

ML Strategies Energy and Environment Update: Week of 10/13/2014

October 14, 2014 | Blog | By David Leiter

VIEWPOINT TOPICS

- Federal Government Relations
 - Energy & Sustainability
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- Federal Government Relations
- Energy & Sustainability

ENERGY AND CLIMATE DEBATE

With a little over three weeks to go before the elections, and just a bit more than that until the next round of international climate negotiations, the United States is trying to determine how, and how much, to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions over the next decade.

Whether and how Congress addresses climate and energy legislation in the coming two, four, or more years will become slightly clearer three weeks from now, when either Democrats retain control of the Senate, or the balance of power flips in favor of Republican leadership. Though the majority will be slim, the focus issues could be different, particularly if Senator Mitch McConnell's (R-KY) campaign prevails, Republicans take control of the upper chamber, and he becomes Majority Leader. Whether or not he becomes Majority Leader, Senator McConnell has promised to continue his battle against Environmental Protection Agency greenhouse gas regulations. Should Democrats retain control of the Senate, Congress is likely to continue in much the same vein for the next several years: unable to pass comprehensive climate or energy legislation, and facing difficult battles even on much smaller measures.

In light of Congress' inability to act, the Obama Administration is using its preexisting authority to address climate change and encourage an all of the above energy strategy. From the Clean Power Plan to Department of Energy efficiency standards to potential methane regulations, the administration is looking for ways to demonstrate its climate and energy leadership as the world prepares for an international climate agreement in Paris next year. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change will meet December 1-12 in Lima, Peru for the Lima Climate Change Conference, at which the 20th session of the Conference of the Parties and the 10th session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol will attempt to lay out as much of a framework as possible in anticipation of the 2015 global climate agreement. It remains to be seen what role the United States will play in negotiating that agreement, but the next several weeks will offer some insight into the process.

CONGRESS

Indian, Chinese Energy Solutions Complicated

Representative John Dingell (D-MI) told a town hall hosted by The Atlantic in Detroit October 7 that there are no easy solutions for ensuring that China and India enact adequate environmental and energy policies to address GHG emissions. Congressman Dingell said that energy disputes will continue to create conflict around the world.

RFS Reductions Increase CO2

Senate Environment and Public Works Committee Chair Barbara Boxer (D-CA) and Senator Ed Markey (D-MA) sent a letter to President Obama October 8 saying that the Environmental Protection Agency's proposal to reduce volume requirements in the renewable fuel standards would increase CO2 pollution. The rule is under review at the White House Office of Management and Budget.

ADMINISTRATION

Houston Climate Resilience

Council on Environmental Quality Chair Mike Boots and Houston Mayor Anise Parker (D) toured the city's Buffalo Bayou project and the Bayou Greenways 2020 project October 6. Chairman Boots said that preparing communities for the impacts of climate change is a key part of President Obama's climate change plan. President Obama established the Climate Resilience and Preparedness Task Force last November, and the task force will provide recommendations to the White House this fall on actions the federal government can undertake to foster resilience investments across the country.

Climate Efforts Unveiled

The White House Council on Environmental Quality released October 8 the [Climate and Natural Resources Priority Agenda](#), a list of federal and private sector plans intended to reduce CO2 emissions and prepare communities for climate change impacts.

NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND SPACE ADMINISTRATION

Largest Hotspot on Record

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration and the University of Michigan [found](#) October 9 a hotspot in the Southwest United States that is releasing the largest concentration of methane ever recorded in United States air. The spot, located at the intersection of Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, and Utah, is 2,500 square miles as is likely due to fugitive methane emissions from natural gas operation leaks.

The weekly *Energy & Environment Update* from ML Strategies provides an overview of what's happening on and off Capitol Hill and around the world that may impact energy and environmental policies and industry players. [Read the update here.](#)

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