



Eye on Washington

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STATE ACTION

STATES URGE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF PIVOTAL ROLE IN EPA PLAN

The Environmental Council of the States (ECOS) representing state environmental commissioners, is urging the EPA to explicitly acknowledge the major role they play in meeting the agencies environmental goals, in the EPA's draft strategic plan for FY2003 – FY2008. ECOS states, "We do not believe it is enough to observe that the EPA's reliance on the partnerships with states and tribes is 'implicit' throughout the plan," and further urges the EPA "to take the discussion of state roles beyond generic references and into program specific delineations..."

As well, ECOS says the EPA doesn't address in its plan that states are experiencing and facing budget shortfalls. The group said of the EPA strategic plan "Only the water goal quantifies the magnitude of the funding shortfall for state clean water and drinking water programs."

ECOS remarked that the plan doesn't delineate "a systematic way of cross-referencing related work among different goals and objectives," and that it does not provide "further indication of which objectives, targets or program approaches have greater priority over others." ECOS noted that, unfortunately, while specific targets had been included in an earlier draft of the plan they had since been removed.

WILDLIFE

COMMITTEE TO ADDRESS INVADING SPECIES AND ALGAL BLOOMS

This week the House Science Committee will mark up two bills aimed at addressing the growing problems of aquatic invasive species and harmful algal blooms.

Invasive Species

Science Committee Chairman Sherwood Boehlert (R-N.Y.) and 84 cosponsors introduced a bill that would provide \$180 million over four years to fighting aquatic invasive species. The Environment, Technology and Standards Subcommittee unanimously approved Chairman Vernon Ehlers' (R-Mich.) H.R. 1081 (the Aquatic Invasive Species Research Act) back in March.

The legislation would fund research programs by NOAA, U.S.G.S. and the Smithsonian Environmental Research Centers well as an EPA program to develop tools for federal, state and local managers to fight invasive species; to support Coast Guard efforts to lessen the risk ships pose in unknowingly transporting the species; and will create grant programs for research in identifying and controlling invasive species.

Many scientists consider exotic species the greatest threat to wildlife and plants in general, aside from habitat loss. The Fish and Wildlife Service indicated that 42 percent of the nation's endangered and threatened species have declined as a result of non-native plants and animals. According to the GAO, in fiscal year 2000, the federal government spent \$631.5 million on invasive species-related activities, and the Agriculture Department received almost 90 percent of the total federal funding directed toward these efforts.

Algal Blooms and Hypoxia

The Science Environment Subcommittee will mark up H.R. 1856, the Harmful Algal Bloom and Hypoxia Research Amendments Act (also by Ehlers) on Thursday, which reauthorizes a 1998 law, providing about \$30 million for research into algal blooms and hypoxia.

The bill offers two major changes to the underlying 1998 law, asking for NOAA to complete assessments of hypoxia and algal blooms, and to

research algal blooms in freshwater. Most algal bloom research covers marine and saltwater environments, so this change would particularly be effective for the Great Lakes.

An amendment to ensure that money for research is actually being used for research is also expected at the markup session. NOAA has in the past tried to move around research money to cover its operational expenses. "We want to make sure research money is used for research and not other purposes," a Republican staff member said.

Schedule: The full Science Committee markup of the aquatic invasive species bill is slated for 10 a.m., Wednesday, June 4, in 2318 Rayburn. The Science Subcommittee on Environment, Technology and Standards' markup of the algal blooms bill is at 10 a.m., Thursday, June 5, in 2318 Rayburn.

AGRICULTURE

MEMBERS TO QUESTION USDA OFFICIALS ON CONSERVATION PAYMENTS

The House Agriculture Subcommittee on Conservation this week will examine the issue of "technical assistance" at the center of difficulties in the implementation of agricultural conservation programs, straining relations between the administration officials and lawmakers. Technical assistance is the money used by the Department of Agriculture to operate the conservation programs; the programs themselves accounting for about 15 percent to 20 percent of the total cost, with the rest going to farmers.

President Bush has proposed skimming 15 percent or so from all conservation programs to create a separate discretionary technical assistance account that would be used to fund all the conservation programs. But Congress has taken a grim view of this proposal, saying a discretionary account would put the funding up for grabs every year in the appropriations process, where it could be redirected to other uses.

Rejecting Bush's proposals in the 2003 spending bill, lawmakers mandated that technical assistance be taken directly from the spending accounts of the programs themselves. Senate staff

say new legislation authorizing more money for the programs is likely the only way to solve the problem going forward.

USDA Undersecretary for Natural Resources and Environment Mark Rey said the agency will take a cooperative approach with legislators in seeking a solution to the disagreement. "We will work with you as the process unfolds," he said, referring to the 2004 appropriations process. "I don't think the programs will die on the vine."

Schedule: The hearing is scheduled for 10 a.m. on Wednesday, June 4, in 1300 Longworth.

ENERGY

ENERGY BILL RETURNS TO FLOOR

S. 14: The Energy Policy Act of 2003 went back to the floor on June 2; no votes expected before June 3. Even if energy remains on the floor all week, as expected, the schedule in subsequent weeks is less clear, prompting many observers to conclude an on-again, off-again approach for much of June if not the entire summer.

"Energy is not that hot of an item right now," an industry lobbyist said. "And it takes a long time to get something through the Senate anyway. We're going to see a very slow, very deliberative process."

Aides to Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist (R-Tenn.) and Senate Energy Committee Chairman Pete Domenici (R-N.M.) insisted the energy bill can be completed within two weeks, but others see this strategy as fantasy given the hundreds of amendments in the pipeline, and a reluctance from Senate Democrats to let the bill move ahead without a fight.

Senators Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) and Charles Schumer (D-N.Y.) in particular plan to add many second-degree amendments in this week's ethanol debate, and this pattern could repeat itself when electricity, climate change, renewable portfolio standards, taxes and fuel economy come to the floor.

The Bush administration has released a Statement of Administration Policy (SAP) on the energy bill calling for an Arctic National Wildlife

Refuge drilling provision and for dropping tax subsidies for a natural gas pipeline to Alaska's North Slope. The release of the SAP follows weeks of intense Canadian lobbying against tax incentives and loan guarantees, and from Keith Ashdown of Taxpayers for Common Sense.

