



Top Stories

11/14/16 – The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) will continue to hold its work on the Dakota Access Pipeline on or under USACE-land bordering, or below, Lake Oahe, as they have [determined](#) that additional discussion with the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe and analysis are warranted.

11/10/16 – The Department of Interior's Bureau of Land Management (BLM) [finalized](#) a [rule](#) that establishes a competitive leasing process for renewable energy projects on federal lands, and provides incentives to encourage development in areas with the highest generation potential and fewest resource conflicts.

10/28/16 – The Department of Health and Human Services [released](#) \$3.09 billion in FY 2017 Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program block grant funds which was made available in [H.R. 5325](#), the Continuing Appropriations and Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2017, and Zika Response and Preparedness Act. Specific levels of funding to state and territory grantees can be found [here](#).

From Congress

11/17/16 – House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy (Calif.), was [joined](#) by all Republican committee chairmen in a letter to leaders of federal agencies, cautioning them against finalizing pending rules or regulations in the administrations last days. This follows a Congressional Research Service [report](#) which

notes that the 116th Congress and the new administration may be able to undo agency final rules the current administration issued after late May 2016 as part of the Congressional Review Act.

11/16/16 – Thirty seven senators [signed](#) a bipartisan letter, including 16 Senate Agriculture Committee members, urging the president to ensure China maintains its biotech approval commitments. The letter states that the president should encourage China to move forward in “deregulating products awaiting final approval and to eliminate trade barriers due to regulatory systems that don’t operate based on scientific assessments.”

11/1/16 – Sen. Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa), Chair, Senate Judiciary Committee, [urged](#) the Department of Justice’s (DOJ) Antitrust Division to conduct an analysis of Bayer’s proposed acquisition of Monsanto. Sen. Grassley cited his concern that the \$66 billion Bayer-Monsanto deal will “lessen competition...and result in less choice and higher prices for farmers and consumers.”

10/27/16 – A bipartisan group of 19 lawmakers [urged](#) the Department of Agriculture (USDA), the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to clarify their stances on the production and sale of industrial hemp. The letter comes following the [release](#) of guidance that attempts to amend the legal definition of industrial hemp in the 2014 farm bill, and limit domestically



grown hemp products for sale only in states that have legalized cultivation of the crop.

From the Administration

11/17/16 – The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) [proposed](#) to more effectively integrate electric storage resources into organized wholesale markets to enhance competition and help ensure that the markets produce just and reasonable rates.

11/17/16 – DOJ [filed](#) an antitrust suit, seeking to block the merger of two nuclear waste management companies – EnergySolutions and Waste Control Specialists. The merger would combine “the only two licensed commercial low-level radioactive waste disposal facilities for 36 states, Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia.”

11/15/16 – USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack [announced](#) that USDA’s Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) is awarding \$200 million to over 70 U.S. agricultural organizations to expand export markets for U.S. farm and food products through the Market Access Program and the Foreign Market Development Program.

11/14/16 – The Department of Energy’s (DOE) Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy [announced](#) a commitment for its [SunShot Initiative](#) to [reduce](#) the cost of solar-generated electricity by 50 percent between 2020 and 2030. To help reach that goal, DOE announced a total of \$65 million—\$25 million for its [PV Research and Development Program](#), \$30 million for its [Technology to Market Program](#), and \$10 million under its [System Integration Program](#).

11/3/16 – The National Park Service (NPS) [announced](#) updated [regulations](#), which increase oversight of oil and gas operations in and around parks in every state except Alaska. The regulations are the first update to the agency’s oil and gas rules in more than 37 years, and will affect 534 operations in 12 parks.

10/31/16 – FDA [published](#) guidance to aid small businesses to achieve compliance with the Food Safety Modernization Act preventative controls for human and animal food.

10/31/16 – The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) [published](#) its [Marine Aquaculture Strategic Plan for FY2016-FY2020](#). The plan features four main goals: regulatory efficiency, scientific tools for sustainable management, technology development and transfer, and an informed public. It also establishes a target of expanding sustainable U.S. marine aquaculture production by at least 50 percent by 2020.

10/25/16 – USDA [announced](#) it is [investing](#) more than \$300 million to help small businesses across the nation reduce their energy costs by adopting renewable energy sources or implementing more efficient energy options.

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 open until Dec. 2.](#)