

- Enacting statutory caps to limit federal spending to 18 percent of GDP - the Congressional Budget Office estimated a deficit for the current fiscal year of \$1.4 trillion, and a 2012 deficit of \$1.08 trillion; and
- Adopting a balanced-budget amendment to the Constitution - Republicans in both chambers, meanwhile, strongly support the concept of statutory caps on government spending, especially with government spending now at about 24 percent of GDP because of the wars and the government's response to the economic recession.

House Committee to Reschedule Nutrient Hearing

The House Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure, Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment has reportedly rescheduled its hearing on how the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) interacts with states in approving water quality standards related to nutrient standards and subsequent Clean Water Act permitting decisions. The hearing is expected to occur June 24.

Legislation introduced by Chairman John Mica (R-FL) and Ranking Democrat Nick Rahall (D-WV), [H.R. 2018](#) would seek to address these and other issues by clarifying that once a state establishes standards or issues a permit, USEPA could not attempt to coerce a state into adopting more stringent measures or permit conditions. H.R. 2018 has not been considered by the committee but is expected to be addressed later this session.

Senate Hearing on Energy Efficiency

On June 9, the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources held a [hearing](#) on the Reducing Federal Energy Dollars Act of 2011 ([S 963](#)) and the Energy Savings and Industrial Competitiveness Act of 2011 ([S 1000](#)).

S. 963, introduced by Senator Tom Carper (D-DE), would support practices to reduce costs, improve energy efficiency, and expand the use of renewable energy by federal agencies. The bill would require agencies to submit standardized reports that enumerate energy and water usage as well as greenhouse gas emissions from their buildings and would establish energy efficiency standards for new federal buildings. In addition, it would require a survey of federal facilities to

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identify potential locations for renewable energy projects, and would require ongoing building commission oversight for buildings over 50,000 square feet or over \$10 million.

In support of his legislation, Senator Carper stated, “agencies face tight budget conditions today and will likely face them for years to come. Given this reality, these private financing tools - known as “Energy Savings Performance Contracts” - will be critical to improving our federal buildings and reaching the energy reduction goals of the federal government.” He added, “as of March 2010, 550 Energy Savings Performance Contracts were awarded to 25 agencies in 49 states. I’m told they generated \$11 billion in energy cost savings, \$9.6 billion of which goes to fund the energy projects and \$1.4 billion was in reduced government spending.”

S. 1000, introduced by Senators Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH) and Rob Portman (R-OH), would enact a national energy efficiency strategy. The bill contains a broad package of low-cost tools that would reduce barriers for businesses, homeowners, and consumers looking to adopt off-the-shelf, cost effective energy efficiency technologies. In support of the legislation, Senator Portman stated, “this is a bipartisan effort to advance energy efficiency, one of the quickest and most affordable ways to lower energy costs for employers and consumers by making it easier for employers to utilize energy efficient tools, they can reduce costs, enabling them to use the savings to expand their companies and hire new workers.”

Testifying at the hearing were: Kathleen Hogan, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Energy for Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy; Kateri Callahan, President, Alliance to Save Energy; Tony Crasi, President, The Crasi Co., Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio; Philip Damiano, Chief Operating Officer, Velcro USA, and Jay Scripter, Vice President for Sustainability, Owens Illinois.

White House Creates Rural Council

This week the President established the White House Rural Council by [Executive Order](#). The Council will coordinate programs across the government to encourage public-private partnerships to promote further economic prosperity and quality of life in rural communities nationwide. Chaired by Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack, the Council will be responsible for providing recommendations for investment in rural areas and will coordinate Federal engagement with a variety of rural stakeholders, including agricultural organizations, small businesses, and state, local, and tribal governments.

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The Council will focus on the following issues:

- **Jobs:** Improve job training and workforce development in rural America
- **Agriculture:** Expand markets for agriculture, including regional food systems and exports
- **Access to Credit:** Increase opportunity by expanding access to capital in rural communities and fostering local investment
- **Innovation:** Promote the expansion of biofuels production capacity and community based renewable energy projects
- **Networks:** Develop high-growth regional economies by capitalizing on inherent regional strengths
- **Health Care:** Improve access to quality health care through expansion of health technology systems
- **Education:** Increase post-secondary enrollment rates and completion for rural students
- **Broadband:** Support the President's plan to increase broadband opportunities in rural America
- **Infrastructure:** Coordinate investment in critical infrastructure
- **Ecosystem markets:** Expanding opportunities for conservation, outdoor opportunities and economic growth on working lands and public lands

Update on Surface Transportation Reauthorization

The House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure Chairman John Mica (R-FL) announced that he would be releasing a draft surface transportation reauthorization measure the week of June 13. This target is possible, but congressional staff indicated that the date may slip by one or two weeks.