On ANWR, staff director Alex Flint (to Senate Energy Committee Chairman Pete Domenici) said that drilling in the Arctic Refuge is not viewed as a "first-priority" issue for the weeks ahead, adding "we don't feel there are 60 votes" to override a filibuster.

Otherwise, the administration's SAP appears to support S.14, notably the electricity title; expresses "concern" that the \$15 billion price tag of the Senate Finance Committee's tax portion is too high; and added that it sees no need for "additional legislation" that would attempt to direct action on global climate change.

CBO SCORES ENERGY BILL

The Congressional Budget Office's cost estimate for S.14 has been released. Assuming the necessary appropriations, CBO said that implementation of the energy bill would cost about: \$3.7 billion in FY '04; \$40.3 billion over the next five years; and \$52.6 billion over the next decade.

CBO said enacting S.14 would increase direct federal spending by: \$94 million in FY '03; \$212 million in FY '04; and \$5.1 billion over the next decade. The legislation would add revenues of \$75 million in FY '04; and revenues of \$820 million over the next decade.

The most expensive items in the Senate energy bill are research and development programs which would cost \$6.6 billion in FY '04, and \$39.9 billion over 2004-8 for programs related to energy and science research. The bill would also authorize: \$1.1 billion for an advanced nuclear reactor design in Arkansas; \$770 million for coal technology programs; \$466 million for the development of federal oil and natural gas resources; \$271 million to promote energy efficiency at federal, state and local levels; and \$126 million to assess renewable resources on federal lands.

'INDIAN ENERGY' SECTION OF S.14 CONTESTED

Section 2604 of the Senate energy bill (S.14) is at the heart of the controversy because it would exempt the federal government from liability after a project is approved, and would not subject energy generated on tribal lands to analysis under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The section of the bill regarding development of energy resources on Indian lands has been an issue with the chairman of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee, Sen. Pete Domenici (R-NM) and the ranking member Sen. Jeff Bingaman (D-NM); each has offered alternatives.

Bingaman will offer an amendment which seeks to have section 2604 deleted, but would still allow for grants and assistance to tribes developing their own energy resources, while Domenici defends section 2604.

Opponents to Section 2604 claim it is a nod to big energy companies and provides them access to those areas that have been previously difficult due to current state and environmental regulations.

Joe Shirley, vice president of the Navajo Nation, told the Senate Indian Affairs Committee, "This scheme, wherein a cabinet Secretary has prescriptive control over decisions regarding Indian energy development, but no subsequent liability, is an abdication of the federal trust responsibility that is patently unfair to tribes."

ON THE HILL

REQUESTS REVIEWED FOR FOREST SERVICE, RURAL DEVELOPMENT

The Senate Appropriations Agriculture Subcommittee held a hearing May 15 to examine portions of the administration's fiscal year 2004 budget request related to rural development, foreign services, forestry and research.

The hearing provided a forum to question administration officials over their proposal to eliminate the Value-added Development Grants Program, from the 2002 farm bill.

Sen. Charles Grassley's (R-Iowa) program provides money to farmers to develop new markets for new agricultural products, such as promoting markets for organic crops. As well, in the 2002 farm bill the program was expanded to include loans and loan guarantees for renewable energy systems including wind energy and anaerobic digesters. Conservation groups have expressed frustration with that spending cut and other reductions to the budgets of the farm bill's renewable energy programs.

Other issues that arose include the decision to cut funding for the Economic Action program and the Pacific Northwest Assistance Program, which aim to help logging communities transition to non-timber-based economies. While Democrats favor those programs, they have been criticized by Republicans as unnecessary.

The Forest Service's wildland fire management program was increased to \$1.57 billion from the \$1.38 billion allocated for FY '03; other programs were cut, including land acquisition, which was reduced to \$44 million from the \$134 million in FY '03.

SENATORS EXAMINE 2002 FARM BILL IMPLEMENTATION

The Senate Agriculture Committee held a hearing May 14 to examine the Department of Agriculture's implementation of the 2002 farm bill, and asked USDA Secretary Ann Veneman about the implementation of programs included in the \$45 billion, six-year law.

Since the farm bill passed in May of last year, numerous differences have emerged between the lawmakers who passed it and those in the administration charged with implementing it, for example a dispute over how to fund technical assistance for USDA's conservation programs, which were reauthorized at record levels in the law.

The Justice Department ruled last year that the planned funding scheme was prohibited, and to resolve the problem the administration recommended instead skimming 15 percent from each program's budget to create a discretionary technical assistance account. Since USDA wound up using only the Environmental Quality Incentives Program, the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program,

the Farmland Protection Program and the Grassland Reserve Program -- to provide the \$333 million in technical assistance needed to administer all the conservation programs.

Aside from the funding issue, lawmakers asked Veneman about new rules that implement the programs authorized in the farm bill. While some of these rules have been released in final form, others have not, and the specifics of the rules have the potential to impact environmental quality.

Another difference with the administration's implementation of the farm bill raised by Committee is the spending cap for Sen. Harkin's Conservation Security Program. Congress set the cap for CSP at \$3.7 billion over the next 10 years, but the administration has proposed a cap of \$2 billion. Other environment and energy-related issues raised were the farm bill's renewable energy portfolio and value-added development grants.

WILDFIRE BILL REDIRECTED TO HOUSE JUDICIARY PANEL

A request by the House Judiciary Committee to review the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 has effectively sidetracked the legislation, delaying its advancement to the House floor as members had suggested just last week.

Judiciary Chairman James Sensenbrenner (R-Wis.) was asked to review H.R. 1904, saying the provisions regarding court proceedings and administrative procedures fall under his committee's jurisdiction. Rep. Mark Udall's (D-Co) spokesman, said, "There are some judicial issues in this bill, which make it ripe for the Judiciary Committee to review."

The bill is aimed at preventing forest fires by returning federally managed forests to their natural condition. Covered by the act are almost 20 million acres near communities and municipal water supplies, in forests occupied by threatened or endangered species, and in areas where the trees are infested with certain insects.

Rep. Scott McInnis' (R-CO) bill H.R. 1904 has been on the fast track since its introduction last month. As of press time, the Judiciary Committee

confirmed it would take up the bill this week, but no specific date was scheduled.

