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Introduction

The House is set this week to work through committee markups of the Budget Reconciliation package. Those of interest to the ABC include House Agriculture, Energy and Commerce and Ways and Means. These smaller packages will be combined into one bill upon which the House will vote. This $3.5 trillion package is moving in tandem with the Senate passed bipartisan Infrastructure package. Speaker Pelosi wants to vote on both pieces of legislation by the end of September. This would mean passage of the bipartisan Infrastructure package while the larger budget reconciliation piece would need to head to the Senate where changes are expected. Senator Joe Manchin (D-WV), who wields an important vote on the package, has already expressed concerns about the size of the package and the lack of support for fossil fuel which is concerning to his home state. Below is news from Washington, D.C.

Administration

Federal Energy Regulatory Commission – New Appointee Could be Tipping Point on Clean Energy

The following story discusses a recent appointee to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission who could further support the development and regulation of Clean Energy technologies.

Miranda Wilson of Energywire reported on September 10, "The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission is set to become a more significant player for the Biden administration's clean energy agenda, as the agency is poised to hold a Democratic majority for the first time in 4 ½ years.

"President Biden announced yesterday his intent to nominate Willie Phillips, chairman of the Public Service Commission of the District of Columbia, to serve as FERC's fifth commissioner. Charged with regulating wholesale electricity markets, power transmission and large natural gas projects, the five-member independent agency has enormous sway over the Biden administration's clean energy priorities, including the goal of a 100 percent carbon-free grid by 2035, analysts said.

“FERC has had a Republican majority or a partisan tie since 2017. As of January, the commission has been led by Chairman Richard Glick, a Democrat who has sought to increase the agency’s accounting of climate change and environmental justice impacts in its decisions. But those efforts haven’t always won majority support.

“If Phillips is confirmed by the Senate, FERC could begin to take more aggressive steps to consider the climate effects of proposed new natural gas pipelines and to eliminate market barriers for renewable energy, analysts said. A Democrat, Phillips is expected to take similar positions on some key issues to those of Glick and the commission’s other Democrat, Allison Clements.

“Even though, as an independent agency, FERC isn’t necessarily under the same administrative umbrella, they have a really huge role to play,” said Jessica Bell, deputy director of the State Energy & Environmental Impact Center at New York University's School of Law.

“Senate lawmakers will need to confirm Phillips before he can join the commission, which could take several months. The process may be stalled with Democrats prioritizing the passage of a significant budget reconciliation package, said Jeff Dennis, general counsel at the clean energy trade group Advanced Energy Economy.

“My experience is sometimes [confirmations] happen really fast, or they drag on for a really long time,” Dennis said.

“Still, Phillips’ addition at FERC could help ensure that the commission moves forward with ongoing proceedings affecting renewable energy, transmission infrastructure and climate change, clean energy groups said. Since Phillips comes from a local regulatory background, FERC observers also expect him to play a role in helping the commission work with state regulators in identifying ways to harmonize FERC policies with states’ clean energy policies.

“The commission has also formed a joint task force with state utility regulators to tackle challenges that may be holding back the development of transmission infrastructure needed to support far-flung renewable energy projects.

“Also, having five commissioners at FERC will significantly reduce the likelihood of the commission reaching a stalemate on various decisions. Former Republican Commissioner Neil Chatterjee stepped down from his role at FERC last month, leaving the regulatory body with two Democrats and two Republicans.

“It’s really key that we have five commissioners at FERC in order for the president’s clean energy goals to be able to advance there,” said Sean Gallagher, vice president of state and regulatory affairs at the Solar Energy Industries Association.

No 'magic wand'

“Phillips could end up being a deciding vote on at least few key issues currently before FERC, analysts said.

“In February, the commission opened a notice of inquiry into how it reviews and approves new natural gas pipelines. Having been accused over the years of being a “rubber stamp” for natural gas projects, FERC is considering reforms that could compel the commission to consider environmental justice impacts, greenhouse gas emissions, states’ climate goals and other factors when deciding whether to approve new projects.

