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### Senate Averts Nuclear Crisis, Paving Way for Nominee Confirmations

After a long and heated debate, final agreement regarding the Senate's filibuster rule was reached Tuesday, avoiding a change that would have allowed executive nominations to be confirmed by a majority vote - or the "nuclear option". The final agreement assured that President Obama's senior executive agency nominees would receive confirmation votes. The agreement led to a 59 to 40 vote Wednesday confirming Gina McCarthy as the next Administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). McCarthy was officially sworn in on Friday morning.

The agreement is expected to boost sub cabinet nominations as well. This includes Kenneth Kopocis, nominated to head the Office of Water; James Jones, to head the Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention; and Avi Garbow, to be the USEPA's general counsel. Indeed, after the McCarthy vote, the Committee on Environment and Public Works scheduled a committee vote on these nominations for July 23. The action may signal that the much delayed Senate confirmation votes could occur before the Senate recesses for the summer in August.

### House Democrats Discuss Climate Change with White House Adviser

This week, the pressure to bring lawmakers on board with the White House Climate Action Plan continued. After meeting with Senate Democrats last week, President Obama's Deputy Assistant for Energy and Climate Change, Heather Zichal, met with House Democrats Friday morning to brief them on the Administration's climate agenda. Zichal met with members from the Committee on Energy and Commerce, as

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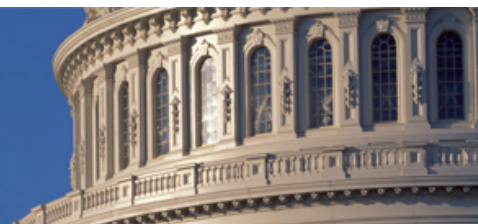
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well as the Committee on Natural Resources. She also met with nine members of the [Sustainable Energy and Environment Coalition](#) (SEEC).

After a meeting with Zichal and SEEC members, Henry Waxman (D-CA), Ranking Member of the Committee on Energy and Commerce, told reporters that “The administration is very determined to use the authority they already have to lower these greenhouse gases that are causing climate change both domestically and to negotiate internationally.” Members of the SEEC noted that Zichal indicated that the Administration would be launching a task force to enhance cooperation between federal and local governments on climate change efforts.

### **Senate Holds Hearing on Colorado River Basin Study**

The Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, Subcommittee on Water and Power, held a [hearing Tuesday](#) to discuss the Bureau of Reclamation’s [Colorado River Basin Supply and Demand study](#). The study, completed in December 2012, looked at Colorado River water use in the seven basin states - Utah, Colorado, Wyoming, New Mexico, Arizona, Nevada, and California – and made demand projections based on changes in population and climate in the next 50 years. The study projects a shortfall in water supply of 3.2 million acre-feet per year by 2060.

Senator Mark Udall (D-CO) chaired Tuesday’s hearing, where he urged his colleagues to adopt the solutions presented within the Bureau of Reclamation study in order to better manage the river’s resources. He stated, “This enormous demand, coupled with climate change and population growth, pose serious challenges for the Colorado River, our economy and our way of life.” U.S. Bureau of Reclamation Commissioner Mike Connor said the Colorado River is facing record drought, with 10 of its lowest flow years occurring in the last 13 years in more than a century of record keeping. He assured senators the study provides a technical foundation to address the situation and explained that the study does not make specific recommendations, but instead outlines threats and a range of solutions that may be considered to resolve imbalances. Panel witness Tanya Trujillo, Executive Director, Colorado River Board of California, stressed that the seven basin states will have to work together to find the best management strategy and stated, “no single strategy will be enough.” Tribal water rights were also represented in the hearing as T. Darryl Vigil, Chairman of the Colorado River Basin Ten Tribes Partnership, voiced tribes’ concerns over how users will be affected once tribes begin to put their water rights to full use.

Several senators asked about the potential of water banking and transfers as a means to increase efficiencies. Commissioner Connor explained that banking and transfer programs can increase use and cost efficiencies in supplying water because transfers can be carried out without the need



of large infrastructure and these kinds of transactions are easily permitted. Connor also told the Subcommittee that the federal government will need help from each state if plans to save the river are going to work.