WATER RESOURCES

HOUSE HOLDS HEARINGS TO PREVENT FUTURE SHORTAGES

The House Transportation and Infrastructure Water Resources Subcommittee will hold a hearing Wednesday examining potential solutions to the problem of increasingly taxed water supplies in the United States. On May 22, a panel of local officials, industry executives and farm representatives told the subcommittee that recent shortages are forcing them to change their way they view the overstressed resource.

Michael Marschner, utilities director for Frederick County, Md., and Ronald Gastelum, president of the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, told the subcommittee that both U.S. coasts are having problems with water supply. Gastelum said his district has been planning extensively to ensure adequate water supply without raising rates, but he said painful choices will have to be made to accommodate a legal settlement requiring California to reduce its take of water from the Colorado River.

At the May 22 hearing, Gastelum said his agency is currently exploring desalination as an option for meeting the terms of the agreement requiring California to reduce its yearly take from the Colorado River. Although desalination has been too expensive to use as anything but a last resort for water in the past, new technologies have brought the price of desalinated water down substantially, he said.

Schedule: The hearing is scheduled for 10 a.m., Wednesday, June 4, in 2167 Rayburn.

CALFED SPENDING UNDER SCRUTINY

The House Resources Committee's Water and Power Subcommittee held a hearing May 15 to discuss how the Interior Department is spending its annual appropriation for the California Bay Delta Program (CALFED).

CALFED comes in the form of 18 federal and state agencies, it is a multibillion-dollar effort to balance California's tight water supplies between human and environmental needs.

The subcommittee members heard from Interior officials about how CALFED money is being spent; whether the spending is being coordinated with other agencies to avoid overlap, and whether the funding is actually heading to the purposes for which it was earmarked. The panel was asked how Interior incorporates direct CALFED implementation expenditures into the budget.

WESTERN WATER PROJECTS GET SCOPED IN SENATE

The Senate Energy and Natural Resources Water and Power Subcommittee is to hold a hearing on bills related to several local water projects in the West:

Fremont-Madison Conveyance Act

S. 520, the Fremont-Madison Conveyance Act, is sponsored by Sen. Michael Crapo (R-Idaho), and would authorize the transfer of the Cross Cut Diversion Dam, Cross Cut Canal and the five Teton Exchange Wells from the Bureau of Reclamation to the Fremont-Madison Irrigation District in Idaho by Sept. 13, 2004.

Under this legislation, FMID would pay the administrative costs of the transfer, including any environmental reviews. Although environmental groups opposed the legislation last year, the FMID has since worked with those concerned that the transfer of the exchange wells would affect water supply on the river. One group that opposed the transfer last year, the Henry's Fork Foundation, now supports it. Another, Trout Unlimited, has withdrawn its opposition.

Tualatin River Basin Water Supply Enhancement Act

S. 625, the Tualatin River Basin Water Supply Enhancement Act of 2003, sponsored by Sen. Gordon Smith (R-Ore.), would authorize a water supply feasibility study looking at ways to meet future water supply needs for agriculture, municipal and industrial uses.

Since the population of communities in the Tualatin River Basin is expected to double in the next 50 years, and the growth will require an additional 16.3 billion gallons of stored water each year, water managers in that county are calling for the study to figure out ways to meet this additional capacity.

The study would identify water conservation measures as well as ways to improve water quality, environmental conditions and species protection.

Irvine Basin Surface and Groundwater Improvement Act

S. 649, the Irvine Basin Surface and Groundwater Improvement Act, would direct the Interior Department to help in the planning, designing and building of projects that would clean polluted groundwater in the San Diego Creek Watershed. Under S. 649, sponsored by Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.), Interior would pay 25 percent of the cost of cleanup.

Hawaii Water Resources Act

S. 960, the Hawaii Water Resources Act, is sponsored by Sen. Daniel Akaka (D-Hawaii) and calls on the Interior Department to participate in the construction of a salt water desalination plant in Kalaeloa, Oahu, and other water projects. The \$25 million desalination plant will supply 5 million gallons per day, and is needed due to population growth on the island.

The bill also authorizes the Dept. of Interior to help state and local agencies build wetlands in Kealakehe, North Kona; to help clean surface water, and establish a recycled water distribution system in Lahaina. S. 960 authorizes the Bureau of Reclamation to spend \$1.7 million on a study of Hawaii's irrigation and water delivery systems.

Small Reclamation Water Resources Project Act

S. 993, sponsored by Sen. Gordon Smith (R-Ore.), authorizes the Dept. of Interior to provide grants and loans to implement projects that can be performed by the recipient organization in 18 months or less. The grants and loans would be limited to \$5 million each, and they would be matched on a 50 percent basis.

Eligible projects under the new program would include water conservation, water quality improvements, water management for urban landscapes, drought assistance, fish and wildlife improvements, and public safety improvements. Previously, projects were required to serve irrigation needs in order to qualify for assistance.

OECA DELAYS RELEASING “BLENDING” GUIDANCE DOCUMENT

The release of an Office of Water draft guidance which suggests that “blending” of stormwater with treated wastewater be allowed, has been delayed by the Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance because of fears that municipalities would re-open consent decrees to lift limits on the practice now in place. The document also suggests that EPA officials may have forced some publicly owned treatment works (POTWs) to make unnecessary and costly changes to their facilities in order to avoid just such blending.

Deputy EPA Administrator Linda Fisher had received documents in April from OECA indicating “there will be numerous legal challenges on our decisions to accept or deny municipal requests to reopen consent decrees to allow blending.”

OECA claims in the document that EPA’s draft blending guide is inconsistent with the agency’s earlier 1984 bypass rule, however the Office of General Counsel (OGC) said that such blending did not constitute a bypass under certain operating conditions, and that the bypass rule addresses only intentional diversion of waste streams from the treatment facility, however it does not define the term “treatment facility.”

An EPA source says that well-run systems have very little dilution, while poorly-run systems have a lot of dilution because their systems are not well maintained, and that “You don’t want to reward [the POTWs] for not maintaining their systems.”

EPA GUIDANCE FOR LISTING IMPAIRED WATERS FOR STATES

An EPA guidance detailing how states identify impaired waters will soon be released. It will recommend decreasing the amounts of sampling data which states are expected to analyze before

deciding if a water body is not meeting water quality standards. The guidance appears to be aimed at limiting future disputes with states over controversial data methodologies, including state requirements which even increase the number of data samples necessary to list a water as impaired.

