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[Governors](#)

[Programs](#)

[Correspondence](#)

## ***The CONEG Connection - December 8, 2016***

***News and highlights from the Northeastern Governors and Washington, DC in the policy areas of energy, environment and transportation.***

### **New Administration Taking Shape**

Below is a quick list of President-elect Trump's picks for top positions in his administration announced so far. Cabinet positions require Senate confirmation; hearings are expected to begin soon after Congress convenes in January.

**Attorney General:** U.S. Senator from Alabama **Jeff Sessions**, currently serving in his fourth term.

**CIA:** Former Army officer and current U.S. Representative from Kansas **Mike Pompeo**.

**Commerce:** Billionaire private equity investor **Wilbur Ross**.

**Defense:** Retired Marine Corps General **James Mattis** (*Note: Since Mattis retired from the military only three years ago the new Congress may hold a vote to waive the law that requires military personnel to be out of active duty for at least seven years before serving as Secretary of Defense.*)

**Education:** American Federation for Children chairwoman **Betsy DeVos** who also served as Michigan Republican party chairwoman.

**Environmental Protection Agency:** Oklahoma Attorney General **Scott Pruitt**.

**Health and Human Services:** Current six-term U.S. Representative from Georgia **Tom Price**.

**Homeland Security:** Retired Marine General **John F. Kelly**.

**Housing and Urban Development:** Neurosurgeon and former Presidential candidate **Ben Carson**.

**Small Business Administration:** Linda McMahon, co-founder and former CEO of World Wrestling Entertainment.

**Transportation:** Former U.S. Labor Secretary **Elaine Chao** who also served as Deputy Secretary for Transportation for President George H.W. Bush.

**Treasury:** Former Goldman Sachs partner **Steven Mnuchin**.

**U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations:** Current South Carolina Governor **Nikki Haley**.

Names continue to be floated for the top spots at Agriculture, Energy, Interior, Labor, OMB, State, and Veterans Affairs.

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## 115th Congress

Republicans and Democrats in both chambers have elected their leadership teams for the new congress, with many in the top spots remaining in place from previous Congress.

In the Senate, Republicans re-elected Sen. Mitch McConnell (KY) to second term as Senate Majority Leader and Sen. John Cornyn (TX), Majority Whip; Sen. John Thune (SD) as Senate Republican Conference Chair, and Sen. John Barrasso (WY) as Senate Republican Policy Committee Chair.

Senate Democrats elected Sen. Charles Schumer (NY) to replace retiring Sen. Harry Reid (D-NV) as Senate Minority Leader. Sen. Dick Durbin (IL) was re-elected to the No. 2 spot of Minority Whip and Sen. Patty Murray (WA) will take the newly-configured role of Assistant Leader. Bernie Sanders (VT) will fill a new position as Senate Democratic Chair of Outreach and Elizabeth Warren (MA) is Vice Chair of the Senate Democratic Conference.

In the House, Republicans unanimously re-nominated Rep. Paul Ryan (WI) to continue as Speaker. He still must be elected by the full House in January but is expected to easily win the required 218 votes. Current Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy (CA) and Majority Whip Steve Scalise (LA) will remain in their positions.

After overcoming a challenge from Rep. Tim Ryan (OH), Rep. Nancy Pelosi was re-elected House Minority Leader. Democrats also re-elected Rep. Steny Hoyer (MD) as Minority Whip and Rep. James Clyburn (SC) as the Assistant Minority Leader. Rep. Joseph Crowley (NY) was also elected chairman of the House Democratic Caucus.

Committee Leadership:

Senate Republicans have not yet named their committee chairs for the 115th Congress, but Senate Democrats have released their list of Committee Ranking Members for the 115th. Of interest to the CONEG program are the following (\* *indicates a new leader*):

- Appropriations: Sen. Patrick Leahy (VT)\*
- Budget: Sen. Bernie Sanders (VT)\*
- Environment & Public Works: Sen. Tom Carper (DE)\*

The House Republican Steering Committee approved the recommendations for committee chairs in the 115th Congress. Of interest to the CONEG program are the following (\* indicates a new leader).

- Appropriations: Rep. Rodney Frelinghuysen (NJ)\*
- Transportation and Infrastructure: Rep. Bill Shuster (PA)

The House Democratic Caucus approved the following Ranking Member spots for exclusive committees including:

- Appropriations: Nita Lowey (NY)
- Energy and Commerce: Frank Pallone (NJ)
- Ways and Means: Richard Neal (MA)\*

To see [complete list of Committee Leadership Assignments](#).



## NEWS FROM AROUND THE REGION:

### CONNECTICUT

Governor Malloy and CTDOT Commissioner Redeker unveiled the state's new fleet of tow-behind snow plows capable of clearing two full highway lanes in a single pass, leading to improved cycle times and reduced fuel consumption.



Governor Malloy announced the availability of \$2.7 million in additional funding for the popular Connecticut Hydrogen and Electric Automobile Purchase Rebate Program.

The Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection will receive a \$160,000 two-year Pollution Prevention grant from U.S. EPA to assist businesses such as hotels, nursing homes and dry cleaners eliminate toxic chemicals, increase energy efficiency and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

### MASSACHUSETTS

Governor Baker and the New England-Israel Business Council head to Israel on an Economic Development Mission to strengthen the Commonwealth's effectiveness in cybersecurity and digital health.

