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Energy & Sustainability Washington Update – August 2024

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VIEWPOINT TOPICS

- Energy & Sustainability
- Biden Administration
- Energy & Sustainability Washington Update

New Bipartisan Energy Permitting Reform Legislation

US Senators Joe Manchin (I-WV) and John Barrasso (R-WY), Chairman and Ranking Member of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, have unveiled the Energy Permitting Reform Act of 2024. This bipartisan bill aims to bolster American energy security by speeding up the permitting process for essential energy and mineral projects nationwide.

The bill shortens timelines before, during, and after litigation on all types of federal authorizations for energy and mineral projects, without changing any existing rights to seek judicial review. It requires the Secretary of the Interior to hold at least one offshore wind lease sale and one offshore oil and gas lease sale per year from 2025 through 2029, subject to minimum acreage requirements, without bypassing environmental reviews, reforms existing backstop siting authority for interstate electric transmission lines and requires interregional transmission planning, requires FERC and NERC to assess future federal regulations significantly affecting power plants and offer formal comments to federal agencies about any effects on electric reliability, sets a 90-day deadline for the Secretary of Energy to grant or deny LNG export applications following environmental reviews, with applications deemed approved if the Secretary fails to meet the deadline, and allows FERC to extend start-construction deadlines for certain existing hydropower licenses.

- Read the text of the *Energy Permitting Reform Act of 2024* **here**.
- Read the section-by-section summary of the *Energy Permitting Reform Act of 2024* **here**.
- Read the one-pager for the *Energy Permitting Reform Act of 2024* **here**.

Department of Energy AI Act Introduced to Advance American Leadership

US Senator Joe Manchin (I-WV), Chairman of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, and Senator Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) have introduced the bipartisan **Department of Energy AI Act**. This legislation seeks to enhance American leadership in artificial intelligence (AI) by leveraging the Department of Energy's (DOE) existing National Laboratory infrastructure and workforce. The bill:

- Authorizes the *Frontiers in Artificial Intelligence for Science, Security, and Technology (FASST)* initiative at DOE.
- Establishes a network of AI research clusters built on DOE's existing ecosystem of computing capabilities and research facilities at National Labs.
- Builds a research and development program on four main pillars.
- Establishes an AI risk evaluation and mitigation program to evaluate and mitigate safety and security risks of AI to better inform future decision-making.
- Directs the development of a strategic plan with specific short-term and long-term goals to advance applications in AI for science, energy, and national security.
- Includes STEM education and workforce development in AI through various disciplines.
- Formally authorizes the Office of Critical and Emerging Technology at the Department of Energy to ensure interagency collaboration.
- Improves the federal permitting process through the use of AI technologies.
- Directs FERC to initiate a rulemaking for the use of advanced computing technologies to expedite the interconnection queue process.
- Directs DOE to study the growth of computing data centers and the electrical power load.

Roadmap for Artificial Intelligence in Science, Security, and Technology

The US Department of Energy (DOE) has unveiled its roadmap for the **Frontiers in Artificial Intelligence for Science, Security, and Technology** (FASST) initiative, aimed at leveraging AI for public benefit. Through FASST, the DOE and its 17 national laboratories are working to develop the world's most advanced integrated scientific AI systems, focusing on science, energy, and national security, in partnership with academic and industry collaborators.

DOE Announces Funding Opportunity for Solar and Battery Storage in Puerto Rico

The US Department of Energy (DOE) has announced plans to launch a $325 million funding opportunity through the new Programa de Comunidades Resilientes, supported by the DOE's Puerto Rico Energy

Resilience Fund (PR-ERF). This initiative is designed to enhance energy resilience for vulnerable communities throughout Puerto Rico by funding solar and battery storage systems for community health care facilities, as well as community centers and shared spaces in subsidized multifamily housing. For community healthcare facilities, DOE may award between $70 million and $140 million to fund energy resilience solutions for federally qualified health centers, dialysis centers, and diagnostic and treatment centers. For multifamily housing properties, DOE may award between $93 million and $185 million to fund energy resilience solutions for community centers and common areas within public or privately owned multi-family housing properties subsidized by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development.

The PR-ERF was launched by DOE's Grid Deployment Office in February 2023 to support Puerto Rico's grid resilience efforts and to achieve the goal for the commonwealth to meet 100% of its electricity needs with renewable energy by 2050.

Read more about this funding opportunity in the **Notice of Intent**.

Bipartisan Infrastructure Law & Inflation Reduction Act Opportunities

Visit the **ML Strategies Energy Funding Matrix** for details of federal clean energy funding and financing opportunities. We update the matrix on a biweekly basis and welcome any inquiries about how the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and Inflation Reduction Act, along with other relevant federal opportunities, may impact your business or organization.

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.