Environmentalists allege that state efforts to ensure data integrity in certain listing decisions have become an excuse to avoid listing waters that show impairment. An EPA official said, “the guidance is meant to be clearer than previous guidance,” and that it will also address statewide water quality reporting, and address monitoring methods some states employ, specifically one called “binomial analysis” in which samples showing impairment are reconsidered in light of the overall number of samples available.

According to the following table, the EPA is still reviewing lists from 16 states and awaiting submissions from 11 others.

APPROVED		
29		
CT	UT	MI
PR	AS	AR**
DC	CNMI	NE
VA	HI	MT
KY	OR	SD
SC	NY	WY
MN	USVI	AZ*
KS	MD	GUAM
MO**	GA	NV*
ND	NC	

FINAL LIST IN REVIEW	
16	
PA	AL
FL	TN
TX	OH
WV	NM
WI	VT
IL	IN
NJ	IA
DE	CA

FINAL LIST NOT SUBMITTED TO EPA	
11	
MA	OK
ME	CO
NH	AK
RI	ID
MS	WA
LA	

- * EPA added waters to state’s list
- ** EPA will add waters to state’s list

DRINKING WATER GROUP WILL SUBMIT MINORITY REPORT CONCERNS TO EPA

The National Drinking Water Advisory Council (NDWAC) decided at a May 14 meeting not to forward a report outlining recommendations to the EPA on small drinking water system’s affordability issues, until a “minority report” which has outlined objections to the main body report on issues raised by small systems representatives, can accompany it to the EPA. NDWAC is a group of drinking water stakeholders which acts as an advisory group to EPA on drinking water decisions.

The minority report will suggest that the new affordability criteria backed by the full panel are “clearly unaffordable for millions of low-income families and many communities by any reasonable definition of ‘affordable’.” The minority group also alleges that steps the full panel recommends to avoid the need for variances would erode local control of water system decisions.

Drinking water systems must soon comply with a new, lower arsenic standard of 10 parts per billion, as well as possible microbial and disinfectant by-product rules in the near future.

WATER FUNDING A TOP PRIORITY, SAYS POLL

A poll by Frank Luntz, commissioned by the Association of Metropolitan Sewage Agencies (AMSA) showed that 70% of those polled would support a 1 percent tax increase if the money were spent on water infrastructure; and 84 percent would back legislation to create a trust fund. Also, that 51% listed water infrastructure as most worthy of a federal trust fund, followed by 23% for roads and highways, 4% for airports and aviation.

The poll is part of an ongoing effort by AMSA to build political support for a long-term trust fund for drinking water and wastewater infrastructure funding needs. If current revenues remain flat, estimates are that billions of dollars will be needed annually to maintain our water infrastructure. Advocates are pushing for both the

short-term funding legislation now in front of Congress, as well as having Congress authorize a trust fund to create the revenue – just as the gasoline tax funds the highway system.

DEFENSE SPENDING

DEFENSE BILL MAY CONTAIN ESA AND MMPA PROPOSALS

The FY2004 Defense authorization bill, H.R.1588, may include at least two provisions of the Pentagon's Readiness and Range Preservation Initiative in the House Armed Services Committee markup. Several Energy Department programs, Base Realignment and Closure programs and Defense Department accounts are also included in the bill which heads to the committee's markup. The most recent activity on this bill occurred on May 20, when a Supplementary Report was submitted to include legislation omitted from the May 16 bill.

House Armed Services Committee Chairman Duncan Hunter (R-CA) may include "modified versions" of proposed Endangered Species Act and Marine Mammal Protection Act changes. The Senate Armed Services Committee approved the ESA changes in the Defense authorization bill it passed. The House Resources Committee marked up Rep. Elton Gallegly's (R-CA) bill, H.R.1835 which contains similar changes to ESA and MMPA.

House Readiness Subcommittee Chairman Joel Hefley's (R-CO) mark included the Sikes Act reauthorization, reauthorizing \$4.5 million through 2008 for the law established in 1960 to help manage DOD lands. The money goes toward managing military installations' natural resources with \$3 million for the Interior Department and \$1.5 million for DOD.

BRAC HALTED; WETLANDS CROSSINGS INCLUDED

On May 9, the House Readiness Subcommittee approved Rep. Taylor's (D-MS) amendment to stop the next round of base closures, scheduled for 2005 through the Base Realignment and Closure Act. Taylor objected to the program

saying that, instead of saving money, at least \$13 billion has been spent so far cleaning up bases the government did not sell.

Subcommittee Chairman Hefley (R-CO) did not support the amendment, saying the BRAC process is useful to the DOD, but that this may not be the time to do it. He said he would support an amendment delaying the 2005 process for two years.

The Subcommittee approved a second Taylor amendment allowing the Combined Arms Maneuver Area in Camp Shelby, Miss., to use some of its funds to build wetlands crossings to comply with environmental laws. The Defense authorization bill allows Congress to fund DOD programs as well as several DOE nonproliferation and cleanup accounts.

Schedule: The full committee markup will take place at 1 p.m., Tuesday, May 13 in 2118 Rayburn.

ESA CHANGE APPROVED; DOE SECURITY PROGRAM FUNDED

The Senate Armed Services Committee completed the FY2004 Defense authorization bill, S.747, on May 8, approving the Pentagon's requested change to the Endangered Species Act as well as the increases in funds for Energy Department security programs; it is unclear when it will go to the floor for a vote.

The Pentagon's request to change ESA in its Readiness and Range Preservation Initiative survived the markup; but other changes to the Marine Mammal Protection Act, Clean Air Act, Resource Conservation and Recovery Act, and Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act, also known as Superfund, were left out.

The committee approved DOD's request allowing Integrated Natural Resources Management Plans, as called for under the Sikes Act, to satisfy an ESA provision on endangered species. John Kostyack, of the National Wildlife Federation, said the proposal on RCRA and CERCLA was vulnerable because so many training sites are contaminated with hazardous materials. He said the

Senate Commerce Committee plans to take up the act's reauthorization in the future.

For DOD Environment Restoration programs, the Readiness Subcommittee increased funding for the cleanup of Formerly Used Defense Sites by \$40 million from the administration's \$212 million request.

