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Energy & Sustainability Washington Updates – August 2020

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Senate Hearing on Carbon Dioxide Management Technologies

The Senate Committee on Energy & Natural Resources held a hearing on July 28 to examine the development and deployment of large-scale carbon dioxide management technologies, including technological and natural carbon removal, carbon utilization, and carbon storage. Providing testimony were representatives from the U.S. Department of Energy, Energy Future Initiative, Inc., the Carbon Utilization Research Council, Columbia University, and the Bipartisan Policy Center.

Defense Authorization Measure Includes Nuclear Legislation

The U.S. Senate, on July 23, approved the annual National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) by a vote of 86–14. Included in the NDAA was Senate Energy Committee Chairwoman Murkowski's (R-AK) Nuclear Energy Leadership Act (NELA), which aims to reestablish U.S. leadership in nuclear energy. The bill focuses the Department of Energy on demonstrating advanced reactor concepts, providing fuel for initial advanced nuclear reactors, and developing the nuclear energy workforce. According to Chairwoman Murkowski, the "advanced reactors supported by NELA have significant potential to provide safe, clean, reliable, and affordable energy to installations such as military bases, remote communities in states like Alaska, and to larger towns and cities across the country."

Senators Continue to Push for American Energy Innovation Act

Sens. Murkowski (R-AK) and Manchin (D-WV), the Chair and Ranking Member of the Senate Energy & Natural Resources Committee, delivered remarks on the Senate floor on July 1 urging their colleagues to pass the American Energy Innovation Act (AEIA), with Chairwoman Murkowski saying it would be a "significant mistake" to not pass the bill before the end of the 116th Congress this year. According to the senators, the "AEIA contains the legislative priorities of more than 70 senators and is supported by more than 200 organizations, including the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the Environmental Defense Fund."

House Committee Advances Energy Legislation

The House Committee on Energy & Commerce on July 15 approved five energy bills:

- The Timely Review of Infrastructure Act was introduced by Reps. Pete Olson (R-TX) and Mike Doyle (D-PA) and addresses insufficient compensation of employees and other personnel at the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC).
- The Energy Savings Through Public-Private Partnerships Act of 2019, introduced by Reps. Peter Welch (D-VT) and Adam Kinzinger (R-IL), would amend the National Energy Conservation Policy Act to encourage the increased use of performance contracting in federal facilities.
- The Reliable Investment in Vital Energy Reauthorization Act was introduced by Reps. David McKinley (R-WV), Paul Tonko (D-NY), and David Loebsack (D-IA). It would amend the Energy Policy Act of 2005 to reauthorize the hydroelectric production incentives program and the hydroelectric efficiency improvement program.

- The Tribal Power Act was introduced by Reps. Tom O'Halleran (D-AZ) and Markwayne Mullin (R-OK). The bill would amend the Energy Policy Act of 1992 to reauthorize programs to assist consenting Indian tribes in meeting energy education, planning, and management needs.
- The Ceiling Fan Improvement Act of 2020 was introduced by Reps. Brett Guthrie (R-KY) and Jan Schakowsky (D-IL). The bill would amend the Energy Policy and Conservation Act to make technical corrections to the energy conservation standard for large-diameter ceiling fans.

New Energy Legislation

- The Job Creation through Energy Efficient Manufacturing Act was introduced by Sen. Merkley (D-OR). The bill requires the creation of a Financing Energy Efficient Manufacturing Program that provides grants for energy efficiency improvement projects in the manufacturing sector.
- The Methane Emissions Reduction Act was introduced by Rep. Upton (R-MI). The bill requires the Department of Energy to carry out a program to reduce methane emissions from flaring and venting natural gas during oil and natural gas production activities.

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.