



THE AEG INSIDER

Geoscience Policy Monthly Review

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October 2013

Budget

- [Budget update for October](#) - The government shutdown and impending debt ceiling crisis were at the forefront of budget talks this October. From October 1 to October 16 the federal government underwent a partial shutdown, halting programs and furloughing workers that did not contribute to the immediate protection of life and property.

Energy

- [Keystone XL southern portion construction may begin in November](#) - This month, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit [ruled](#) not to grant the Sierra Club, Clean Energy Future Oklahoma, and the East Texas Sub Regional Planning Commission a temporary injunction to stop the construction of the Gulf Coast pipeline, the southern extension of Transcanada's Keystone XL tar sands export pipeline.
- [Hearing on the Transboundary Hydrocarbon Agreement](#) - On October 1, the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources held a [hearing](#) to discuss proposed energy legislation. The legislation in question would approve an agreement between the U.S. and Mexico to develop oil and gas reserves that cross the international maritime boundary in the Gulf of Mexico.
- [U.S. is largest oil producer in 2013](#) - [PIRA Energy Group](#), a New York energy market consultancy, released a [report](#) this October indicating that the U.S. has surpassed Russia and Saudi Arabia to become the world's largest producer of oil in 2013.
- [Tax code overhaul could spell bad news for oil and gas](#) - House Ways and Means Committee Chairman Dave Camp (R-MI) has acknowledged that tax credits normally enjoyed by the oil and gas industry are not off the table when it comes to overhauling the United States' tax code.

Environment

- [Supreme Court to review GHG rule](#) - The Supreme Court [agreed to hear](#) six cases challenging the regulations set forth by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regarding greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from stationary sources this October.

Federal Agencies & Administration

- [EPA to hold meetings around the nation to discuss reducing GHG emissions](#) - The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is hosting eleven public listening sessions across the country to solicit ideas and input from the public regarding the best [Clean Air Act](#) approaches to reducing carbon pollution from existing power plants.
- [NSF grants fund new ocean observation center](#) - The National Science Foundation awarded \$16 million in grants to [fund a new observation system](#) in the sub-polar region of the North Atlantic Ocean to better understand the 'global conveyor belt' – the system of surface ocean currents that carry warmer waters northward, and the deep ocean currents that carry cooler waters southward toward the equator.

Government Shutdown

- [Smithsonian T-Rex reveal delayed by shutdown](#) - The government shutdown from October 1 through October 17 caused a delay in the delivery of a *Tyrannosaurus rex* skeleton scheduled to be revealed at the [Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History](#) on [National Fossil Day](#), October 16, 2013.
- [Hearing on The National Park Service's Implementation of the shutdown](#) - On October 16, the House Natural Resources Committee and the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee held a joint oversight [hearing](#) entitled *As Difficult As Possible: The National Park Service's (NPS) Implementation of the Government Shutdown*.
- [Shutdown closes National Parks](#) - The House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology postponed all hearings during the government shutdown. Additionally, other committees were unable to hold hearings because so many furloughed federal employees were unable to testify during the partial shutdown.

Natural Hazards

- [Government program to buy back hurricane-damaged and at-risk homes](#) - New Jersey and federal officials have teamed up to help buy back damaged or high-risk homes impacted by Superstorm Sandy.

Natural Resources

- [House hearing on impacts of regulations on US mining](#) - The House of Representatives passed the [National Strategic and Critical Mineral Production Act](#), in a 246-178 vote.

- [President Obama signs helium bill](#) - Both the House and Senate passed crucial helium legislation this September to avert the shutdown of the federal helium reserve near Amarillo, Texas.
- [Murkowski, Wyden introduce bipartisan critical minerals bill](#) - Senators Ron Wyden (D-OR) and Lisa Murkowski (R-AK), Chairman and Ranking Member of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, along with 15 other senators have submitted the latest round of legislation outlining a comprehensive minerals policy for the United States.
- [New U.S.-Russia international park sparks concern](#) - This October, the United States and Russia agreed to a memorandum of understanding (MOU) regarding stewardship of the Bering Strait region.

Research & Education

- [Congress takes up America COMPETES Act](#) - As the dust settled on the latest fiscal crises this October, members of Congress were able to address the lapse in authorization for [The America Creating Opportunities to Meaningfully Promote Excellence in Technology, Education and Science Act \(COMPETES Act\)](#) that occurred at the end of September.

Space

- [NASA prepares for next Mars mission](#) - NASA is preparing to launch its next spacecraft. The Mars Atmosphere and Volatiles Evolution mission (MAVEN) is set to launch on November 18 from Cape Canaveral Air Force Station in Florida.

Water

- [Court rules against EPA on agricultural stormwater case](#) - In the case, [Alt v. EPA](#), the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of West Virginia ruled that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) cannot require a West Virginia poultry farm to obtain a [Clean Water Act](#) discharge permit for its stormwater.

Federal Register - Click [here](#) for key Federal Register notices posted this October.

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