SECURITY RELATED

SECURITY BILL STATUS

A Senate Environment and Public Works Committee markup of chemical, nuclear and wastewater security legislation is in limbo, as Republican leaders seek the needed votes to pass the three separate bills during the same session.

EPW Chairman James Inhofe (R-OK) with Sen. Zell Miller (D-GA) introduced the chemical security bill on May 5. It calls on the Department of Homeland Security to establish regulations within a year requiring chemical site owners to conduct vulnerability assessments and prepare site security plans that address the results.

DHS will likely focus on the roughly 120 highest-risk facilities located near the nation's largest urban centers. The Inhofe bill would set fines for any site where the security review falls short of the law's requirements, and a provision allowing the government to take civil action against any violating facility. Senate Democrats have questioned the validity of the penalty system.

Although the Inhofe proposal makes no direct mention of the Environmental Protection Agency, Sen. Jon Corzine (D-N.J.) offered a bill which moved unanimously last summer through the EPW Committee, which places the chemical security issue primarily in EPA's hands.

The Bush administration, Hill Republicans and industry are wrestling over the EPA jurisdiction issue. EPA officials said the agency has been set to release a regulation addressing the issue last summer, but that announcement never came. EPA Administrator Christie Whitman explained that lawyers from other agencies won the argument that EPA would be overstepping its legal bounds.

WASTEWATER SECURITY

The House passed the Wastewater Treatment Works Security Act, providing \$200 million in grants for publicly owned treatment facilities to conduct vulnerability assessments and security enhancements, but the Senate has yet to hold a hearing on the issue this year, and no bill has been introduced on the majority side. It now waits for markup in the EPW Committee.

EPW Committee ranking member Jim Jeffords (I-VT) introduced S.779, an updated version of wastewater security legislation introduced last year. The new version of Jeffords' bill would supposedly strengthen the enforcement section of the EPA over wastewater plants.

A Senate staffer said the minority side will look for ways to incorporate into the legislation the principles it feels are important. "Accountability is the biggest issue," he said. "We want to make sure the facilities are sharing the information with EPA."

NEWS FOUND ON THE WEB

BUREAU OF RECLAMATION'S WATER 2025 REGIONAL CONFERENCES, LOCATIONS AND DATES

- Tuesday, July 8 - Phoenix, AZ
- Wednesday, July 9 - Las Vegas, NV
- Thursday, July 10 - Sacramento CA
- Wednesday, July 16 - Salt Lake City UT
- Thursday, July 17 - Boise ID
- Tuesday, July 29 - Billings MT
- Tuesday, August 12 - Albuquerque, NM
- Thursday, August 14 - Austin, TX

Go to the web site for contact information for each of the Regional Conferences at www.doi.gov/water2025/conference/regional.html

INTERIOR DEPARTMENT PROVIDES NEW GUIDANCE TO PROMOTE DEVELOPMENT OF CONSERVATION BANKS

The U.S. Department of the Interior has issued the first comprehensive federal guidelines designed to promote the establishment of Conservation Banks, which ensure perpetual protection for endangered species that are adversely affected elsewhere, Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks Craig Manson said today.

"This is a hallmark event in the 30-year history of the Endangered Species Act," Manson said, "and a major step by the Fish and Wildlife Service to implement Secretary Norton's Four C's - conservation through cooperation, communication and consultation." To read more, go to www.doi.gov/news/030508a.htm

ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT "BROKEN" FLOOD OF LITIGATION OVER CRITICAL HABITAT HINDERS SPECIES CONSERVATION

Faced with mounting numbers of court orders from six years of litigation, the Interior Department's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will soon run out of funds to designate critical habitat for threatened and endangered species, Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Fish and Wildlife and Parks Craig Manson said today. More important, the flood of court orders requiring critical habitat designations is undermining endangered species conservation by compromising the Service's ability to protect new species and to work with states, tribes, landowners and others to recover those already listed under the Act, Manson said. For more information, go to www.doi.gov/news/030528a.htm

CABINET OFFICIALS REPORT PROGRESS ON PRESIDENT BUSH'S HEALTHY FORESTS INITIATIVE

Interior Secretary Gale A. Norton, Agriculture Secretary Ann M. Veneman and Commerce Secretary Don Evans have announced improved administrative procedures to expedite forest health projects under the Bush Administration's Healthy Forests Initiative.

The announcements -- the result of proposals and guidance released in December -- will focus environmental analysis and allow vital forest health projects to move forward, such as the removal of flammable materials and the reseeded and

planting of areas severely burned by wildland fires. To read more, go to www.doi.gov/news/030530a.htm

WHITMAN ANNOUNCES \$15 MILLION FOR NATION'S WATERSHEDS

To support community-driven initiatives that protect habitat, improve water quality, and enhance outdoor recreation, EPA Administrator Christie Whitman today announced nearly \$15 million in grants to 20 watershed organizations selected as part of a new Watershed Initiative.

Administrator Whitman said, "EPA is very excited to commit significant federal dollars to support these top watershed efforts, all of which will serve as national models for other communities to follow. The organizations selected today stand ready to achieve on-the-ground water quality improvements..." To read more, go to <http://yosemite.epa.gov>

EPA ANNOUNCES SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS TOWARDS PROTECTING NATION'S DRINKING WATER SOURCES; 32,000 ASSESSMENTS COMPLETED

Protection of our nation's drinking water reached a significant milestone this month with the completion by drinking water systems, in conjunction with states and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), of 32,000 assessments of lakes, reservoirs, rivers, and aquifers that provide drinking water to communities across the country, EPA Assistant Administrator for Water G. Tracy Mehan III announced today. The assessments will provide critical information for protection of the sources of drinking water. To read more, go to <http://yosemite.epa.gov>

NOAA FISHERIES PROPOSES NOTICE TO REDUCE FISHING CAPACITY IN THE PACIFIC COAST GROUND FISH TRAWL INDUSTRY

NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service ([NOAA Fisheries](http://www.noaa.gov)) today published a notice to reduce fishing capacity in the Pacific Coast groundfish trawl industry. The agency is seeking public comment during the next 30 days on the notice. [NOAA](http://www.noaa.gov) (the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration) is an agency of the



Commerce Department. The omnibus FY 2003 spending bill authorized NOAA Fisheries to reduce the number of commercial trawlers catching groundfish (excluding whiting caught by at-sea processors). Go to www.publicaffairs.noaa.gov

NOAA REPORTS DROUGHT CONDITIONS IMPROVING IN PARTS OF U.S.