“By having a five-member commission, hopefully they can get a good number of those commissioners on board and create something that’s robust and will take into account greenhouse gas impacts and environmental justice,” Bell said of potential changes to a 1999 policy statement.

“In a statement yesterday, the Interstate Natural Gas Association of America called for the Senate to act promptly on the nomination because "an effective and efficient FERC is key to enabling a reliable and resilient natural gas system to meet the growing energy needs of our country.”

"As the Senate considers Chairman Phillips’ nomination, it is critical that he demonstrate a commitment to a predictable and clear regulatory process and evaluating each project on its merits in accordance with federal law to ensure that needed natural gas infrastructure will be built in a timely fashion," said INGAA President Amy Andryszak.

“In addition, Phillips seems generally supportive of reducing barriers for renewable energy and other technologies such as demand response so they can fully participate in wholesale markets, several experts pointed out.

“Analysts at ClearView Energy Partners LLC noted that D.C.'s clean energy ambitions under Phillips include a commitment to use 100 percent renewable energy by 2032, although they added that some organizations may question his work history.

"Earlier in his career, Phillips worked for former U.S. Senator and later U.S. Attorney General, Jeff Sessions (R-GA), and interned in the Office of General Counsel under the George W. Bush administration — a bipartisan history that may appeal to moderates although it may disappoint progressives," ClearView said in a note to clients yesterday.

“In April, Phillips spoke at a FERC technical conference where he shared his support for incentivizing clean energy technologies and called for electrification of other types of energy resources. In a world with electrified transportation, school buses could provide grid reliability benefits, Phillips said at the time.

“You look at a school bus parking lot, and you see a parking lot. I see a power plant. I see a storage facility. How great would it be for us to tap into that resource to benefit the system?” Phillips said during the conference.

“That perspective could be valuable for FERC’s broad inquiry into potential reforms to the electric transmission planning process, according to Dennis. More widespread electric transportation would increase power demand, furthering the need to build new transmission lines, Dennis said.

“Overall, Phillips has demonstrated a commitment to the energy transition and to FERC’s role as a key player in helping speed up the process for getting new renewable energy projects up and running, said Gallagher of SEIA.

“When we spoke to him, he was passionate about getting the District and Public Service Commission to lead on the energy transition,” Gallagher said. “He also understands some of the nitty-gritty issues like interconnection and how important an efficient, timely interconnection process is to actually being able to bring clean energy projects online.”

“Nonetheless, environmental justice groups and local organizations in Washington, D.C., said they were disappointed with the administration’s selection of Phillips to serve as one of the nation’s top energy regulators. As a commissioner and chairman on the D.C. PSC, Phillips has sided with electric utilities in the city at the expense of consumer protection and climate action, said Jeff Stottlemyer, an organizer with We Power DC, a coalition advocating for local control of the district's energy system.

“Willie Phillips represents business as usual in terms of utility regulations, which we can no longer afford," Stottlemyer said in an email. "The Biden administration must not waste the opportunity to establish a bolder and more progressive FERC, and we therefore call for the withdrawal of the Phillips nomination."

“Phillips’ appointment — pending Senate confirmation — is good news for those hoping to see a “greener” FERC, said Paul Patterson, an analyst at Glenrock Associates LLC. But it won’t necessarily be a “panacea” for the transition to carbon-free energy, Patterson said.

“Bottom line is large renewable related infrastructure faces many of the same challenges other big infrastructure projects do," Patterson said in an email, "and I don’t know of any magic wand FERC can wave to make all those hurdles go away."

Congress

House Democrats Release Details of Clean Energy Program

The following story discusses aspects of the House Energy and Commerce Committees budget reconciliation package.

Nick Sobczyk of E&E News PM wrote on September 9, "The House Energy and Commerce Committee is proposing a $150 billion Clean Electricity Payment Program for its portion of the massive budget reconciliation package, offering a first look at Democrats' linchpin decarbonization policy.

"It would be paired with a $13.5 billion investment in electric vehicle infrastructure, $9 billion for transmission, and a methane fee on the oil and gas industry, on top of billions in other spending, according to a fact sheet from the committee.

