



## Top Stories

**2/6/2013** – Following the resignation of current DOI Secretary Ken Salazar, President Obama [nominated](#) REI CEO Sally Jewell to the post. Jewell will face Senate confirmation before being able to take the reins as head of the department.

**2/1/2013** – Department of Energy Secretary Steven Chu [announced](#) he will resign his position effective as soon as his successor is nominated and confirmed.

## From the 113th Congress

**2/6/2013** – The House Energy & Commerce Committee adopted its [oversight plan](#) for the 113th Congress. Issues to focus on in the new session include EPA regulations, the National Nuclear Security Administration and national laboratories oversight, Yucca Mountain, the Clean Air Act, and



more. An amendment to the plan by ranking member Waxman (Calif.) to focus a number of

hearings on climate change science was voted down.

**2/4/2013** – Senator Murkowski (Alaska), ranking member of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, released her [energy blueprint](#), a comprehensive document looking to the future of America's energy priorities through various policy proposals. Some of the policies discussed in the blueprint included streamlining permitting processes, expanding revenue sharing with states and development of offshore oil drilling.

**2/1/2013** – The House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee approved its [oversight plan](#) for the 113th Congress, outlining each subcommittee's jurisdictional oversight on issues including total maximum daily loads, water quality standards, water pollution control, wastewater treatment and more.

**1/24/2013** – Rep. Waxman (Calif.) and Sen. Whitehouse (R.I.) [launched](#) a bicameral task force to focus congressional and public attention on climate change; they also plan to work on legislation related to the issue.

## From the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

**2/8/2013** – EPA put its [draft plan](#) for climate change adaptation out for public comment. The plan identifies areas under the EPA's jurisdiction that are already being affected by climate change, and ways to respond to such change. The draft plan will be an appendix to a government-wide sustainability report yet to be released.

**2/7/2013** – EPA released a new [report](#) offering different development approaches for low-income, minority, tribal and overburdened communities that incorporate their unique socio-economic situations. Some of the development suggestions include facilitating community engagement, promoting public health, providing housing choices, and more. The report highlights seven case studies in communities from Boston to New Orleans.

**2/6/2013** – For the first time, EPA has [added](#) data on oil, gas and coal methane emissions to its online tracking [tool](#) for greenhouse gas emissions. The reporting addition contributed

to an increase of 82 million metric tons in carbon dioxide equivalent emissions from the previous year.

**2/4/2013** – EPA [released](#) a series of fact sheets outlining best practices and better understanding of Low Impact Development (LID), an approach to land development that focuses on preserving and recreating natural landscapes while treating stormwater as a resource rather than a waste product. The fact sheets are primarily intended as a resource for state and local decision makers.

**1/31/2013** – EPA [announced](#) its proposal for the 2013 percentage standards for four fuel categories (biomass-based diesel; advanced biofuels; cellulosic biofuels and total renewable fuels) as part of the Renewable Fuel Standard Program (RFS2). The program encourages the use of renewable fuels in the transportation sector to decrease greenhouse gas pollution and strengthen American energy security. The proposed standards will be open for public comment for 45 days.

**1/31/2013** – EPA released a [study](#) on infrastructure financing options for transit-oriented development (TOD). TOD is development of areas near or abutting transit stations that brings together housing, transit, employment, and shopping expansion options. The study gives guidance on financing and infrastructure development for communities considering investing in TOD.

**1/29/2013** – EPA sent its Tier 3 pollution [proposed standards](#) on gasoline to the White House for review. The proposed standards would lower sulfur allowed in gasoline from 30ppm to 10ppm. An EPA spokesman said the draft rule is expected out in March.

**1/16/2013** – EPA [released](#) their [Toxics Release Inventory \(TRI\) report](#) showing that total toxic air releases in 2011 went down 8 percent from the previous year even with total releases of toxic chemicals increasing for the second year in a row. EPA attributes the lower number of releases to the decrease in hazardous air pollutant emissions.

**1/16/2013** – EPA sent a [proposed rule](#) regarding polluted water discharges from power plants, to the White House for review. The rule, which has not been updated since 1982, would tighten regulations against power plant discharges of lead, arsenic, mercury and other toxins. The rule will be finalized by May 22, 2014.

