

ML Strategies' Weekly Energy and Environment Update - Week of January 21, 2014

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By David Leiter, Sarah Litke, Jean Cornell, Bryan Stockton, Jordan Collins and Neal Martin

After approving a three-day continuing resolution through January 18 to buy time for debate, Congress sent a bipartisan \$1.1 trillion omnibus Fiscal Year 2014 spending **bill** (H.R. 3547) to President Obama January 16. The measure, which the president signed the following day, funds the federal government through September, and though it includes a few energy riders, it leaves the big debates for later.

The agreement gives \$30.1 billion overall for Interior and environmental programs, \$231 million above the enacted level for fiscal year 2013, increasing spending for national parks and avoiding deeper sequestration cuts that both parties hoped to prevent. The measure boosts the Environmental Protection Agency's budget by \$299 million from post-sequestration 2013 levels. The legislation includes \$34.1 billion for energy and water programs for the remainder of the fiscal year, a \$777 million increase over current funding levels; \$27.3 billion would go to the Department of Energy.

The measure limits mountaintop mining regulations and puts a hold on rules that would stop funding of overseas coal-fired power plants. It prohibits the Environmental Protection Agency from establishing greenhouse gas regulations for livestock producers, requires the agency to compromise with states on haze issues, and requires the administration to report to Congress on federal agency obligations and climate change program spending. The bill blocks funding for the implementation or enforcement of federal light bulb efficiency standards, though the provision will have little impact, as the standards have largely gone into effect.

Both houses are in recess for the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday, but will return January 27. When the Senate returns, it will resume work on the unemployment insurance extension and consider a flood insurance bill. Other potential issues for the upcoming three-week work period may include legislation to raise the minimum wage, final conference agreements on the farm and water resources bills, and consideration of administration nominees. President Obama will address Congress during his annual State of the Union January 28.

On the tax extender issue, Speaker of the House John Boehner (R-OH) said January 16 that he is not sure whether the cost of reinstating the now-expired tax extenders package should be offset with deficit reduction measures elsewhere or added to the government's existing debt. Debate over the issue is likely to continue for several months.

For more on the latest energy and clean technology regulatory and legislative developments please see [ML Strategies'](#) most recent *[Energy and Environmental Update](#)*.

Authors

David Leiter