

Secretary Moniz Testifies and House Committee Releases Energy and Water Appropriations Bill – ML Strategies Weekly Energy and Environmental Update

June 19, 2013 | | By David Leiter

Written by David Leiter, Sarah Litke, Jean Cornell, Bryan Stockton, Jordan Collins, and Neal Martin

All eyes turned to the U.S. House Energy and Commerce Committee last week as Secretary of Energy Ernest Moniz testified before Congress for the first time since being sworn-in. Secretary Moniz outlined the energy policy, science, nuclear security, and management goals of the Department and then listed several areas in which he hopes to improve work.

He is currently considering options to consolidate science and energy program management, to create a stronger independent oversight function that will report directly to him, to strengthen lines of authority and management, and to forum councils of advisors on issues ranging from cybersecurity to National Labs management. Secretary Moniz said he will consider liquefied natural gas export terminals expeditiously and in the current order outlined by the Department; he anticipates a decision will be made by the end of the year.

This morning, the House Appropriations Committee released the Chairman's mark of the fiscal year 2014 energy and water appropriations bill. The measure, which totals \$30.4 billion, is \$2.9 billion below 2013 enacted levels and \$4.1 billion below requested levels. Department of Energy renewable energy programs, scientific research programs, and ARPA-E all saw cuts. According to the Committee, the [legislation](#) addresses Army Corps of Engineers, Bureau of Reclamation, energy programs, environmental cleanup, nuclear security, scientific research, and Yucca Mountain issues.

The Senate approved H.R. 954, the Farm Bill, 66-27 on June 10. While that chamber is expected to focus on immigration reform this week, the House will focus on the Farm Bill on Wednesday and Thursday. It is expected that 150 Republicans and 75 Democrats are needed to pass the bill. Members are likely to have liberal access to the floor for amendments, and there are expected to be many amendments from both sides regarding food stamp funding levels. While the House bill is in better shape than last year, the whole thing could collapse if certain Republicans succeed in stripping a dairy provision introduced by Representative Collin Peterson (D-MN). If that is taken out, Representative Peterson could get agriculture state Democrats to vote against the bill.

There has been increased chatter in DC about a potential White house climate change proposal announcement as early as next month. It is unclear if the proposal will be entirely new or will partly or entirely consist of existing proposals. The regulatory authority of the Environmental Protection Agency might be used heavily to implement the proposal. The timing of the release might further complicate the nomination of Gina McCarthy, which has been held up in the Senate.

The Senate is currently considering a plethora of nominations. Gina McCarthy and Labor Secretary Nominee Tom Perez are unlikely to be considered until July at the earliest. The re-nomination of Nuclear Regulatory Commission Chairman Allison Macfarlane has slowed as Senate Environment and Public Works Chairman Barbara Boxer (D-CA) continues to ask for agency documents on the San Onofre facility. On the other hand, the Senate will likely confirm Penny Pritzker to serve as Secretary of Commerce, Anthony Foxx to serve as Transportation Secretary, and Fred Hochberg to remain the head of the Export-Import Bank before the July 4th recess.

It is anticipated that Senators Ron Wyden (D-OR), Lisa Murkowski (R-AK), Dianne Feinstein (D-CA), and Lamar Alexander (R-TN) will publicly release their nuclear waste management legislation before the July 4th recess; the bill had previously been made public but questions arose over implementation. The Senate Environment and Public Works Committee will consider S. 332, the Climate Protection Act, and the House Energy and Commerce Committee is expected to hold a hearing on energy efficiency in the July work period.

For more on the latest energy and clean technology regulatory and legislative developments please see [ML Strategies'](#) most recent *[Energy and Environmental Update](#)*.

Authors

David Leiter