

Energy & Sustainability Washington Updates — March 2020

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Senate to Take up Bipartisan Energy Bill

Could this finally be the year for a bipartisan energy bill? Perhaps. On February 27, Sens. Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) and Joe Manchin (D-WV), the leaders of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, unveiled the text of their American Energy Innovation Act (AEIA). The bill focuses on energy efficiency; renewable energy; energy storage; carbon capture, utilization, and storage; advanced nuclear; industrial and vehicle technologies; mineral security; cyber and grid security and modernization; and workforce development. The AEIA is comprised of more than 50 energy bills that the Senate Energy & Natural Resources Committee has advanced over the past year.

The full Senate will take up the bill this week, with another Murkowski bill, the Advanced Geothermal Innovation Leadership Act, serving as the legislative vehicle, meaning that the Senate will take up the geothermal legislation and Sens. Murkowski and Manchin will amend it with the text of the AEIA.

For the full bill text, please click [here](#). For a high-level summary, please click [here](#). For a section-by-section summary, please click [here](#).

New Energy Legislation

In addition to the AEIA, February saw the introduction of a number of other energy-related measures:

- Reps. Chris Pappas (D-NH), Dave Schweikert (R-AZ), and Mikie Sherrill (D-NJ) introduced the Joint Long-Term Storage Act (H.R. 5905). The bill would require the Secretary of Energy to establish a demonstration initiative focused on the development of long-duration energy storage technologies. Sens. Angus King (I-ME) and Martha McSally (R-AZ) introduced companion legislation.
- Rep. Dan Crenshaw (R-TX) introduced the New Energy Frontiers Through Carbon Innovation Act (H.R. 5864). The bill would establish and support the research, development, and demonstration of advanced carbon capture and utilization technologies at the Department of Energy. There are no cosponsors.
- Reps. Steven Horsford (D-NV) and Dina Titus (D-NV) introduced the Department of Energy and Nuclear Regulatory Commission Whistleblower Protection Act (H.R. 5787). The bill would amend the Energy Reorganization Act of 1974 to clarify whistleblower rights and protections.
- Reps. Andy Levin (D-MI) and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-NY) introduced the Electric Vehicle Freedom Act (H.R. 5770). The bill would establish a national network of electric vehicle charging stations, and is cosponsored by Reps. Rashida Tlaib (D-MI), Mark Pocan (D-WI), Pramila Jayapal (D-WA), Jamie Raskin (D-MD), Thomas Suozzi (D-NY), Ro Khanna (D-CA), and Matt Cartwright (D-PA).
- Reps. Brett Guthrie (R-KY) and Janice Schakowsky (D-IL) introduced the Ceiling Fan Improvement Act (H.R. 5758). The bipartisan bill would amend the Energy Policy and Conservation Act to make technical corrections to the energy conservation standard for ceiling fans.
- Rep. Yvette Clarke (D-NY) introduced the Electric Vehicles for Underserved Communities Act (H.R. 5751). The bill would increase deployment of electric vehicle charging infrastructure in low-income communities and communities of color. The bill is cosponsored by Reps. Gwen Owens (D-WI), Darren Soto (D-FL), Raul Grijalva (D-AZ), Bennie Thompson (D-MS), Pramila Jayapal (D-WA), Earl Blumenauer (D-OR), Tim Ryan (D-OH), Andre Carson (D-IN), Peter Welch (D-VT), Joseph Kennedy (D-MA), Bonnie Watson Coleman (D-NJ), Nanette Diaz Barragan (D-CA), and Mark DeSaulnier (D-CA).
- Rep. Sean Casten (D-IL) introduced the Energy Prices Require Including Climate Externalities (Energy PRICE) Act (H.R. 5742). The bill would clarify that the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission has the responsibility to ensure that public electric utilities consider greenhouse gas emissions when setting their utility rates. Reps. Mike Levin (D-CA), Jared Huffman (D-CA), and Joseph Kennedy (D-MA) cosponsor the bill.

Congressional Activity

The House Energy and Commerce Committee:

- March 3 — a hearing on “Building a 100 Percent Clean Economy: Advanced Nuclear Technology’s Role in a Decarbonized Future.”

The Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee:

- March 3 — a hearing to examine the President’s FY2021 Budget Request for the Department of Energy with testimony from Energy Secretary Dan Brouillette.
- March 3 — a business meeting to consider the nomination of Mr. James P. Danly to be a member of the Federal Regulatory Commission for the remainder of the term expiring June 30, 2023.
- March 5 — a hearing on the “Energy Outlook of the U.S. from the Perspective of the IEA” with testimony from Dr. Fatih Birol, executive director of the International Energy Agency.

President’s Fiscal Year 2021 Budget Request for the Department of Energy

On February 10, President Trump released his fiscal year 2021 budget request, including \$35.4 billion to fund the Department of Energy (DOE) for “vital priorities such as promoting America’s continued rise as an energy independent nation, enhancing national security through modernizing the nation’s nuclear deterrent, and advancing transformative scientific innovation and environmental cleanup.”

Highlights of the budget request include:

- \$720 million for the Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy, including
- \$97 million in support of the Energy Storage Grand Challenge;
- \$731 million for the Office of Fossil Energy Research and Development, including
- \$546 million for Advanced Coal Energy Systems and Carbon Capture, Utilization and Storage (CCUS);
- \$1.3 billion for the Office of Nuclear Energy;
- \$195 million for the Office of Electricity, including \$40 million for the Grid Storage Launchpad; and
- \$185 million for the Office of Cybersecurity, Energy Security, and Emergency Response.

For the budget request and supporting documents, please click [here](#).

State of the Union

On February 4, President Trump delivered the State of the Union before members of the US House and US Senate. With regard to energy, the president said, “Thanks to our bold regulatory reduction campaign, the United States has become the number one producer of oil and natural gas anywhere in the world, by far. With the tremendous progress we have made over the past three years, America is now energy independent, and energy jobs, like so many other elements of our country, are at a record high.”

For the full text of the address, please click [here](#).

DOE Nomination

On February 13, President Trump announced that he would nominate Under Secretary of Energy Mark W. Menzes to serve as Deputy Secretary of Energy, replacing Dan Brouillette, who is now the Secretary of Energy.

Authors



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Neal Martin brings more than two decades of experience in government and federal relations to his work, helping clients navigate a wide range of issues. He provides strategic guidance to organizations seeking to advance their legislative priorities and enhance their visibility before Congress and federal agencies.