

Federal Climate and Energy Activities Weekly Roundup
April 6—April 10

Congress is on recess until Monday, April 20, therefore, there are no legislative introductions and updates to report in this week's SGA Federal Climate and Energy Activities Weekly Roundup.

Events and News

- This week, climate negotiators from 175 nations wrapped up 10 days of discussions in Bonn, Germany regarding the international response to climate change under the U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change. The Bonn talks are in preparation for the world climate conference in Copenhagen, Denmark set for December 2009, at which participating countries hope to agree to a new global emissions reduction treaty to replace the Kyoto Protocol. To date, participants have not been able to reach agreement on how a new world climate agreement should be structured.
- On April 8, the Commerce Department's National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) awarded a contract to the nonprofit research group Electric Power Research Institute to develop a plan for standardizing components of a future smart grid system. The plan, which will be delivered to NIST by the end of 2009 will propose standards for how the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission should establish public-private partnerships and develop a certification and accreditation process for smart-grid technology.
- This week, in an effort to gain the support of moderates Senators for climate change legislation, the Obama Administration signaled that it would consider giving away some emissions allowances under a cap and trade system, rather than the 100 percent auction of allowances the President supported during the campaign. However, a 100 percent auction remains the Administration's preference. The House Energy and Commerce Committee's draft climate and energy bill (Waxman-Markey) does not address the issue of auctioning allowances and distributing the revenue raised in such an auction.

Regulations

On April 10, EPA began a 60-day comment period on a proposed rule that would impose greenhouse gas emissions reporting requirements on industrial facilities emit over 25,000 tons of carbon dioxide or carbon dioxide-equivalent greenhouse gases a year. The comment period closes June 9. According to EPA, the requirements would apply to roughly 13,000 emission sources in a wide range of industrial sectors, including power plants, iron and steel producers, automakers, petroleum refineries, and landfills. EPA is scheduled to propose a finding by April 20 on whether greenhouse gas emissions from cars and trucks endanger public health and welfare under the Clean Air Act. If the agency finds that emissions do indeed endanger the public health and welfare, EPA would then be required to control vehicle emissions of greenhouse gases, as well as emissions from stationary sources