"Energy and Commerce, chaired by Rep. Frank Pallone (D-N.J), is expected to mark up its $456 billion portion of the reconciliation bill early next week ahead of the Sept. 15 deadline congressional leaders have set to cobble together the full $3.5 trillion package.

"The proposals in E&C's portion were largely expected, and they align closely with what Senate Democratic leaders proposed when they issued the budget resolution last month. But the fact sheet is the first public look at the specifics of the CEPP, which is essentially a clean electricity standard designed to fit the "Byrd" rule that governs reconciliation.

"The CEPP, as described in the fact sheet, does not include power sector-wide emissions or clean energy deployment targets. Rather, payments and fees would be based on clean electricity deployment of individual suppliers.

"Administered through the Department of Energy from 2023 to 2030, the program would offer grants to electricity suppliers who increase clean electricity provided to customers at least 4 percent over the previous year.

"Suppliers would get $150 for each megawatt-hour above 1.5 percent of the previous year's clean generation. Grants could be used only for a narrow range of customer-focused investments, including clean energy or energy efficiency investments, bill assistance, and worker retention.

"Meanwhile, suppliers that do not hit the target would be assessed a fee at $40 per MWh based on their clean energy shortfall, according to the committee fact sheer.

"The CEPP would define clean electricity as any generation with a carbon intensity less than 0.10 metric ton of carbon dioxide equivalent per MWh, likely ruling out most natural gas.

"Ultimately, Democrats want the CEPP, paired with expanded clean energy incentives coming out of the tax-writing committees, to hit 80% clean energy in the power sector by 2030. That’s a potentially huge chunk of President Biden’s Paris Agreement pledge to reduce emissions 50 to 52 percent by the end of the decade.

“But questions remain about whether the CEPP would pass muster with the Senate parliamentarian, who enforces the strict rules that allow a narrow set of policies to bypass the filibuster through reconciliation.

“Senate Energy and Natural Resources Chair Joe Manchin (D-WV), who will weigh in on the Democrats' climate plans, has said he would not support a reconciliation package with a $3.5 trillion spending topline.

“The E&C proposal also outlines tens of billions in other investments in emissions reduction and environmental remediation. On top of the $13.5 billion for electric vehicles, the bill would offer $7 billion in loans and grants through DOE to develop new zero-emissions transportation technologies and $5 billion for the replacement of trucks and school buses with zero-emissions vehicles through EPA.

“The transmission cash would come in the form of grants and loans targeted in part at modernizing the grid between the Eastern and Western interconnections.

“The package would include roughly $17 billion to decarbonize the federal fleet, $18 billion for energy efficiency and $27.5 billion for a green bank program to fund climate projects around the country. The House Oversight and Reform reconciliation bill also includes funding for the federal fleet.

“Lead pipe removal would get a $30 billion investment, and the legislation would dole out $10 billion to clean up Superfund sites on the National Priority List. Critics of the bipartisan infrastructure deal said it didn't have enough for lead pipes.

House to Offer 10-Year Clean Energy Tax Breaks Extensions

This story discusses the House Ways and Means Committee budget reconciliation package.

On September 10, Geoff Koss of E&E Daily, “The House Ways and Means Committee will push for 10-year extensions on an assortment of clean energy tax credits in the upcoming reconciliation package, doubling the duration included in previous iterations of the panel’s clean energy tax plan.

“The committee, which yesterday launched a multiday markup of bills for inclusion in the $3.5 trillion budget reconciliation package under development, is expected to turn to a revised version of the “Growing Renewable Energy and Efficiency Now (GREEN) Act,” H.R. 848, early next week.

“Ways and Means Chairman Richard Neal (D-MA) said yesterday that the upcoming package will make “historic investments in clean energy that support the creation of new, good jobs while helping combat climate change and prepare for an increase in extreme weather events in the future.”

“While the text of the revised clean energy bill has not yet been released, Neal said he’s committed to meeting President Biden’s carbon emissions goals, “and our 10-year, full-value policy accomplishes that.”

“That’s twice as long as the extensions included in the version of the "GREEN Act" released in February, which extended the investment and production tax credits through 2026.

