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Weekly Legislative Update April 3, 2023

Congressional Outlook

Both chambers are in recess until lawmakers return on April 17, with most of the legislative priorities left to address.

When the Senate returns, the upper chamber will vote on the **Fire Grants and Safety Act** ([S. 870](#)), which would amend the Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of 1974 to authorize appropriations for the United States Fire Administration (USFA) and firefighter assistance grant programs. Additionally, the legislation would provide \$20 million extra to the USFA to distribute [firefighter assistance grants](#) to local departments through the fiscal year 2030. The bill has significant bipartisan support, but Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee Ranking Member Rand Paul (R-Ky.) forced additional consideration calling for a more robust amendment process. Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.) filed cloture on the bill last week.

After months of limited progress, lawmakers will return to Washington with a focus on addressing the debt ceiling. Following exchanges in the press by President Biden and Speaker of the House Kevin McCarthy (R-Calif.), including a letter by the Speaker, a group of centrist Democrats and Republicans are working [behind the scenes](#) to create a potential backup plan for the \$31.4 trillion debt limit. The summer deadline has spurred some lawmakers into action, while the Biden administration has avoided conversations that include compromises or spending cuts. After McCarthy called for a [meeting](#), the president responded by saying he would not meet until House Republicans released a budget plan of their own. We expect the negotiations to begin in earnest when the two-week recess concludes. Many compare the issue to 2011 when Congress and President Obama negotiated the Budget Control Act.

Bills and Regulations of Interest to You

Bill	Title	Sponsors	Background
S. 1149	Recovering America's Wildlife Act	Sens. Heinrich and Tillis	Provides more than \$1.4 billion a year for wildlife conservation and endangered species restoration.
H.R. 1837	Investing in Our Communities Act	Reps. Kustoff and Ruppertsberger	Restores tax-exempt advance refunding for municipal bonds so state and local governments can more efficiently invest in projects throughout their communities
H.R. 1814 , S. 977	Facilitating Investments Required for Emergency Services to All Towns in Our Nation (FIRE STATION) Act	Rep. Pascrell, Sen. Van Hollen	Provides grants for fire station construction through the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and for other purposes.
S.1005	Weatherization Assistance Program Improvements Act	Sen. Reed	Amend the Energy Conservation and Production Act to improve the weatherization assistance program, and for other purposes.
H.R. 1840 , S. 1016	Agriculture Resilience Act	Rep. Pingree, Sen. Heinrich	Address climate change on agriculture through improved soil health, sequestration of carbon, reduction of emissions, and enhancement of resilience.
H.R. 1824	Food and Farm Act	Rep. Blumenauer	Reforms the safety net for farmers and ranchers, enhance soil, water, and habitat conservation, encourage beginning farmers and ranchers, strengthen nutrition for Americans, support agriculture research and innovation, reduce food waste, improve animal welfare, and invest in regional food systems, and for other purposes.

Agency	Title	Proposed Regulation	Comment Deadline
EPA	PFAS Drinking Water Rule Proposal	Formally published Wednesday, March 29th here .	Tuesday, May 30th

Week in Review

Sen. Paul eyes floor votes on firefighter bill after committee spat

Centrist Democrats hatch secret plan to head off debt ceiling calamity

McCarthy to Biden on debt limit: 'You are on the clock'