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In the Senate, Chairman Barbara Boxer (D-CA) was quoted saying that she hopes to release legislative language in mid-June in connection with a number of hearings the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works will conduct around that time. The goal remains to markup a bill in Committee before the July 4 congressional recess.

Communications Spectrum Legislation Moves in Senate

On May 8, the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation approved a measure to reallocate the D-Block spectrum to public safety and gain federal funding to realize a nationwide, interoperable public safety broadband network. The D-Block is a 10 MHz section of broadband spectrum in the 700 MHz frequency range and is highly sought after by mobile broadband carriers as the optimal frequency for their communications networks to operate on.

The measure, known as the [Strengthening Public-Safety and Enhancing Communications Through Reform, Utilization, and Modernization \(SPECTRUM\) Act of 2011](#), would establish a framework that would give public safety professionals a nationwide, interoperable wireless broadband network on par with private sector networks by reallocating D-Block spectrum to public safety. It would also direct the Federal Communications Commission to establish standards on how public safety officials would lease capacity to non-public safety entities with ability to reclaim the network when needed for public safety use.

Round Two: House Committee Set to Hold Second Hearing on Controversial California Water Bill

On June 13, the House Committee on Natural Resources, Subcommittee on Water and Power will be holding a follow-up to the contentious June 2 hearing on California water supplies. House minority Members called for the second hearing on the San Joaquin Water Reliability Act ([H.R. 1837](#)), which is the prerogative of the minority under House rules. H.R. 1837 proved controversial during the hearing and with Senators Dianne Feinstein (D-CA) and Barbara Boxer (D-CA) having come out forcefully against the proposal. In a joint statement, Feinstein and Boxer stated, "the answers to California's water challenges lie not in radical proposals to eviscerate state and federal environmental laws and water rights, but rather through the development of balanced, consensus-based solutions that respect the interests of all stakeholders." The June 2 hearing highlighted the passion dividing Central Valley farmers, Southern California water

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exporters and Northern California water users. The June 14 hearing will likely feature water users, farmers, fisherman and agency representatives as witnesses.

EPA Rule Impact Amendment Fails on Senate Vote

On Thursday, the Senate fell seven votes shy of adopting an amendment that would require the Environmental Protection Agency and other agencies to increase their analysis of rules and guidance documents, including the indirect effects of rules. The amendment was offered by Senator Olympia Snowe (R-ME) to a bill to reauthorize the Economic Development Administration. Among the 53 supporters were the entire Senate Republican caucus and six Democrats: Senators Ben Nelson (NE), Jon Tester (MT), Amy Klobuchar (MN), Joe Manchin (WV), Mark Pryor (AR) and Jeanne Shaheen (NH). Senator Joe Lieberman (I-CT), Chairman on the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Government Affairs, previously expressed interest in holding a hearing on regulatory review proposals introduced in the Senate. No hearing has been scheduled to date.

American Rivers CEO Nominated to Interior Post

President Barack Obama announced his intention to nominate [Rebecca Wodder](#) to be the next Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife and Parks for the U.S. Department of the Interior. Wodder is currently President and Chief Executive Officer of the non-profit American Rivers, directing strategic, programmatic and financial operations. Previously, Wodder had worked at The Wilderness Society and as Legislative Assistant to U.S. Senator Gaylord Nelson of Wisconsin.

If successful in her nomination, Wodder would join David Hayes, a former Vice Chair of American Rivers, who is currently Deputy Secretary at the U.S. Department of the Interior.

Transportation - Just Because it is Cool

Google announced that they are offering [added real-time transit data to Google Maps](#). Currently maps are available for the following cities: Boston, MA, Portland, OR, San Diego, CA, San Francisco, CA, Madrid, Spain and Turin, Italy.

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Hearings

Senate

House

Date: June 15, Time: TBA
Committee: Appropriations
Hearing: FY12 Appropriations: Energy and Water

Date: July 6, Time: TBA
Committee: Appropriations
Hearing: FY12 Appropriations: Energy and Water

Date: July 11, Time: TBA
Committee: Appropriations
Hearing: FY12 Appropriations: Interior and Environment

Date: July 13, Time: 10:00 am
Committee: Natural Resources
Hearing: San Joaquin River Water Bill

Date: June 14, Time: 10:00 am
Committee: Science, Space & Technology
Hearing: Transportation Research Priorities

Date: June 15, Time: 2:00 pm
Committee: Science, Space & Technology
Hearing: Clean Technology Programs

Date: June 14, Time: 10:00 am
Committee: Transportation & Infrastructure
Hearing: Improving Marine Transportation System to Create Jobs and Boost Exports

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