“Staff familiar with Neal’s thinking said the bulk of tax credits in the revised bill would also see 10-year extensions, with the ITC expected to be restored to the full 30% credit solar developers enjoyed until Congress moved in 2015 to phase out the break.

“There will be a direct-pay option for the ITC and other incentives in the bill — a request made by multiple clean energy sectors to help weather the slowdown in tax equity markets brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic.

“The measure would also add energy storage to the qualifying technologies for the ITC, another major policy widely sought by clean energy interests and one that was included in the earlier versions of the "GREEN Act."

“The revised bill is expected to include new incentives for transmission and a five-year extension of the federal production tax credit for existing nuclear plants, said one informed staffer. It additionally will include “robust” incentives for electric vehicles and charging stations.

“It was unclear yesterday whether the revised bill would repeal an assortment of fossil fuel tax incentives, despite clamoring by dozens of House liberals for doing so.

“The repeal of tax breaks for oil, gas and coal is included in a competing bill, the “Clean Energy for America Act,” S. 1298, which was advanced by the Senate Finance Committee earlier this year.

“However, it remains to be seen whether those provisions will be retained when the reconciliation package is brought to the Senate floor, given the chamber’s 50-50 split and anticipated opposition from Democrats representing fossil fuel-producing states.

Fossil fuel fight

“The possible repeal of fossil fuel tax breaks, new fees on methane production and a carbon border adjustment tax were among the issues that a coalition of more than 120 conservative and limited-government groups warned the Ways and Means Committee against yesterday.

“Now is one of the worst times to raise taxes on American families and businesses,” wrote Americans for Tax Reform and other groups, which noted that employment lags by millions compared with pre-pandemic levels and inflation is “running rampant.”

“Rather than pushing tax increases on American families and businesses, we urge you to push policies that promote economic growth so that the economy can recover and grow,” wrote the groups.

“Ways and Means Republicans hammered the point throughout yesterday’s markup, with ranking member Kevin Brady (R-TX) decrying “tons of green welfare subsidies for the wealthy” in the reconciliation push.

“The last thing Americans need right now is trillions more in government spending that drives up prices, kill jobs and wastes our hard-earned tax dollars,” he said at the start of the markup.

“Criticism also came from Democrats on the panel, with Florida Rep. Stephanie Murphy complaining at the outset that the entire bill was unavailable, as were Congressional Budget Office scores of the deficit impacts and the revenue raisers to pay for the spending.

“I don’t think it’s asking too much to want to see this Ways and Means bill in its entirety before voting on any part of it,” said Murphy, a co-chair of the moderate Blue Dog Caucus who was among the House centrists who pressed Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) last month to bring the Senate’s bipartisan infrastructure bill to the floor immediately.

“I think that’s asking for the absolute minimum, especially when we are proposing to create or change programs that will affect my constituents at every stage of their lives," Murphy added. "For this reason, and unless something changes, I have no choice but to vote ‘no’ on each subtitle and on final passage.”

New tax bills

“In the runup to the Ways and Means markup, committee Democrats have introduced a flurry of energy tax bills this week that are likely to surface when the panel turns to climate policy next week.

“Rep. Don Beyer (D-VA) on Tuesday introduced the “Green Vehicle Adoption Nationwide Act,” H.R. 5180, which would provide a 30 percent tax credit for the purchase of zero-emission commercial vehicles from delivery vans to heavy-duty trucks. In a statement, Beyer said he expects the bill to be considered by the Ways and Means Committee.

"A second Beyer bill, H.R. 5179, would extend and modify the credit for carbon dioxide sequestration. Separate legislation, H.R. 5194, offered by Rep. Terri Sewell (D-Ala.), would tackle the same issue.

"Rep. John Larson (D-CT) this week also offered legislation, H.R. 5192, that would establish a production tax credit for clean hydrogen.

"Another bill, H.R. 5183, offered by Rep. Danny Davis (D-IL), would boost the energy credit for solar facilities placed in low-income communities, while separate legislation offered by Rep. Dwight Evans (D-Pa.) would provide a tax break for environmental justice programs.

