



House of Representatives

SUSTAINABLE ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT COALITION

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER—DECEMBER 2013

TOP ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL STORIES

- **Super Typhoon Haiyan Now One Of The Strongest Tropical Cyclones Ever To Make Landfall**—Haiyan's winds grew to speeds of 190 – 195 mph as it barreled across the Philippines—speeds that, according to WunderBlog, haven't been seen since Hurricane Camille in 1969, which sustained 190 mph winds when it made landfall in Mississippi. Along with its extreme sustained wind speeds, Haiyan's gusts have reached up to 235 mph.
- **Enviros Give a Thumbs-up to Obama's New Climate Chief**—President Obama has picked Dan Utech, an experienced environment and energy wonk, to replace outgoing White House climate adviser Heather Zichal.
- **Deals at Climate Meeting Advance Global Effort**—Two weeks of United Nations climate talks ended with a pair of last-minute deals keeping alive the hope that a global effort can ward off a ruinous rise in temperatures.
- **Obama Asks Federal Agencies to 'Prepare' for Climate Change**—The White House underscored that point when it issued a new executive order directing federal agencies to help states and communities prepare for the effects of climate change, including sea-level rise, storms, and droughts.
- **Interior Secretary Says Obama May Bypass Congress on Monuments**—Interior Secretary Sally Jewell says she will recommend that President Obama act alone if necessary to create new national monuments and sidestep a Congress that has failed to address dozens of public lands bills.
- **EPA Faces Challenges To Air Pollution Authority In Supreme Court Cases**—The U.S. government's authority to regulate air pollution nationwide, often against the wishes of Republican-leaning states, could face new curbs when the Supreme Court takes on two high-stakes cases in coming months.

SEEC MEMBER LEGISLATION

Energy Task Force Chair Rep. Jim Langevin (RI): *H.R. 3563, Federal Employees Responsible Investment Act*

Bill Summary: Would direct the Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board to select a "Corporate Responsibility Index" as an option for TSP investment. The index would include companies that meet strict financial criteria, in addition to having strong corporate governance, sustainable environmental policies and practices, solid workplace relations, positive community involvement, safe products, and respect for human rights around the world.

SEEC ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Leadership Meets with the Army—SEEC Leadership Members had the opportunity to have lunch with Assistant Secretary of the Army (ASA) Katherine Hammack. The ASA updated members about the Army's efforts to protect the warfighter via energy efficiency and renewable energy. Members discussed ways to help the Army continue their efforts.

Expanding Climate Change Outreach, SEEC Talks with Religious Community—SEEC Members met with Reverend Mitch Hescocx, CEO of the Evangelical Environmental Network (EEN), to learn how to speak with the religious conservatives about climate change.

Pushing Back on Latest Drilling Push—SEEC took to the floor to highlight problems with the GOP's latest "oil above all" bill, H.R. 1965. Members offered amendments, including: Member **Rep. Alan Lowenthal (CA)** allowing for continued review of actions that qualify for Categorical Exclusions to NEPA for Extraordinary Circumstances; Member **Rep. Colleen Hanabusa (HI)** requiring the Quadrennial Federal Onshore Energy Production Strategy to include the expected increase in production of geothermal, solar, wind, or other renewable energy sources on lands designated as Hawaiian Home Lands; and Vice-Chair **Rep. Jared Polis (CO)** and Member **Rep. Jared Huffman (CA)** requiring a study of the impact of flooding on oil and gas facilities, including leaks and spills. SEEC issued a [statement](#) asserting that "instead of proving that they know how to recycle, albeit bad bill ideas, the GOP should work with us to grow sustainable domestic jobs through a clean energy economy."

Floor Activity Continues for Other Controversial Energy Bills—SEEC also offered amendments to two additional energy bills, H.R. 2728 and H.R. 1900. For H.R. 2728, Vice-Chair **Rep. Rush Holt (NJ)** and Climate Task Force Chair **Rep. Scott Peters (CA)** offered an amendment maintaining the Interior Secretary's authority to issue regulations to reduce methane emissions from oil and gas drilling on public lands. For H.R. 1900, amendments included: Co-Chair **Rep. Paul Tonko (NY)** requiring that, in order for the new deadlines to apply, methane leaks be minimized, and Member **Rep. Jackie Speier (CA)** tolling the deadlines until FERC has responded to state or local concerns about projects.

California Congresswoman Seeks Offshore Fracking Moratorium—SEEC Member **Rep. Lois Capps (CA)** called for a moratorium on offshore fracking in federal waters, requesting a comprehensive study of its environmental and public health impacts.

TOP ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT FACTS

- ◆ **\$23 billion:** Amount consumers will save because of a new Department of Energy efficiency rule for electric motors.
- ◆ **7th:** Where 2013 ranks in terms of warmest years since record keeping began in 1850.
- ◆ **1.5:** Number of times greater than prevailing estimates that methane is being emitted due to human activity.
- ◆ **Five-fold:** Amount of fossil-fuel subsidies paid by industrial nations are in comparison to climate aid provided to poor countries.
- ◆ **\$14.2 billion:** Amount the Interior Department disbursed from energy production in FY13, a 17% increase over FY12.

SEEC MEMBER TWEET OF THE MONTH

Rep. Alan Lowenthal @RepLowenthal: Executive Order just issued to prepare U.S. for impacts of #climatechange. Policy leadership must start now. <http://1.usa.gov/19X3B6F>

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