### **Senate Environment and Public Works Holds Hearing on Climate Change**

The Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works held a hearing on Thursday entitled "[Climate-Change: It's Happening Now](#)." The hearing was contentious as Democrat and Republican members clashed over scientific studies and reports on the issue. Committee Republicans took aim at the Obama administration, Democrats, and climate change "alarmists" for intentionally overstating the scientific validity of carbon-reduction policies. Chairman Barbara Boxer (D-CA) and other Democrats on the committee stated that their colleagues on the other side were living in an "Alice in Wonderland" world, where Climate Change did not exist.

Boxer's attempt to start up the climate change debate within her committee follows a briefing held last week between Senate Democrats and President Obama's Energy Advisor, Heather Zichal. The briefing was an effort to bring lawmakers and the administration on the same page regarding climate action plan regulations and timelines. Boxer and Senator Bernie Sanders (I-VT) introduced climate change legislation earlier this year, and Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-CA) is working on another bill that would apply to the utility industry.

### **Senator Wyden Plans to Release Natural Gas Proposal Soon**

Senator Ron Wyden (D-OR), Chairman of the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, has stated that the Committee is planning to unveil proposals on natural gas policy in the near future. Wyden stated that he supports natural gas but believes there are serious environmental challenges that come with the resource. The challenge of most concern to Wyden is methane gas emissions, to which Wyden stated the committee is looking into.

### **Reports | News Stories | Legislation**

#### **[EPA Headquarters Renamed in Honor of Bill Clinton](#)**

The Washington Post | July 17, 2013

The EPA renamed its D.C. headquarters as the "William Jefferson Clinton Federal Building," in honor of the former president.



### [Court Vacates EPA Deferral Rule for Biogenic GHG Emissions](#)

Biomass Magazine | July 15, 2013

### [Biomass Industry Reacts to Tailoring Rule Decision](#)

Biomass Magazine | July 15, 2013

### [Climate Change Forces US Forest Service to Shift Its Strategy on Larger Fires](#)

Southern California Public Radio | July 17, 2013

## **Upcoming Congressional Hearings**

### [Senate Hearing: Environment and Public Works](#)

Full Committee Hearing on the Nominations of Kenneth Kopocis to be Assistant Administrator for the Office of Water of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), James Jones to be Assistant Administrator for the Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention of the EPA, and Avi Garbow to be General Counsel for the EPA.

Tuesday, July 23 | 10:00 am

### [Senate Hearing: Environment and Public Works](#)

Full Committee hearing entitled, "Oversight Hearing on Implementation of MAP-21's TIFIA Program Enhancements."

Wednesday, July 24 | 10:00 am

### [Senate Hearing: Environment and Public Works - Superfund, Toxics, and Env. Health](#)

Subcommittee will hold a hearing entitled, "Cleaning Up and Restoring Communities for Economic Revitalization."

Wednesday, July 24 | 2:00 pm

### [Senate Hearing: Energy and Natural Resources - Water and Power](#)

To address aging water resource infrastructure in the United States.

Thursday, July 25 | 2:30 pm

### [House Markup: Appropriations - Interior, Environment](#)

FY 2014 Interior and Environment Appropriations Bill.

Tuesday, July 23 | 10:00 am



### **House Hearing: Science, Space, and Technology- Environment & Energy**

Lessons Learned: EPA's Investigations of Hydraulic Fracturing.

Wednesday, July 24 | 10:00 am

### **House Hearing: Science, Space, and Technology - Energy**

The Future of Coal: Utilizing America's Abundant Energy Resources.

Thursday, July 25 | 9:30 am

### **House Hearing: Natural Resources**

Hearing on a bill to recognize States' authority to regulate oil and gas operations and promote American energy security, development, and job creation. "*Protecting States' Rights to Promote American Energy Security Act.*"

Thursday, July 25 | 9:30 am