



## Top Stories

**4/12/2013** – Sally Jewell was [sworn in](#) as the new secretary of the U.S. Department of Interior, following Senate confirmation on April 10.

**4/10/2013** – President Barack Obama released his [FY 2014 budget proposal](#), totaling \$3.77 trillion over the next 10 years with a federal deficit reduction of \$1.8 trillion. See the [NCSL Federal Budget Overview](#) for more information. For details on EPA's budget request see the [NCSL Environment Committee overview](#). For highlights of agriculture, energy and environment program funding for FY 14, see the [NCSL Federal Budget and Appropriations Highlights chart](#).

## From the 113th Congress

**4/18/2013** – The Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee [confirmed](#) the nomination of Ernest Moniz to be secretary of the U.S. Department of Energy, with a vote of 21-1. The nomination now must pass the full Senate, but a full floor vote is yet to be scheduled.



**4/17/2013** – The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) produced a new [score](#) for S. 601, the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA), estimating the cost of implementation at \$12.2 billion for the next 10 years. CBO previously scored S.601, on April 9, at \$12.5 billion. According to Senate staff the differential was based on a technical correction made in the legislation, which was re-sent to CBO April 12. CBO expects the costs of the

mandates in WRDA to fall below the annual thresholds in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act (UMRA).

**4/11/2013** – The Senate Environment and Public Works committee held a [hearing](#) on the nomination of Gina McCarthy to be administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The committee asked McCarthy a number of questions largely related to transparency at the agency. The members did not vote on the confirmation and have not yet set a date to do so. Gina McCarthy currently has one hold on her nomination from Senator Roy Blunt (R-Missouri).

**4/5/2013** – The House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Environment and the Economy released [draft legislation](#) related to the regulation of coal ash disposal. The draft is identical to a Senate bill introduced in August during the 112th session of Congress. The legislation would give states discretion on how to regulate coal ash.

## From the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

**4/17/2013** – EPA released its yearly [report](#) on national greenhouse gas emissions data. The most updated report found that the United States emitted less greenhouse gas in 2011 than the previous year, dropping 1.6 percent.

**4/16/2013** – EPA released [draft guidance](#) for its National Water Program for FY 2014. The guidance expresses how the agency will work with state and tribal governments to improve the nation's waters. Specifically, the guidance looks at best practices for protecting drinking water, clean water quality, sustainable water resources and water infrastructure.

**4/12/2013** – EPA [published](#) a proposal in the Federal Register to loosen emissions standards on storage vessels used to store liquids at oil and natural-gas production sites. The proposed rule eases requirements for existing tanks, streamlines monitoring requirements and clarifies the definition of the

containers affected so as not to unintentionally include similar vessels.



**4/12/2013** – EPA [released](#) final guidance for Nonpoint Source Program and Grants for States and Territories.

The guidance affects grants from section 319 of the Clean Water Act and is applicable beginning FY 2014. The final guidance emphasizes watershed project implementation, increased accountability measures and flexibility for state programs.

**4/10/2013** – The president released his FY 2014 [budget proposal for EPA](#), requesting \$8.2 billion, a decrease of 3.5 percent from FY 2012. Under the president's request, funding for state and tribal environment programs would see a 13 percent reduction from FY 2012. See the [NCSL Environment Committee Budget Brief](#) for more details.

**4/10/2013** – EPA's Science Advisory Board (SAB) announced it will hold a [public meeting](#) of the [Hydraulic Fracturing Research Advisory Panel](#) to provide feedback and a progress report on EPA's draft study on hydraulic fracturing and the potential impacts on drinking water resources. The meeting will take place May 7.

**4/3/2013** – EPA extended the comment period on its revised [Mercury and Air Toxics Standards \(MATS\)](#) for new sources during the startup and shutdown periods for power plants for another 30 days. The deadline is now May 13.

## From the United States Department of Energy (DOE)

**4/16/2013** – DOE [announced](#) the investment of \$16 million for a five year research study in dry storage of spent nuclear fuel.

The study will be led by nonprofit group Electric Power Research Institute, and will further the current design of dry storage cask technology for high burn-up nuclear fuel waste removed from commercial nuclear plants.

**4/10/2013** – The president's FY 2014 budget [provided](#) DOE with \$28.4 billion, including a 40 percent increase from FY 2012 in funding for clean energy technology and energy efficiency activities. See the [NCSL ETA Committee energy overview](#) for more specifics.

## From the United States Department of Interior (DOI)

**4/11/2013** – The National Park Service [reported](#) that the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) provided more than \$42 million in grants to 338 communities across the nation to expand or establish outdoor recreation areas in 2012.

**4/10/2013** – The president [proposed](#) \$11.9 billion for DOI in his budget request, with a \$5.3 billion investment in the America's Great Outdoors program to maintain recreational land around the nation.

**4/4/2013** – DOI [released](#) its final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the removal of hydroelectric facilities on the Klamath River. The EIS recommends full removal of all four facilities. The matter must now go to Congress for approval before DOI can take action.

## From The Administration

**4/16/2013** – The president [released](#) the final implementation plan to attempt to translate the National Ocean Policy into tangible actions. The plan focuses on accelerating permitting decisions, better management of the ocean, coastal and Great Lakes resources, and collaborating with state and tribal partners without creating any new regulations.

**4/10/2013** – In his FY 2014 budget proposal the president requested a strategic review of the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) to explore the possible sale of the utility. TVA was a New

Deal public works project and currently serves nine million customers in seven states.

## From the Courts



**4/18/2013** – The Center for Biological Diversity and the Sierra Club filed a suit against DOI in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California. The plaintiffs [feel](#) DOI violated the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) when it auctioned land for hydraulic fracturing without fully analyzing the environmental impact.

**4/18/2013** – The American Chemistry Council filed a petition against EPA in the U.S. Supreme Court. It is related to EPA's interpretation of the Clean Air Act's Prevention of Significant Deterioration (PSD) program in regulating greenhouse gases at industrial facilities. The industry plaintiffs [feel](#) is an incorrect interpretation.

**4/12/2013** – Judges of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit heard oral arguments in a case against the EPA regarding its hazardous air pollutants standards related to lead smelting. The complicated case questions whether EPA has the authority to regulate elemental lead versus lead compounds.

## Additional Resources and Reports of Interest

**4/17/2013** – The Oil Spill Commission Action, a group of former panelists appointed to investigate the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill, [released](#) a report card for the action taken on recommendations the panelists made three years ago. The administration received a "B" grade and industry received a "B minus" while Congress received a "D-Plus", despite passage of the RESTORE Act.

**4/12/2013** - The U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA) created a new [state energy portal](#) that uses interactive maps to show energy data from across the nation, ranging from natural gas pipeline routes to renewable energy production and state-by-state energy potential.

## NCSL Resources



The 2013 [NCSL Spring Forum](#) will take place May 2-4 in Denver, Co. See the full [agenda](#) and [Register Online!](#)

Visit our [Environment Newsletter Archives](#) page to see past issues of our Environment Update

Please visit the NCSL [Federal Deficit Reduction Overview](#) page for updated federal budget information.

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