

# Energy & Sustainability Washington Updates – February 2021

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Since our last update we have seen the start of a new congress, an unprecedented insurrection at the U.S. Capitol, the impeachment of an outgoing president, and the inauguration of a new president. To say these are heady times would be an understatement. Through the tumult, stress, and celebrations of the past several weeks, the wheels of government have continued to turn, with significant developments for energy and sustainability.

Visit ML Strategies' Insights Center for "**Energy & Sustainability: What to Expect from the 117<sup>th</sup> Congress and the Biden Administration**" by clicking [HERE](#). Topics covered include energy tax provisions, buildings efficiency, emissions, electric vehicles, fuel economy for vehicles, DOE loans, and carbon tax, among others.

### President Biden Takes Action on Climate

In a **Proclamation of a National Day of Unity**, issued on Inauguration Day, President Biden identified, among other challenges, a "climate crisis with force and fury" as a threat facing the nation, and declaring that "We can confront the climate crisis with American jobs and ingenuity." Read the proclamation by clicking [HERE](#).

Meeting an oft-repeated campaign pledge for "day one" activities of his new inauguration, President Biden immediately had the U.S. rejoin the **Paris Climate Agreement**. On April 22, the fifth anniversary of the original signing of the Paris Agreement, President Biden plans to hold an international climate change summit as he seeks to reassert U.S. leadership on this issue.

Also on his first day in office, President Biden issued an:

**Executive Order on "Protecting the Health and Environment and Restoring Science to Tackle the Climate Crisis"** that "directs all executive departments and agencies to immediately review and, as appropriate and consistent with applicable law, take action to address the promulgation of Federal regulations and other actions during the last 4 years that conflict with these important national objectives, and to immediately commence work to confront the climate crisis." Read the Executive Order by clicking [HERE](#).

**Executive Order on "Modernizing Regulatory Review"** that directs the Office of Management and Budget and other executive departments and agencies "to begin a process with the goal of producing a set of recommendations for improving and modernizing regulatory review." The Executive Order states that the nation "faces serious challenges, including a massive global pandemic; a major economic downturn; systemic racial inequality; and the undeniable reality and accelerating threat of climate change" and that it is the policy of the Biden Administration "to mobilize the power of the Federal Government to rebuild our Nation and address these and other challenges." Read the Executive Order by clicking [HERE](#).

**Executive Order on Revocation of Certain Executive Orders Concerning Federal Regulation** that states it is the policy of the Biden Administration "to use available tools to confront the urgent challenges facing the Nation, including the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, economic recovery, racial justice, and climate change." The Executive Order revokes a number of Executive Orders issued by former president Donald Trump and can be found by clicking [HERE](#).

On January 25 President Biden issued an **Executive Order on "Strengthening American Manufacturing"**, primarily aimed at meeting "Buy American" requirements for federal procurement as a means of growing the American manufacturing sector. In his remarks, President Biden stated that federal efforts would involve "using American-made steel and technology, to rebuild our roads, our bridges, our ports, and to make them more climate resilient, as well as making them able to move faster and cheaper and cleaner to transport American-made goods across the country and around the world, making us more competitive." Read the Executive Order by clicking [HERE](#).

As further evidence of the seriousness with which President Biden intends to tackle the climate crisis, the issue was a point of discussion for President Biden with world leaders in his first week in office, including with U.K. Prime Minister Boris Johnson, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, French President

Emanuel Macron, and German Chancellor Angela Merkel.

### **Department of Energy Leadership**

On January 27, the Senate Committee on Energy & Natural Resources held a confirmation hearing for former Michigan governor Jennifer Granholm to serve as Secretary of Energy. A vote by the full Senate is expected in the near future.

Meanwhile, the Administration named a number of senior leadership appointees to the Department of Energy. Read more on those appointees by clicking [HERE](#).

### **Congressional Committees Organize for 117<sup>th</sup> Congress**

The House Energy & Commerce Committee has announced Democratic subcommittee leadership and rosters for the new Congress. The Subcommittee on Energy will be led by Chairman Rush (D-IL) and the Subcommittee on Environment and Climate Change led by Chairman Tonko (D-NY). For a complete list of Democratic subcommittee members click [HERE](#).

Republicans on the Energy & Commerce Committee have also announced their subcommittee leadership and rosters, with Ranking Member Upton (R-MI) leading Republicans the Subcommittee on Energy and Ranking Member McKinley (R-WV) leading Republicans on the Subcommittee on Environment and Climate Change. For a complete list of Republican subcommittee members click [HERE](#).

With the even 50-50 split in the Senate following Democratic wins in the two Georgia Senate run-off elections on January 5, the new majority leader Sen. Schumer (D-NY) and now minority leader Sen. McConnell (R-KY) have been in negotiation on a power-sharing agreement, with the primary sticking point being a Republican demand that Democrats commit in writing to not end the filibuster. Already weeks into the new congress and no organizing agreement reached, on January 25 Republicans conceded on their request regarding the filibuster allowing negotiations to continue. It is expected that the two parties will have equal representation on all committees with any vote on legislation or nominations that is tied going to the full Senate for consideration.

Sen. Manchin (D-WV) will assume the chairmanship of the Senate Energy & Natural Resources Committee with Sen. Barrasso (R-WY) leading Republicans as the ranking member. At the Senate Environment and Public Works committee, Sen. Carper (D-DE) will serve as chairman with Sen. Capito (R-WV) serving as ranking member. Subcommittee rosters are expected in the near future.

## **Authors**



**R. Neal Martin**, Senior Director of Government Relations

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.