## From the United States Department of Energy

**2/7/2013** – DOE and the US Department of Treasury [announced](#) they will make available \$150 million in tax



credits for manufacturers of clean energy technologies. The Advanced Energy Manufacturing Tax Credit will be allocated on a competitive basis to [eligible](#) projects based on commercial viability, domestic job creation, technological innovation, and other criteria.

**2/4/2013** – DOE began [implementation](#) of Phase II of its Carbon Capture and Storage FutureGen 2.0 Project. The project, a partnership with FutureGen Industrial Alliance in Illinois, is aimed at making commercial scale carbon capture and storage feasible. Phase I began with an initial \$1 billion investment in Sept., 2010.

## From the United States Department of Interior

**2/6/2013** –DOI [announced](#) 23 projects in solar, wind, and thermal power on federal land that will move through the



permitting process and, if approved, will be built in the next two years. There are 14 solar, six wind and three geothermal power projects being identified for permitting on federal land, with the total capacity to power approximately 1.6 million homes.

**2/4/2013** –DOI's Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) [released](#) their final environmental impact study on a proposed road through part of the Alaskan wildlife refuge, recommending against construction. The road would connect King Cove, Alaska with access to the Cold Bay airport, currently separated by water. FWS found construction of the road would irreparably harm the ecological functions of the land.

**1/22/2013** – DOI [sent](#) revised proposed rules on hydraulic fracturing on federal land to the White House for review. The proposed rule would require companies utilizing the method of hydraulic fracturing for natural gas extraction to disclose the chemicals they are using in the fracturing process and to address environmental issues related to water/chemical flow-back. The rule is expected to be finalized in July.

**1/18/2013** – DOI Secretary Ken Salazar [announced](#) the first-ever plan to set aside state-wide land to encourage wind and solar energy development. The department designated 192,000 acres of public land throughout Arizona to be used for utility-scale development in the solar and wind industry. The announcement comes after a three year environmental analysis of the land.

## From The Administration

**1/29/2013** – The Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council, a government body made up of various US cabinet secretaries and governors from the Gulf States, released its proposed [path forward](#) for restoration and recovery in the Gulf coast. The draft proposes that 30 percent of the funds from the [RESTORE Act](#) go to ecosystem restoration in the area, and be overseen by the Council. The goals of the proposed plan include restoring and conserving habitat, restoring water quality, replenishing and protecting coastal and marine resources and enhancing

community resilience. The final plan is scheduled to be completed by July 2013.

**1/29/2013** – The president signed into law the [Disaster Relief Appropriations Act](#), passed by the Senate Jan. 28 and the House Jan. 15, to appropriate \$50.6 billion to long and short term relief and recovery efforts aiding areas affected by Hurricane Sandy. Within the total funding package were billions of dollars in funding for natural resources and infrastructure programs. See our [NCSL Info Alert](#) for a breakdown of these provisions.

## From the Courts



**1/25/2013** – The US Court of Appeals [ruled](#) in the case of *American Petroleum Institute vs. EPA* regarding the EPA's 2012 cellulosic ethanol mandates. The court found that EPA had unfairly required refiners to use cellulosic ethanol before the biofuel was readily available. The court felt EPA improperly promoted the availability of the advanced biofuel in order to support the industry's growth. However, in the same case, the court rejected the industry petition from the American Petroleum Institute (API) that EPA must stick with the Energy Information Administration's estimates in setting cellulosic ethanol projections.

**1/24/2013** – The US Court of Appeals for the DC Circuit [denied](#) EPA's petition for a rehearing and rehearing en banc of the previous decision by the court to vacate the Cross State Air Pollution Rule (CSAPR), finding that the rule exceeds EPA's statutory authority. This does not impact the current implementation of the precursor to CSAPR, the Clean Air Interstate Rule (CAIR), which is currently being enforced.

# Additional Resources and Reports of Interest

**2/7/2013** – The Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI), the U.S.'s first greenhouse gas cap-and-trade program, [announced](#) it will set stricter limits on allowable emissions effective next year. RGGI will be lowering the emissions cap by 45 percent from 165 million tons of allowable CO2 to 91 million tons. There are currently nine Northeastern and Mid-Atlantic states that participate in RGGI.

**2/6/2013** – The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Office of the Chief Economist released [two reports](#) on the challenges climate change will pose to U.S. agriculture and to forestry in the next decade. The reports are supplemental to the National Climate Assessment, the [third draft](#) of which was released in late January.

## NCSL Resources

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

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