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Energy & Sustainability Washington Updates – March 2021

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President Biden Issues Executive Order on Supply Chains

In response to continued and growing concerns about the reliance of the U.S. industrial base on China for materials vital to critical industries, the president issued an Executive Order on February 24 focused on supply chains for critical goods, including high-capacity batteries for electric vehicles and the rare earth elements that go into them. The order will require a 100-day supply chain review of government contractors and the private sector, including those in the energy and transportation industries. Following that initial analysis, over the next year federal agencies, including the National Security Council, Department of Homeland Security, and Department of Justice, will be tasked with additional review and actions focused on steps the U.S. can take to domestic production and ways the U.S. can work with allies on a coordinated response to supply chokeholds.

The Secretary of Energy, in consultation with the heads of appropriate agencies, is directed to submit a report identifying risks in the supply chain for high-capacity batteries, including electric-vehicle batteries, and policy recommendations to address these risks. Also required of the Secretary of Energy is a report on supply chains for the energy sector industrial base.

Read the executive order by clicking **HERE**.

Find a Fact Sheet by clicking **HERE**.

White House Working Group on Coal and Power Plant Communities

On February 26 National Economic Council Director Brian Deese and National Climate Advisor Gina McCarthy convened and co-chaired the first meeting of the Interagency Working Group on Coal and Power Plant Communities and Economic Revitalization as outlined by President Biden's January 27 executive order on tackling the climate crisis. The Working Group will focus on identifying and delivering federal resources to revitalize the local economics of coal, oil and gas, and power plant communities, ensuring benefits and protections for workers in these communities. According to a statement, "the Interagency Co-Chairs reiterated President Biden's commitment to supporting and investing in coal, oil and gas, and power plant communities as the Administration leads an equitable clean energy revolution that strengthens the American economy and creates millions of good-paying, union jobs."

Department of Energy Leadership Developments

In a bipartisan vote of 64-35 the Senate confirmed former two-term Michigan governor, and electric vehicle enthusiast, Jennifer Granholm to serve as the 16th Secretary of Energy. In a Department of Energy blog post titled "Deploying the Clean Energy Revolution", Secretary Granholm outlined her priorities including solar, wind, electric cars, advanced batteries, energy efficient appliances, and a weatherized grid structure. Read the post by clicking **here**.

Meanwhile, over the past month the Department of Energy has welcomed a number of new political appointees with an announcement found by clicking **here**. For a full list of Biden-Harris appointees to the Department of Energy click **here**.

On March 4 the Senate Energy & Natural Resources Committee will hold a hearing on the nomination of David M. Turk to serve as Deputy Secretary of Energy.

Energy Department Funding Opportunity

Through the Advanced Research Projects Agency-Energy (ARPA-E), the Energy Department has announced a $100 million funding opportunity for "transformative clean energy solutions". According to DOE, as "the first of billions of dollars of DOE R&D opportunities to be announced this year, this funding will help identify cutting-edge, disruptive clean energy technologies to address the climate crisis."

Click **HERE** to learn more about this funding opportunity.

Manchin Officially Takes Gavel at Senate Energy Committee

On February 4 the Senate passed the organizing resolution giving Senate Democrats control of committees and officially appointing Senator Manchin (D-WV) as Chairman of the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources. Senator Manchin served as Ranking Member of the committee in the 116th Congress and has been a member of the committee since being elected to the Senate in 2010.

Senator Barrasso (R-WY) will lead committee Republicans as the ranking member.

House Hearing on Pathways to a Clean Energy Future

The House Energy & Commerce Subcommittee on Energy held its first hearing of the 117th Congress titled “Pathways to a Clean Energy Future.” In his opening remarks, Energy & Commerce Committee Chairman Pallone (R-NJ) noted that he and Reps. Rush (D-IL) and Tonko (D-NY) had introduced the CLEAN Future Act in the previous congress and intend to reintroduce an updated version of the bill in the 117th Congress as the basis for comprehensive climate action. The legislation is aimed at achieving a 100 percent clean energy economy by 2050. To read Chairman Pallone’s full remarks, click **HERE**.

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.