



# NCSL

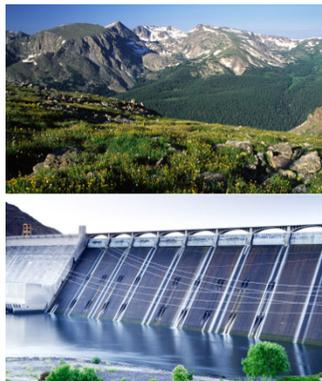
## Environment Federal Update

April 2016 | Volume 5, Issue 4



### Top Stories

**4/22/2016**—Secretary of State John Kerry [joined](#) representatives from 170 countries in signing the Paris Climate Agreement at the United Nations (UN) in New York City. The agreement, which was unveiled at the UN Paris Climate Conference in December, aims to reduce greenhouse gas emission levels so that global temperatures stay below 3.6 degrees by 2100. The countries that sign the accord pledge to “reach global peaking of greenhouse gas emissions as soon as possible,” although no date is specified. Although Secretary Kerry signed the accord, the deal still has to be ratified by the United States by April 21, 2017. Typically international accords are ratified by the U.S. Senate, however, President Obama is expected to bypass Senate ratification through an executive order.



will be allowed to either sell their vehicles back to Volkswagen or get repairs, though a technical solution for fixing the falsified emissions test software has not yet been announced. Additionally, no specific financial information on the buy-back plan has been disclosed.

**4/18/2016**—The Department of Interior (DOI) announced the Fiscal Year 2016 [allocations](#) to states from the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). Each state will receive a portion of the \$94.8 million available this year. LWCF is funded through offshore oil and gas royalties.



**4/18/2016**—Officials from the Obama Administration told [reporters](#) that it is going to propose rules that would compel transportation projects that receive federal funding to record and reduce emissions associated with the project. The proposal is expected to be developed by the Federal Highway Administration and would not impose penalties or emissions targets, but rather would rely on funding recipients' voluntary efforts.

**4/15/2016**—EPA [released](#) its annual greenhouse gas inventory for 2014 which showed that methane emissions were 34 percent higher than EPA had previously reported. There was also an overall 1 percent increase in emissions from 2014 to 2013.

**4/12/2016**—Three environmental groups [filed suit](#) against EPA in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia, citing that the agency has unreasonably delayed setting aviation emission

### From the Administration

**4/22/2016**—The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) [announced](#) the agency is developing a national action plan on drinking water. According to EPA, the “concerted, strategic engagement with key partners and stakeholders” aims to correct unsafe conditions in drinking water systems throughout the country.

**4/21/2016**—Volkswagen [reached](#) a settlement with EPA over its violation of emissions standards. The agreement involves Volkswagen buying back almost half a million vehicles that were fitted with software to falsify emissions tests. Consumers

standards and has therefore violated the Clean Air Act. EPA proposed an endangerment finding on airplane emissions last year and is expected to finalize it this summer.

**4/6/2016**—EPA, along with the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy, released a [report](#) summarizing how climate change is affecting public health.

## From Congress

**4/19/2016**—The U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Appropriations [approved](#) its Fiscal Year 2017 Energy and Water Appropriations bill, which contains a total of \$37.4 billion for various programs under the Department of Energy (DOE) as well as waterway infrastructure projects. The bill contains language to block EPA's Clean Water Rule, a recently enacted regulation that determines which water bodies are to be regulated under the Clean Water Act. As of publication date, the U.S. Senate was debating its own Energy and Water appropriations bill. The bill is currently stalled due to disagreement over an amendment that would prevent the administration from purchasing heavy water from Iran.

## Additional News

**4/21/2016**—The Virginia General Assembly voted to prohibit funding to work on complying with the EPA's Clean Power Plan. Specifically, language was added to the [state budget](#) stating that the Department of Environmental Quality can no longer use state funding to prepare or submit a compliance plan for the Clean Power Plan "unless the stay issued by the U.S. Supreme Court is released." While the Governor of the state proposed an amendment to remove this language from the budget, the Virginia House overrode the Governor's amendment, ensuring that the language was included.

**4/20/2016**—San Francisco's Board of Supervisors unanimously [approved](#) a measure to require all future commercial and residential buildings in the city under 10 stories tall be equipped with solar panels. This is the first major U.S. city to require solar panels on roofs.

**4/18/2016**—New York Governor Andrew Cuomo [announced](#) a new fund for clean energy projects and projects to prepare for climate change impacts. From the total \$11 million fund, grants will be awarded in sums ranging from \$100,000 to \$2 million to cities and local communities. An additional \$1.4 million will be awarded to farmers to support water conservation, energy efficiency and greenhouse gas emission reduction.

**4/8/2016**—A Federal judge in Oregon [ruled](#) in favor of a group of children plaintiffs who sued the fossil fuel industry and the federal government for failing to protect future generations from climate change.

**4/4/2016**—Workers in South Dakota [reported](#) a possible leak in the Keystone Pipeline, operated by TransCanada. TransCanada has since shut down parts of the pipeline operations in the state while they investigate the leak. The company is excavating soil around the site of where the leak was spotted but so far has not reported any environmental impacts.

**4/4/2016**—A settlement was [approved](#) for the 2010 BP Deepwater Horizon oil spill in which BP will pay around \$20 billion. This amount includes \$5.5 billion in civil penalties and \$7.1 billion for natural resource damages. Most of the money will be distributed among the Gulf Coast states that were affected by the spill.

## NCSL Resources

Registration is open for [NCSL's 2016 Legislative Summit](#) taking place in Chicago, Aug. 8-11. Register before May 23 to receive the early bird rate.

The NRI Committee is pleased to present its [2016 Spring Webinar Series](#) with topics ranging from rural broadband to water infrastructure to GMO labeling. Webinars will be occurring every other Thursday from April 14-June 23. Check our [website](#) for more information and to register.