Above-average precipitation throughout much of the United States during the past three months led to improving drought conditions in many areas, according to scientists at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's NOAA National Climatic Data Center in Asheville, N.C. NOAA is part of the Commerce Department.

Twenty-four percent of the contiguous United States was in moderate-to-extreme drought in April, down from 37 percent in January and 50 percent during the summer of 2002, based on a widely used measure of drought severity, the Palmer Drought Index. For more go to www.publicaffairs.noaa.gov/releases2003/may03/naa03052.html

NEW USGS FACT SHEET ON PAST AND PRESENT DROUGHTS IN UTAH

Streamflows in Utah are the lowest recorded in nearly 100 years, confirming what most Utahans have known for the past 4 years: the state is in a drought. According to a new U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) fact sheet on present and historical droughts in the state, however, the unusual aspect of this drought is not its length but its severity.

A reproducible photograph of Lake Powell in drought conditions can be found at <http://water.usgs.gov/pubs/fs/fs-037-03/>. (Lake Powell near Hite, Utah, showing exposed channel of the Colorado and Dirty Devil rivers, which are normally flooded by the lake, as well as the deltaic sediments that are deposited at the upper end of the lake; view to the east in October 2002. Photo courtesy of the USGS.) www.usgs.gov

**BILLS INTRODUCED
May 5 - 23, 2003**

SENATE

Monday, May 5

S. 993 SMITH

A bill to amend the Small Reclamation Projects Act of 1956, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

S. 994 INHOFE

A bill to protect human health and the environment from the release of hazardous substances by acts of terrorism; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

Tuesday, May 6

S. 997 DOMENICI

A bill to authorize the Secretary of the Army to carry out critical restoration projects along the Middle Rio Grande; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

S. 1003 CRAIG

A bill to clarify the intent of Congress with respect to the continued use of established commercial outfitter hunting camps on the Salmon River; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

S. 1005 DOMENICI

An original bill to enhance the energy security of the United States, and for other purposes; from the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources; placed on the calendar.

Wednesday, May 7

S. 1015 GREGG

A bill to authorize grants through the Centers For Disease Control and Prevention for mosquito control programs to prevent mosquito-borne diseases, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Thursday, May 8

S. 1027 NELSON

A bill to amend the Irrigation Project Contract Extension Act of 1998 to extend certain contracts

between the Bureau of Reclamation and certain irrigation water contractors in the States of Wyoming and Nebraska; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

Friday, May 9

S. 1036 ALLARD

A bill to provide for a multi-agency cooperative effort to encourage further research regarding the causes of chronic wasting disease and methods to control the further spread of the disease in deer and elk herds, to monitor the incidence of the disease, to support State efforts to control the disease, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

S. 1038 THOMAS

A bill to limit the acquisition by the United States of land located in a State in which 25 percent or more of the land in that State is owned by the United States; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

Monday, May 12

S. 1039 INHOFE

A bill to amend the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to enhance the security of wastewater treatment works; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

S. 1043 INHOFE

A bill to provide for the security of commercial nuclear power plants and facilities designed by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

Tuesday, May 13

S. 1051 DOMENICI

A bill to direct the Secretary of the Interior to carry out a demonstration program to assess potential water savings through control of Salt Cedar and Russian Olive; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

Thursday, May 15

S. 1058 ALLARD

A bill to provide a cost-sharing requirement for the construction of the Arkansas Valley Conduit in the

State of Colorado; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

S. 1071 BINGAMAN

A bill to authorize the Secretary of the Interior, through the Bureau of Reclamation, to conduct a feasibility study on a water conservation project within the Arch Hurley Conservancy District in the State of New Mexico, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

Thursday, May 22

S. 1097 FEINSTEIN

A bill to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to implement the Calfed Bay-Delta Program; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

S. 1107 THOMAS

A bill to enhance the Recreational Fee Demonstration Program for the National Park Service, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

S. 1109 TALENT

A bill to provide \$50,000,000,000 in new transportation infrastructure funding through Federal bonding to empower States and local governments to complete significant infrastructure projects across all modes of transportation, including roads, rail, transit, aviation, and water, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

S. 111 FEINSTEIN

A bill to provide suitable grazing arrangements on National Forest System land to persons that hold a grazing permit adversely affected by the standards and guidelines contained in the record of Decision of the Sierra Nevada Forest Plan Amendment and pertaining to the Willow Flycatcher and the Yosemite Toad; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

S. 1116 LEVIN

A bill to amend the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to direct the Great Lakes National Program Office of the Environmental Protection Agency to develop, implement, monitor, and report on a series of indicators of water quality and related environmental factors in the Great Lakes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

S. 1134 BOND

A bill to reauthorize and improve the programs authorized by the Public Works and Economic Development Act of 1965; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

Friday, May 23

S. 1146 CONRAD

A bill to implement the recommendations of the Garrison Unit Tribal Advisory Committee by providing authorization for the construction of a rural health care facility on the Fort Berthold Indian Reservation, North Dakota; to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

HOUSE

Tuesday, May 6

H.R. 1961 COSTELLO

A bill to provide for the external regulation of nuclear safety and occupational safety and health at the Department of Energy; to the Committee on Science, and in addition to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and Education and the Workforce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

H.R. 1965 GIBBONS

A bill to amend the Endangered Species Act of 1973 to limit the application of that Act with respect to actions on military land or private land and to provide incentives for voluntary habitat maintenance, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Resources.

Wednesday, May 7

H.R. 2020 MOORE

A bill to reduce the impacts of hurricanes, tornadoes and related hazards through a program of research and development and technology transfer, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Science, and in addition to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

Thursday, May 8

H.R. 2036 ISAKSON

A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide economic incentives for the preservation of open space and conservation of natural resources, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

H.R. 2040 OSBORNE

A bill to amend the Irrigation Project Contract Extension Act of 1998 to extend certain contracts between the Bureau of Reclamation and certain irrigation water contractors in the States of Wyoming and Nebraska; to the Committee on Resources.

