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ML Strategies Weekly Energy and Environment Update – Week of October 14, 2013

October 15, 2013 | Blog | By David Leiter

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

As the federal government shutdown continued last week, Congressional debates continued over a continuing resolution and the debt ceiling. The impact of the shutdown continues to progress at the agency level with the Energy Information Administration and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission announcing that they would furlough employees as leftover funding was spent last week. Only the Department of Energy continues to run at a near-normal level, but questions remain as to how long the agency and its national labs will be able to maintain their operations. General energy and environment discussions have halted as the country approaches the debt ceiling. The week ended with some optimism that a deal to increase the debt limit before the "x-date" of government default could be reached.

When he delivered his first **speech** on the Senate floor on September 18, Senator Ed Markey (D-MA) commented that he was drafting two energy bills. Once the government reopens, Senator Markey is prepared to introduce his renewable energy standard and energy efficiency standard bill. Senator Markey is already a co-sponsor of the Senator Udalls' renewable energy standard bill, but he wanted to introduce his own language, similar to language he put forth in the House, as well. He is also working on what will probably be two bills aimed at addressing the natural gas distribution line leaks issue. The first bill is likely to require state regulators to consider "quick cost recovery" and the harmonization of reporting standards. The second bill would create a revolving fund, modeled after the Safe Drinking Water Revolving Fund, that would assist local governments in upgrading leaky distribution systems.

As we reported last Monday, Deputy Assistant to the President for Energy and Climate Change Heather Zichal announced that she would soon step down from her position. Possible replacements include Zichal's deputy Dan Utech, Natural Resources Defense Council President Frances Beinecke, White House Council on Environmental Quality Deputy Director Gary Guzy, former Deputy Secretary of the Interior David Hayes, and Department of Energy Chief of Staff Kevin Knobloch.

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

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