"Several proposals address energy efficiency, including:

- H.R. 5181, offered by Rep. Earl Blumenauer (D-OR), which would temporarily increase the deduction for energy-efficient commercial buildings.

- H.R. 5187, offered by Rep. Jimmy Gomez (D-CA), which would extend, increase and modify the nonbusiness energy property credit.

- A second Gomez bill, H.R. 5188, to extend the new energy-efficient home credit.

4 Deadlines to Watch on Capitol Hill This Autumn

With so much focus on the bipartisan infrastructure package as well as the budget reconciliation package, one would think that these were the only Congressional legislative priorities. However, that's far from the case. The story below discusses other items of interest Congress must address this fall.

E&E Daily reporter George Cahlink published on September 9, "As Congress starts to return from summer recess, lawmakers will face a series of deadlines in the coming weeks that they will have to meet to avert a government shutdown and implement President Biden's climate agenda.

"Here are the dates to watch in coming weeks on Capitol Hill as both chambers enter a high-stakes legislative period that could set the course for the administration's handling of energy and environmental issues over the next three-plus years.

1. Sept. 15 — Reconciliation bills due

“House and Senate Democratic leaders are pressing to have their $3.5 trillion plan for carrying out Biden’s domestic goals ready to move to the floor by mid-September.

“Both chambers are planning to assemble various bills into a single budget reconciliation package that would be able to pass the Senate with only 50 votes, meaning it could not be filibustered. It’s expected to contain a clean energy payment program, invest heavily in electric vehicles, create a Civilian Climate Corps and overhaul the energy tax code.

“House Democrats are marking up their versions of the bill this week and next in committee — including the Natural Resources and Ways and Means committees today. The Senate is expected to compile its version mostly behind closed doors.

“The sequencing and composition of the legislation on the floors will be crucial, even as there is no near-term deadline for passing reconciliation. Leaders would like to move it this fall rather than risk pushing votes on the partisan plan into an election year.

“House Democratic leaders will need to balance competing progressive and moderate interests, while in the Senate a single Democratic defection could sink the package.

“Senate Energy and Natural Resources Chair Joe Manchin (D-WV), a fossil fuel ally, rattled Democrats last week when he called a “strategic pause” in reconciliation, saying he does not support the $3.5 trillion spending goal and warned against setting artificial deadlines. He’s raised similar concerns in the past, often to position himself as a dealmaker.

“Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) took the latest warning from Manchin in stride, saying yesterday “we’re moving full speed ahead,” though adding, “Without unity, we’re not going to get anything.”

<u>2. Sept. 27 — House infrastructure vote</u>

“Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) meanwhile, only got House Democrats on board with the budget framework last month by agreeing to a demand from moderates that the chamber vote on a bipartisan infrastructure bill no later than Sept. 27.

“Centrist Democrats are anxious to get the Senate’s $1.2 trillion infrastructure bill — backed by many Republicans — signed into law. But House progressives have said for months they won’t support the bipartisan funding for road, bridges and other assorted infrastructure until they first are assured that the Senate will back the far larger $3.5 trillion reconciliation effort.

“For Pelosi, a legendary vote counter, balancing those interests could be one of the biggest challengers of her speakership. She can lose no more than three Democratic votes in the narrowly divided House and cannot rely on any Republican votes.

“Pelosi yesterday said the House reconciliation bill would be marked up to $3.5 trillion but acknowledged there would be negotiations with the Senate and that figure could eventually change. She said Democrats should be touting the bill’s policy initiatives, like combating climate change, rather than haggling over price.

“Pelosi said she hoped climate proposals in the reconciliation bill would help attract GOP support considering recent extreme weather. But she added, “the fossil fuel industry weighs in very heavily.”

3. Oct. 1 — New fiscal year

“Congress faces its annual crisis of not having new spending in place with another new fiscal year beginning on Oct. 1.

“Lawmakers have yet to send any of the 12 spending bills to the president, and it’s a long shot any will make it into law before the new fiscal year begins. Indeed, both chambers are only in session for 10 days this month, and leadership is likely to be consumed by moving ahead with budget reconciliation.