H.R. 2042 WAXMAN

A bill to amend the Clean Air Act to reduce emissions from electronic power-plants, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

Friday, May 9

H.R. 2046 RANGEL

A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to rebuild America through job creation; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

H.R. 2048 GILCHREST

A bill to extend the period for reimbursement under the Fishermen's Protective Act of 1967, and to reauthorize the Yukon River Restoration and Enhancement Fund; to the Committee on Resources.

H.R. 2057 McINNIS

A bill to provide for a multi-agency cooperative effort to encourage further research regarding the causes of chronic wasting disease and methods to control the further spread of the disease in deer and elk herds, to monitor the incidence of the disease, to support State efforts to control the disease, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Resources, and in addition to the Committee on Agriculture, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

H.R. 2059 PEARCE

A bill to designate Fort Bayard Historic District in the State of New Mexico as a national historic landmark, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Resources.

Wednesday, May 14

H.R. 2088 YOUNG

A bill to authorize funds for Federal-aid highways, highway safety programs, and transit programs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, and in addition to the Committees on Ways and Means, the Budget, Science, Resources, the Judiciary, Energy and Commerce, Government Reform, and Rules, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

H. Con. Res. 181 ORTIZ

Concurrent resolution expressing the sense of the Congress regarding the obligations of Mexico under the Treaty Between the United States and Mexico of 1944 relating to the use of the Colorado, Rio Grande, and Tijuana Rivers; to the Committee on International Relations.

Thursday, May 15

H.R. 2123 CAPPS

A bill to amend the Safe Drinking Water Act and the Federal Water Pollution Control Act concerning water pollution resulting from discharges of perchlorate; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, and in addition to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

H.R. 2132 JANKLOW

A bill to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to reallocate costs of the Pactola Dam and Reservoir, South Dakota, to reflect increased demands for municipal and industrial and fish and wildlife purposes; to the Committee on Resources.

H.R. 2136 KING

A bill to amend the Clean Air Act to prohibit the use of methyl tertiary butyl ether as a gasoline additive

and to repeal the oxygenate requirement for reformulated gasoline, to provide funding for the clean up of underground storage tanks, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

H.R. 2138 OSE

A bill to elevate the Environmental Protection Agency to cabinet-level status and redesignate such agency as the Department of Environmental Protection; to the Committee on Government Reform.

Tuesday, May 20

H.R. 2169 LEACH

A bill to save taxpayers' money, reduce the deficit, cut corporate welfare, protect communities from wildfires, encourage Federal land management agency reform and accountability, and protect and restore America's natural heritage by eliminating the fiscally wasteful and ecologically destructive commercial logging program on Federal public lands, restoring native biodiversity in our Federal public forests, and facilitating the economic recovery and diversification of communities affected by the Federal logging program; to the Committee on Resources, and in addition to the Committees on Agriculture, and Education and the Workforce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

Wednesday, May 21

H.R. 2193 OBERSTAR

A bill to provide funding for port security enhancements, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, and in addition to the Committee on Ways and Means, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

H.R. 2200 UDALL

A bill to require Federal agencies to develop and implement policies and practices that promote environmental justice, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in

addition to the Committee on Resources, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

Thursday, May 22

H.R. 2215 BISHOP

A bill to amend the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to ensure that sewage treatment plants monitor for and report discharges of raw sewage, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

H.R. 2242 KENNEDY

A bill to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to include Indian tribes among the entities consulted with respect to activities carried out by the Secretary of Homeland Security, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Resources, and in addition to the Committee on the Judiciary, the Budget, Intelligence (Permanent Select), and Homeland Security (Select), for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

H.R. 2245 LoBIONDO

A bill to amend the Water Resources Development Act of 1986 to limit the non-Federal share of the cost of shore protection projects; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

H.R. 2257 REHBERG

A bill to convey the Lower Yellowstone Irrigation Project, the Savage Unit of the Pick-Sloan Missouri Basin Program, and the Intake Irrigation Project to the appurtenant Irrigation Districts; to the Committee on Resources.

**FEDERAL REGISTER NOTICES
May 5 – 30, 2003**

DOE. Bonneville Power Administration notice of intent to prepare an EIS. Written comments are due no later than June 19. Comments may also be made at an EIS scoping meeting open house on May 22. FR 5/05/03. p. 23705

INTERIOR. Bureau of Reclamation. Request for supplemental information related to the notice of intent

to prepare a draft EIS. Written comments or suggestions are invited during a formal scoping period of 120 days, following publication of the supplemental NOI. FR 5/05/03 page 23761

DOE. Western Area Power Administration. Notice of decision. Parker-Davis Project - Extension of Electric Power Resource Commitments by Application of the Energy Planning and Management Program Power Marketing Initiative. PMI will apply to the P-DP effective June 4, 2003. FR 5/05/03 page 23709

INTERIOR. Office of the Secretary. Extension of Comment Period on Revised Departmental Strategic Plan for FY 2003 – 2008. Comments should be provided no later than May 26. FR 5/06/03 page 24015

COMMERCE. NOAA. West Coast States and Western Pacific Fisheries - Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery - Corrections to the 2003 Annual Specifications and Management Measures; In-Season Trip Limit Adjustments; Announcement of Incidental Halibut Retention Allowance. Effective 0001 hours local time May 1, 2003, until the 2004 annual specifications and management measures are effective. Comments will be accepted through May 22. FR 5/06/03 page 23901

COMMERCE. NOAA. Magnuson-Stevens Act Provisions; Fisheries Off the West Coast States and in the Western Pacific; Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery; Groundfish Fishery Management Measures. Final rule; correction. Effective May 6, 2003. FR 5/06/03 page 23924

COMMERCE. NOAA. Fisheries Off the West Coast States and in the Western Pacific; West Coast Salmon Fisheries; 2003 Management Measures. Final rule; annual management measures for the ocean salmon fishery; Request for Comments. Effective from 0001 hours Pacific Daylight Time, May 1, 2003, until the effective date of the 2004 management measures. Comments must be received by May 21. FR 5/06/03 page 23913

AGRICULTURE. Farm Service Agency. Commodity Credit Corporation. Record of Decision for the Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement on the Conservation Reserve Program. FR 5/08/03 page 24848

