



Top Stories

11/17/2015—The U.S. Senate [passed](#) a resolution disapproving the Clean Power Plan. Based on authority given to Congress under the Congressional Review Act, the resolution, if signed into law, would prohibit the Clean Power Plan from going into effect. President Obama [issued](#) a veto threat of the resolution, which would require approval of two-thirds of each chamber to override. Even with this veto threat, the U.S. House is expected to vote on its own resolution of disapproval that passed the Energy and Commerce committee on Nov. 18. In late October the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit [issued](#) an order documenting the schedule for the many requests being made by state officials to stay the rule. The order requires all those who want to ask for a stay do so by Nov. 5 and directs EPA to file a final response to those requests by Dec. 23. It is likely the court will not decide on whether to grant a stay until early 2016.



11/16/2015—The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) released final versions of new rules associated with the implementation of the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA). The rules address produce safety, the foreign supplier verification program, and accredited third-party certification. With this announcement the FDA has now finalized five of the

seven rules that implement the major components of FSMA. For more details see [NCSL's Info Alert](#).

11/6/2015—President Obama [announced](#) he is rejecting the TransCanada Keystone XL Pipeline, citing concerns that it would adversely impact efforts to combat global warming.



From the Administration

11/23/2015—The White House [announced](#) the 2016 greenhouse gas targets and sustainability plans for all federal agencies. The targets have the agencies reducing greenhouse gas emissions from their operations to 41.8 percent below 2008 levels by 2025.

11/23/2015—FDA [approved](#) the production of genetically engineered (GE) AquAdvantage Salmon, the first approval for a GE animal intended for human consumption. The FDA noted that based on a comprehensive analysis of scientific evidence the salmon meets current requirements for safety and effectiveness. As part of the agency's announcement, it also published guidance on the voluntary labeling of GE food while also denying a petition that would require the mandatory labeling of food containing GE ingredients.

11/18/2015—The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Utilities Service Administrator Brandon McBride announced that all [active projects](#) "USDA has financed through the Recovery

Act are now providing broadband service in rural areas nationwide.” According to Administrator McBride, nearly 6 million rural Americans now have access to new or improved high speed internet service due to funding provided by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

11/17/2015—USDA’s Natural Resource Conservation Service [pledged](#) \$4 million to monarch butterfly conservation in 10 states throughout the Midwest and Southern Great Plains. Monarch butterflies are important pollinators in the United States with habitats that have recently been considered threatened.

11/12/2015—The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) [formally banned](#) the pesticide sulfoxaflor, disclosing that it poses a risk to bees. Farmers are allowed to continue using existing stocks of the chemicals if they have them but distributors must dispose of, export, or return to manufacturers, any supplies on their shelves.

11/12/2015—FDA [published](#) a notice seeking comments on whether the term “natural” should be permitted on human food labeling, including when genetically engineered food ingredients are involved. Comments will be accepted until Feb. 10, 2016.

11/10/2015—USDA [released](#) predictions for Florida’s citrus harvest for 2016, forecasting that it could be as low as 23 percent below the 2014-2015 harvest. The decline is largely due to citrus greening disease which has been infecting the state’s crops for years.

11/6/2015—In an effort to promote the use of nuclear energy as a component of the country’s clean energy strategy, the Department of Energy (DOE) [announced](#) a number of actions to sustain and advance nuclear energy. These actions include providing the nuclear energy community with access to technical, regulatory and financial support for new or advanced nuclear reactor designs; addressing the needs of and investing in Small Modular Reactors; and establishing a working group for research and development into Light Water Reactors.

10/28/2015—USDA [announced](#) it is partnering with 21 states through the Biofuel Infrastructure Partnership to invest \$210 million in renewable energy infrastructure. The money will go to increasing fueling pumps nationwide that supply renewable fuel to motorists.

10/23/2015—The Department of Health and Human Services [released](#) \$3 billion in Fiscal Year 2016 Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) block grants. LIHEAP is a program that assists low-income families with energy costs.

From the 114th Congress

11/17/2015—The U.S. House passed the Critical Infrastructure Protection Act ([H.R. 1073](#)), which would prepare the nation for an electromagnetic pulse (EMP) attack. Specifically, the bill would require the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to create a national plan and education campaign in response to an EMP event while also directing research into improving resiliency and identifying infrastructure risks.

Additional Resources and Reports of Interest

11/18/2015—Norwegian oil company Statoil [announced](#) it is ending 16 exploration leases in Alaska’s Chukchi Sea following the September decision by Shell to leave the area. In addition to “disappointing” results in the exploration drilling phase, Statoil also noted the steady decline of oil prices as a contributing factor to the decision.

11/2/2015—Entergy [notified](#) the Nuclear Regulatory Commission that it plans to close the FitzPatrick nuclear plant in Oswego County, N.Y. by early 2017. This is the second nuclear plant closure for the company in less than a month.

NCSL Resources

Registration is still open for [NCSL’s Capitol Forum](#), held in Washington, D.C., Dec.8-11, complete with our annual Lobby Day and professional development for legislative staff.