date: Tuesday, June 21, 2016

Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Director, Neil Kornze, faced tough questions during a Senate Energy and Natural Resource Committee hearing this June, where committee members were able to question him about the agency's new Planning 2.0 rule.



President Obama celebrates 100th anniversary of NPS

Date: Monday, June 20, 2016

President Barack Obama celebrated the National Park Service's (NPS) upcoming 100th anniversary at Yosemite National Park this June. The Obama Administration and House and Senate Appropriations Committees have included language in their budgets to increase funding for NPS in FY 2017.



International Resource Panel releases report on land resource management

Date: Monday, June 20, 2016

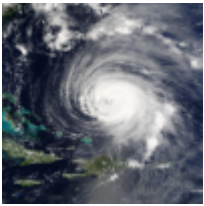
The International Resource Panel's (IRP) working group on Land and Soils released a report outlining tools and policies for utilizing land resources sustainably into the future.



House approves bill to reform NSF facilities management

Date: Friday, June 17, 2016

The House Committee on Science Space and Technology voted overwhelmingly to pass the NSF Major Research Facility Reform Act of 2016 (H.R. 5049).



NOAA experts give monthly update on U.S. and global climate conditions

Date: Thursday, June 16, 2016

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) held their Monthly Climate Briefing telecast summarizing NOAA's May U.S. and global climate analyses, monthly and seasonal forecasts, and the outlook for La Niña development.



House and Senate Committees pass FY 2017 Interior and Environment appropriations bills

Date: Thursday, June 16, 2016

The House and Senate Appropriations Committees each passed their fiscal year (FY) 2017 Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies appropriations bills this June, allocating funding for BLM, BOEM, BSEE, EPA, NPS, the Smithsonian Institution, and USGS from October 1, 2016 through September 30, 2017.



Senate CST Committee passes Coastal Coordination Act of 2016

Date: Wednesday, June 15, 2016

The Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation held an executive session to consider the Coastal Coordination Act of 2016 (S. 3038), which would update and reauthorize the Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA).



Hearing highlights the status of research on new energy technologies

Date: Wednesday, June 15, 2016

The House Committee on Science, Space and Technology's Subcommittee on Energy held a hearing to discuss emerging energy technologies in the United States.