INTERIOR. Bureau of Reclamation. Central Valley Improvement Act, Criteria For Evaluating Water

Conservation Plans. Notice. The final version is now available. FR 5/08/03 page 24754

DOE. Western Area Power Administration. Headgate Rock to Blythe Transmission Line, Bernardino County, CA. Notice of floodplain involvement. Comments on the proposed floodplain action are due no later than May 27, 2003. FR 5/12/03 page 25366

EPA. Effluent Limitations Guidelines and New Source Performance Standards for the Metal Products and Machinery Point Source Category. Final rule. This regulation shall become effective June 12, 2003. FR 5/13/03 page 25685

EPA. National Advisory Council on Environmental Policy and Technology (NACEPT) Superfund Subcommittee Meeting. Notification of public advisory NACEPT subcommittee on superfund: open meeting. The meeting will be held on June 17-18, 2003. FR 5/13/03 page 25605

EPA. National Tribal Conference on Environmental Management; Notice of Proposal Solicitation. CORRECTION. On the original document 03-10168, from April 24, 2003, page 20142, make the following correction: in the third column under DATES, in the second line, change "June 23, 2003" to "July 23, 2003". FR 5/13/03 page 25684

INTERIOR. Bureau of Reclamation. California Bay-Delta Public Advisory Committee Public Meeting. Notice of meeting. The meeting will be held June 5. FR 5/13/03 page 25626

INTERIOR. Bureau of Reclamation. Glen Canyon Dam Adaptive Management Work Group (AMWG). Notice of public meeting. The meetings will take place in Phoenix on May 28-30. FR 5/13/03 page 25627

COMMERCE. NOAA. Fisheries off the West Coast States and in the Western Pacific; Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery. Notice of intent to revise the scope of a Programmatical Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) for fishing conducted under the Pacific Coast Groundfish FMP. Request for written comments. Written comments will be accepted on or before June 13. A public scoping meeting is scheduled for June 16. FR 5/16/03 page 26557

EPA. Notice of Approval of Submissions to Prohibit Mixing Zones for Bioaccumulative Chemicals of

Concern Pursuant to Section 118 of the Clean Water Act and the Water Quality Guidance for the Great Lakes System for the States of Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio and Wisconsin. Notice. EPA's approval is effective on May 16, 2003. FR 5/16/03 page 26616

UTAH MITIGATION COMMISSION. Notice of Availability of the Final Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact for the Rehabilitation or Replacement of Diversion Dams on the Duchesne and Strawberry Rivers in Utah. FR 5/16/03 page 26683

EPA. Forum on State and Tribal Toxics Actions; Notice of Public Meeting. The two projects will meet jointly June 4-5, 2003. Requests to participate in the spring FOSTTA meeting, identified by docket ID# OPPT- 2003-0022 must be received by EPA on or before May 29, 2003. FR 5/19/03 page 27071

DOE. Western Area Power Administration. Construction and Operation of the Proposed Wellton-Mohawk Generating Facility, Yuma County, AZ. Notice of Intent to Prepare an EIS. The public scoping meetings will be held on June 3, in Wellton, and June 4, in Yuma. Written comments on the scope of the EIS for the proposed Project should be received no later than June 30, 2003, which will be the end of the EIS scoping period. FR 5/19/03 page 27056

AGRICULTURE. Natural Resources Conservation Service. Notice of Availability of Finding of No Significant Impact and Environmental Assessment for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program. To ensure consideration, comments on the EA and FONSI must be postmarked on or before June 19. FR 5/20/03 page 27519

EPA. Endocrine Disruptor Methods Validation Subcommittee under the National Advisory Council for Environmental Policy and Technology; Notice of Public Meeting. The meeting will be June 5-6, 2003. FR 5/21 page 27797

INTERIOR. Fish and Wildlife Service. Notice of Availability of an Environmental Assessment, and Receipt of an Application for an Incidental Take Permit for the Harley John Reservoir Replacement in Riverside County, CA. Comments due on or before July 21, 2003. FR 5/21/03 page 27841

INTERIOR. Fish and Wildlife Service. Proposed Rule and Notice of Public Meeting. Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Listing of the Central California Distinct Population Segment of the California Tiger Salamander; Reclassification of the Sonoma County and Santa Barbara County Distinct Populations From Endangered to Threatened; Species Rule. Comments due by July 22. Public hearings will be conducted June 17-19, 2003. FR 5/23/03 page 28648

THE UNIFIED AGENDA OF FEDERAL REGULATORY AND DEREGULATORY ACTIONS: Agriculture Dept. Commerce Dept. Defense Dept. Energy Dept. Interior Dept. FR 5/27/03 pages 29971-30548

COMMERCE. NOAA. NMFS. Financial Assistance for Fisheries Disasters. Notice of solicitation for applications. Applications must be received by close of business on June 27, 2003. Applications received after that time will not be considered for funding. The earliest start date of awards is approximately 45 days after the date of publication of this notice. FR 5/28/03 page 31686

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY. Meeting of the President’s Council of Advisors on Science and Technology. Notice of meeting. Meeting date is June 10, 2003. FR 5/29/03 page 32037

AGRICULTURE. Natural Resources Conservation Service and Commodity Credit Corporation, USDA.. Environmental Quality Incentives Program. Final rule. Effective date is May 30. FR 5/30/03 page 32337

AGRICULTURE. Natural Resources Conservation Service, USDA. Notice of Proposed changes in the National Handbook of Conservation Practices. Notice and request for comments. Comments will be received for a 30-day period, starting on the date of this publication. This series of new or revised conservation practice standards will be adopted after the close of the 30-day period. FR 5/30/03 page 32458

DEFENSE. Dept. of the Army; Corps of Engineers. Coastal Engineering Research Board. Notice of an open meeting. The meetings will be held June 16-18, 2003. FR 5/30/03 page 32466

DEFENSE. Dept. of the Army; Corps of Engineers. Estuary Habitat Restoration Council Meeting. Notice

of an open meeting. The meeting will be held on June 12, 2003. FR 5/30/03 page 32466

INTERIOR. Fish and Wildlife Service. Notice of Meeting of the Trinity Adaptive Management Working Group. Notice of meeting. The group will meet June 19-20, 2003. FR 5/30/03 page 32540

****END****

