

Energy & Sustainability Washington Updates - August 2021

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Infrastructure Bill Poised to Advance in Senate

After weeks of negotiation between the White House and a bipartisan group of Senators, on July 28 agreement was **announced** on the bipartisan *Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act*, with President Biden saying in a statement that this legislation represents “the most significant long-term investment in our infrastructure and competitiveness in nearly a century.”

Find the bill text by clicking [HERE](#).

The Senate quickly moved to open debate on the \$1 trillion agreement – despite legislative text not being finalized at the time – with a bipartisan vote of 67-32. The agreement includes \$550 billion in new spending over five years, in addition to planned spending for items like the five-year surface transportation reauthorization bill which must be passed by September 30.

There was some question as to whether the procedural vote to open debate would succeed in securing the necessary 60 votes. With 17 Republicans joining to begin debate there is confidence that the Senate will pass a final bill, although there are many details to be worked out. Senate Majority Leader Schumer has said the Senate will not begin the annual August recess, scheduled to start on August 9, until they have completed work on the infrastructure bill. Key Senators have indicated they are confident the bill will see final passage the week of August 2 although we will be watching the debate and amendment process closely for any hurdles that may arise.

While the bipartisan compromise measure does not go as far as many progressives had hoped, it does include a number of titles devoted to energy infrastructure, found in the *Energy Infrastructure Act approved* by the Senate Energy & Natural Resources Committee in July, including:

- Grid Infrastructure and Resiliency
- Supply Chains for Clean Energy Technologies
- Fuels and Technology Infrastructure Investments
- Enabling Energy Infrastructure Investment and Data Collection
- Energy Efficiency and Building Infrastructure
- Methane Reduction Infrastructure
- Abandoned Mine Land Reclamation
- Natural Resources-related Infrastructure, Wildlife Management, and Ecosystem Restoration
- Western Water Infrastructure
- Authorization of Appropriations for Energy Act of 2020

The fate of the bill is unclear in the House of Representatives where Democrats hold a narrow majority and progressive members of the Democratic caucus have signaled they are unhappy with the legislation, specifically regarding their concerns regarding the urgency of the climate crisis. However, in the end this is a top priority for President Biden and it is likely the House will accept the compromise legislation.

Next Up: Reconciliation

Once the Senate completes work on the infrastructure bill, Democrats' goal is to move to a budget reconciliation package that would require only 51 votes for passage – versus the 60 votes typically required to advance legislation in the upper chamber. This package is expected to pass entirely along partisan lines at a cost of \$3.5 trillion. Interested stakeholders from the energy and sustainability sectors will be pushing for inclusion of priorities that do not make it into the infrastructure bill, although the reconciliation measure is limited to tax and revenue. We will be looking for that package to potentially include a range of policies, including creation of a Climate Conservation Corps, a clean energy standard, tax incentives for clean energy, the end of subsidies for fossil fuel, and provisions related to energy efficient buildings.

Read more about the reconciliation in the July Washington Updates from ML Strategies by clicking [HERE](#).

Senator Seeks Revival of Civilian Conservation Corps

Senator Robert Casey (D-PA) has introduced the *Restore Environmental Vitality and Improve Volatile Economy by the Civilian Conservation Corps Act* – the *REVIVE the CCC Act*. With a goal of addressing the climate crisis while creating jobs, the legislation would revive the 1930s era CCC.

Read a summary of the bill by clicking [HERE](#).

Zero Emission Homes Act

Legislation to provide rebates for the purchase and installation of electric appliances and equipment in single-family homes and multifamily buildings, with additional support for low- and moderate-income households, was introduced in the Senate last month by Senator Heinrich (D-NM), along with 11 cosponsors, and in the House by Reps. Castor (D-FL) and Tonko (D-NY) with seven cosponsors. The *Zero Emission Homes Act* would establish a Zero-Emission Homes Program to provide households with rebates for purchase and installation of qualified electrification projects (QEPs), offering up to \$10,000 in immediate price relief for the purchase and installation of select QEPs with additional amounts for low- and moderate-income households and multifamily buildings.

Click [HERE](#) to read a fact sheet on the legislation.

DOE Funding Announcements

The Office of Energy & Renewable Energy has awarded \$60 million to 32 higher education institutions across the nation to create and operate Industrial Assessment Centers tasked with aiding small manufacturers in improving productivity, securing information, reducing waste and saving energy, and offering training for undergraduate and graduate engineering students in manufacturing processes, energy assessment procedures, and energy management systems.

Read more about the Industrial Assessment Centers by clicking [HERE](#).

The Vehicle Technologies Office has awarded \$60 million to 24 research and development projects focused on reduction of carbon dioxide emissions from passenger cars and light- and heavy-duty trucks. The funding is a component of the Biden Administration's goal of achieving net-zero emissions economy-wide by 2050. The selected projects will: 1) accelerate innovation in electric vehicle batteries and electric drive systems; 2) ready new mobility systems technology for commercial and consumer use; 3) develop lightweight materials to increase passenger and commercial vehicle efficiency; 4) reduce exhaust emissions while improving commercial vehicle engine efficiency; and 5) improve understanding of energy use and environmental impact of new vehicle technologies.

Find the awarded projects by clicking [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.