



## Top Stories

**9/8/16** – The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine [released](#) a report urging Congress, federal and state agencies to increase their support for innovation in “increasingly clean” electric power technologies. Also cited was the need for the United States to place a price on greenhouse gases (GHG) and other pollutants to reflect the “hidden costs” to both human health and the environment.

**9/2/16** – The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) [announced](#) additional funding to assist more than 1,900 approved applicants waiting on farm operating loans. The funds leverage up to \$185 million in additional lending for direct and guaranteed farm operation loans.



**9/9/16** – The House Natural Resources Committee [approved](#) H.R. 5259 that would end the administration’s pause in federal coal leasing. The bill would require the administration to finalize its programmatic environmental impact statement on the coal-leasing program.

**9/1/16** – Senators Charles Schumer (D-NY) and Tammy Baldwin (D-Wisc.) [called](#) on the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Agriculture Tom Vilsack and U.S. Trade Representative Ambassador Michael Froman to investigate Canada’s National Ingredients Strategy and Ontario’s Class VI pricing program.

## From Congress

**9/21/16** – The House [passed](#), 400-20, the Emergency Citrus Disease Response Act, H.R. 3957 that aims to expand the ability of farmers to file for tax deductions to replace trees infected by the [citrus greening disease](#).

**9/15/16** – Members of the House Energy and Commerce Committee [suggested](#) privatizing the Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR) in response to a [report](#) issued by the Department of Energy (DOE), which warned Congress that the advancing age of the 695 million-barrel SPR will compromise the stockpile’s health in upcoming years and that federal dollars are required to ensure its viability.

## From the Administration

**9/23/16** – The Fish and Wildlife Service [proposed](#) listing the rusty patched bumblebee as endangered under the Endangered Species Act.

**9/22/16** – USDA [issued](#) a directive instructing inspectors on how to handle an avian flu outbreak, replacing instructions issued in 2009. NCSL recently readopted its [Avian Flu policy resolution](#) that calls for, among a number of items that federal agencies should work closely with the states to align efforts and share best practices.

**9/22/16** – The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) [released](#) a final rule to accelerate permitting for interstate power lines on

federal land, giving the developer a “simplified integrated inter-agency permitting process.”

**9/16/16** – The White House [released](#) a national strategy to modernize the regulatory system for biotechnology products, updating existing framework to cover the roles of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the USDA, and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in product approvals and attempts to streamline the process.

**9/15/16** – The Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families [released](#) \$14.4 million in FY 2016 funding for Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program block grant funds.

**9/15/16** – DOE [released](#) a draft report summarizing the major themes that emerged from a series of regional meetings surrounding the process of developing a consent-based approach to siting nuclear waste facilities. NCSL submitted comments, and they are featured throughout the report. DOE also [released](#) the draft report with the findings and recommendations of the Secretary Energy Advisory Board Task Force on the Future of Nuclear Power.

**9/14/16** – The U.S. Department of Interior (DOI) [announced](#) Phase I of the Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan, designed to guide commercial-scale wind, solar and geothermal power development across 10.8 million acres of the Southern California desert.

**9/13/16** – USDA [announced](#) the availability of \$5 million in farm-to-school grants to increase locally sourced foods.

**9/9/16** – DOI and DOE [released](#) the publication of a joint strategic plan to continue accelerating the development of offshore wind energy in the U.S., [“The National Offshore Wind Strategy: Facilitating the Development of the Offshore Wind Industry in the United States.”](#)

**9/9/16** – FDA [provided](#) a total of \$21.8 million to support 42 states with the implementation of the [Food Safety Modernization Act](#).

**9/8/16** – USDA Secretary Vilsack [suggested](#) the creation of a White House “food council” to unify and coordinate policy areas such as food safety, trade, and production methods across federal agencies and the private sector.

**9/2/16** – DOE [released](#) new proposed efficiency standards for residential gas furnaces, establishing the minimum efficiency standard at 92 percent beginning 5 years after the rule is finalized.

## Additional News

**9/21/16** – The UN [adopted](#) a declaration to fight antibiotic resistance with the aim of reducing their use in both agriculture and human medicine.

**9/9/16** – The 8<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court of Appeals [ruled](#) the EPA violated the Freedom of Information Act by releasing personal contact information of owners of concentrated animal feeding operations to environmental groups.

**9/1/16** – PJM Interconnection, the mid-Atlantic grid operator, [found](#) that complying with EPA’s Clean Power Plan would raise prices by no more than 3.3 percent, or \$1.93 per megawatt hour.

**9/1/16** – The U.S. Geological Survey [released](#) a report finding that honeybee colonies are becoming less conducive to commercial beekeeping due to land use changes.

**8/31/16** – The U.S. Department of Justice [filed](#) an antitrust lawsuit in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois to block the \$190 million proposed merger and acquisition of Monsanto’s Precision Planting LLC by Deere and Company.

## NCSL Resources

Register now for the NCSL Capitol Forum, Dec. 6-9, in Washington, D.C., to tackle critical state-federal issues, gain insight from national experts, and work with committees to craft the States’ Agenda. [Registration and housing are now open.](#)