



Top Stories

11/30/217 – The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) [finalized](#) volume requirements for renewable fuels for 2018 and biomass-based diesel for 2019. Specifically, next year's volume requirement for conventional biofuels is set at 15 billion gallons, the maximum set out under the Renewable Fuel Standard, while advanced biofuels must total 4.29 billion gallons, including 288 million gallons of cellulosic ethanol. EPA raised the final 2018 cellulosic ethanol volume mandate by 50 million gallons from its previous proposal earlier this year.

11/27/17 – The Department of Energy (DOE) is weighing a significant overhaul of energy efficiency standards that would provide additional "flexibility." In a [request for information](#), the agency released a proposal aimed at making efficiency standards more like corporate average fuel economy (CAFE) standards for vehicles that impose a standard across a company's product lines rather than current DOE standards that require all products like refrigerators and lightbulbs to meet mandatory efficiency levels. Comments are due Feb. 26.

11/22/17 –The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) [proposed](#) delaying the effective date by two years for the 2015 final rule concerning Waters of the United States (WOTUS). The proposal seeks to remedy a potential problem where a series of court rulings could leave the final rule in effect for a portion of the country. Specifically, although the final rule went into effect on Aug. 28, 2015, a full nationwide stay was instituted by the 6th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in October 2015. That stay, however, could be dissolved if the Supreme Court rules that a separate case brought before a U.S. District Court judge in North Dakota must come first. If the circuit court's nationwide stay were undone by the Supreme Court, 13 states would be covered by

a stay issued in this case, resulting in WOTUS still applying to the other 37 states. Comments are due by Dec. 13.

11/16/17 – The House passed the [Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, 227-205](#). The bill would retroactively reduce the value of the production tax credit, while also adding new requirements to qualify for the investment tax credit. It would phase out a separate solar energy tax break after 2027 and eliminate a \$7,500 tax break for purchases of electric vehicles, while extending the nuclear production tax credit. However, many of these changes are not included in the current Senate version so any potential bill approved by Congress is likely to be different.

11/15/17 – [David Zatezalo](#) was approved by the Senate, 52-46, to serve as the assistant secretary of labor for the Mine Safety and Health Administration, Several Department of Energy nominees were also confirmed—[Paul Dabbar](#) and [Mark Menezes](#) were confirmed as undersecretaries of science and energy at the Department of Energy (DOE) respectively, and [Steven Winberg](#) was approved to be assistant secretary for fossil energy. The Senate also approved, by voice vote, [Kevin McIntyre](#) to serve as chairman of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), and [Richard Glick](#) to serve as a FERC commissioner.

11/13/17 – The U.S. International Trade Commission formally proposed recommendations for restricting imports of solar cells and panels. The action follows an Oct. 31 [announcement](#) formally recommending the U.S. impose restrictions and triggers a 60-day clock for the president to act.

11/6/17 – The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) [announced](#) a series of grants and loans totaling \$207 million to promote the development of broadband service in rural areas in 13 states.

11/9/17 - A study by the National Cancer Institute covering pesticide applicators [reported](#) no link between exposure to glyphosate and cancer. Specifically, the study found "no statistically significant associations" with glyphosate used and non-Hodgkin's lymphoma in a cohort of pesticide sprayers from North Carolina and Iowa.

11/9/17 – The D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals [held](#) litigation for an additional 60 days, until Jan. 8, surrounding EPA's Clean Power Plan (CPP) final rule, pushing back on the administration's [request](#) to indefinitely suspend the litigation. The move follows EPA's proposal to [repeal](#) the CPP, for which comments are due by Dec. 15.

11/9/17 - EPA [issued](#) final designations for the 2015 National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for ozone, designating 85 percent of U.S. counties as in attainment of, or meeting, the standard. However, the agency did not officially designate the remainder as failing to meet the standard, avoiding any requirements for these counties to act. EPA stated that while "it is not extending the time provided under section 107 of the Clean Air Act, is not yet prepared to issue designations. In the spirit of cooperative federalism, EPA stated that it will continue to work with states and the public to help areas with underlying technical issues, disputed designations, and/or insufficient information" and will address noncompliant areas "in a separate future action." Any area determined not to meet the standard will have to act to reduce smog-forming emissions.

11/3/17 – A [report](#) mandated by the [Global Change Research Act of 1990](#), concluded that human activity is the primary driver of climate change. The report reiterates findings that human activity is "extremely likely" to be the reason that global temperatures are the highest in the history of modern civilization, and found that annual global average temperatures are expected to rise by 2.5 degrees Fahrenheit by 2050 despite the decline in growth of global carbon dioxide emissions.

From Congress

11/15/17 - The Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee [advanced](#) a measure that would allow for oil and gas operations in a section Arctic Natural Wilderness Refuge. The bill directs the Interior Department to offer two ANWR leases of at least 400,000 acres each within 10 years of the bill passing. It now goes to the Senate Budget Committee to be included in the wider budget reconciliation package. The Congressional Budget Office estimated such operations would raise \$1 billion over 10 years. Additionally, the committee added an amendment offered by Senator Bill Cassidy (R-La.) that would increase the share of revenue coastal states receive as part of revenue sharing with the federal government.

From the Administration

11/21/17 – The Government Accountability Office (GAO) issued a [report](#) recommending that the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) increase oversight of the 22 federal agricultural research and promotion programs, otherwise known as "check-off" programs, while also acknowledging significant progress made following the USDA inspector general [report](#) detailing the same issue in 2012.

11/20/17 - The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) [told](#) the American Farm Bureau Federation that the agency intends to [grant](#) agricultural and livestock industries a 90-day waiver for a mandate requiring the use of electronic logging devices in place of paper logs for commercial trucks.

11/16/17 – Department of Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke appointed [Brian Steed](#), former chief of staff for U.S. Representative Chris Steward (R-Utah) as the acting director for program and policy (as of Nov. 27, his title has been changed back to deputy director for programs and policy, exercising authority of the director).

11/16/17 – FERC [denied](#) New York's appeal of its decision surrounding the Valley Lateral Project, a gas pipeline proposed by Millennium Pipeline Co. New York argued that its Department of Environmental Conservation is the appropriate

agency to interpret Clean Water Act language, and therefore has the final say on whether the project can be constructed. The New York attorney general, Eric Schneiderman, asked the 2nd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals to block construction, and it will hear arguments on Dec. 5.

11/14/17 – Sean Cunningham, executive director of DOE’s Office of Energy Policy and Systems Analysis, told state regulators at the annual meeting of the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners, that he is confident FERC “will dutifully consider and adopt” DOE’s [proposal](#) to subsidize coal and nuclear power plants.

Other

11/14/17 – The International Energy Agency (IEA) [announced](#) that the United States is poised to lead the world in crude oil and gas production by the end of the next decade. The report anticipates that oil demand will rise until 20140 and natural gas demand will grow an additional 40 percent.