Governor Baker and Lt. Governor Polito announced \$250,000 in Conservation District Innovation Grants to preserve and protect the Commonwealth's natural resources.

Governor Baker and Lt. Governor Polito announced more than \$3.9 million in grant awards to protect over 900 acres of land through the Local Acquisitions for Natural Diversity (LAND) Grant Program which seeks to address climate change and protect biodiversity within the Commonwealth.

The MassWorks Infrastructure Program awarded \$85 million in 2016 grants for a range of infrastructure improvements that are stimulating new economic growth and attracting \$1 billion in new private investment.

UMass Lowell will receive an \$80,000 pollution prevention grant from the U.S. EPA to promote practices to reduce the use of energy, water, and toxics in the seafood processing and dairy pasteurization sectors.

## **NEW HAMPSHIRE**

Manchester-Boston Regional Airport has been rated the country's Best Midsize Airport by Travepulse.com.

The New Hampshire Coastal Risk and Hazards Commission issues recommendations for "Preparing New Hampshire for Projected Storm Surge, Sea-Level Rise, and Extreme Precipitation."

The NH Department of Environmental Services will receive a \$160,000 two-year U.S. EPA pollution prevention grant to promote climate change mitigation for the hospitality industry and to assist businesses located in sensitive and flood-prone areas to install rain gardens or other best management practices to control storm water.

## **NEW YORK**

Governor Cuomo signs legislation to require NYSDOT to study each of the state's 5,300 at-grade railroad crossings and recommend safety improvements.



New York is first state in the nation to secure international certification of its Green Bonds that support the development of affordable housing that reduces the impact of climate change.

New York is on track to become the first state in the nation to participate in a federal auction for an offshore wind site and is seeking comments on a draft plan to measure wind speed and ocean waves at the federal ocean site located off the Long Island coast.

## **RHODE ISLAND**

Governor Raimondo met with U.S. Secretary of Education John King and West Warwick High School students to talk about the state's initiative to establish Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) in all public schools.

RIDOT completes the Great Island Bridge replacement project in Narragansett eight months ahead of schedule and \$700,000 under budget.

RIDOT seeks to implement the first two of 13 truck tolling facilities on Route 95.

The new Rhode Island Farm Energy Program awards \$52,245 in grants to local farms to support energy efficiency projects and help farmers transition to renewable power.

The RI Department of Environmental Management will receive a \$129,000 two-year U.S. EPA Pollution Prevention grant to reduce the potential during storm surges or hurricanes for releases of hazardous material or petroleum products from above ground storage tanks located in flood-prone coastal communities.

## **VERMONT**

Governor Shumlin has been awarded the prestigious insignia of Officer of the Ordre national du Québec by Québec Premier Philippe Couillard.

Governor-elect Phil Scott begins work to build his new Administration and has announced two key Cabinet positions.

The Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation has been awarded a \$160,000 two-year EPA Pollution Prevention grant to help businesses comply with the new Universal Recycling Law and to provide information on hazardous waste management regulations to generators of small quantities of hazardous waste.



Northeast Commissioners on the Environment (NECOE) meet and congratulate Commissioner Tom Burack for his service.

From left to right: ME Commissioner Paul Mercer, CT Commissioner Rob Klee, MA Commissioner Marty Suuberg, NH Commissioner Tom Burack, RI Director Janet Coit, and Sarah Rutter, Regional Program Coordinator, CONEG.



## NEWS FROM WASHINGTON, DC:

Congress is set to consider a Continuing Resolution (CR) this week that would extend funding for federal programs through April 28, 2017. The current CR expires on December 11.

The EIA reports that the New England natural gas pipeline capacity has increased for the first time since 2010.

The U.S. Department of Energy announced the approval of the 154-mile underground and underwater New England Clean Power Link Transmission Line that will bring up to 1,000 megawatts of hydropower from Québec, Canada to southern Vermont.

Amtrak CEO Charles “Wick” Moorman discusses on CBS This Morning the railroad’s plans under new leadership and the new administration.



The Federal Railroad Administration proposes new safety regulations for high speed passenger trains.

The USDOT Inspector General has released its annual report detailing the agency’s top management challenges for the current fiscal year.



century.

New analysis from the White House Office of Management and Budget finds that severe weather events associated with climate change will have a significant impact on the federal budget and suggests that keeping global average temperature increases below 2 degrees Celsius could significantly reduce annual economic losses and U.S. Federal revenue losses from climate change by mid- and late-

The U.S. EPA finalized increases in renewable fuel volume requirements across all categories of biofuels under the Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS) program.

The Government Accountability Office (GAO) has released two new reports on the RFS: Renewable Fuel Standard: Low Expected Production Volumes Make It Unlikely That Advanced Biofuels Can Meet Increasing Targets and Renewable Fuel Standard: Program Unlikely to Meet Its Targets for Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions. GAO also recently provided testimony on these two reports to the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EIA finds that Federal leasing for offshore wind is increasing.



*Did You Know...*

Three wind turbine manufacturers provide more than 75% of U.S. wind capacity.

Source: Energy Information Administration

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