“As a result, Congress will need to pass stopgap spending legislation, known as a continuing resolution, that would fund agencies at current levels until at least late November. While a CR averts a government shutdown and buys time for a year-end agreement, level funding frustrates agency heads who won’t be able to start new programs and will have little flexibility to move existing dollars.

“The White House earlier this week asked Congress to attach at least $24 billion in emergency spending to the legislation for relief and recovery efforts tied to Hurricane Ida and other natural disasters and Afghanistan refugee resettlement.

“Democratic leaders have signaled they support the add-ons.

“Additionally, the CR is expected to extend a host of federal programs that would otherwise expire at the end of the fiscal year, including the federal flood insurance program.

“It notably does not extend federal surface transportation programs that expire on Sept. 30, although the administration likely left it out to pressure Congress to pass the bipartisan infrastructure plan this month, which contains a new, multiyear surface transportation authorization.

4. October — Debt ceiling

“Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen warned Congress yesterday that a federal debt crisis is coming next month.

“Yellen said that sometime in October, the U.S. Treasury will run short of options for paying it debts, which would force the nation into default. She said that could be averted by having lawmakers agree to raise the nation’s debt ceiling for the first time in two years.

“A delay that calls into question the federal government’s ability to meet all its obligations would likely cause irreparable damage to the U.S. economy and global financial markets,” Yellen wrote in a letter to Pelosi.

“Congress has been sparring over raising the debt ceiling for months. Democrats insist it must be a bipartisan effort, while GOP leaders have said they won’t back adding to a cap estimated at $28.5 billion and blame Democrats for increased spending.

“Pelosi told reporters yesterday Democrats would not attach a debt increase to the reconciliation package, but did not rule out adding it to the CR.

“Republican lawmakers might be hard-pressed to oppose the increase if it were attached to a CR that also averts a shutdown and provides relief for several traditionally “red” states hit hard by Ida. Yesterday, Louisiana GOP Rep. Garret Graves urged Democrats not to "play politics" with the debt limit and disaster relief.

“Pelosi said there are “several options” for raising the ceiling without naming them, adding she hopes the GOP goes along and stressing that Democrats increased the limit three times under the Trump administration.

Other

Report Outlines Path to 80% Clean Power

Energy Innovation released a study last week which concluded that the U.S. could produce 80% of its electricity by inexpensive emissions free technologies by 2030.

Ester Wells of Energywire wrote on September 9, “Approximately 80% of U.S. electricity could be emissions-free by 2030 at an affordable cost, generating up to 1 million new jobs each year and avoiding up to 317,000 premature deaths by 2050, according to a new report.

“In an analysis of 11 different studies and reports since 2020, clean energy group Energy Innovation concluded that cost declines in renewable energy technology have made it possible to achieve a “feasible” rapid transition to clean electricity, which would create jobs, cut emissions and improve health outcomes — all at “a modest cost” to electricity consumers. The report considered university studies, as well as reports from think tanks and environmental groups such as the Natural Resources Defense Council.

“Doing a meta analysis like this, we find that it's not just one group or one set of assumptions or one policy design that's finding these benefits,” said Dan Esposito, senior policy analyst at Energy Innovation and author of the report. “We find that a wide variety of studies looking at this issue are all basically coming to the same conclusions.”

“However, other analysts and reports have said that achieving high percentages of clean power may not be achievable within this decade without a large infusion of politically difficult government spending and policies that could facilitate more transmission, among other things. Vistra Corp. CEO Curt Morgan, for example, said last December that achieving President Biden’s target of a decarbonized grid by 2035 would carry an “extremely high” cost, although he did not speak to an 80% target specifically.

“The U.S. currently generates 21% of its electricity from renewables and 40% from natural gas, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration. The new analysis said that increasing the clean share to 80% or 90% would raise electricity bills by less than 4% by 2030. Extending federal tax credits for renewables — and enacting credits for storage and other clean technologies — would counteract any cost increases, the report said.

“Esposito said the “single biggest factor” driving down the price of clean electricity production and making this transition possible is the cost declines in solar, wind and battery storage technology.

“Since 2010, the cost of utility-scale solar installations has dropped 82% as PV module systems have become cheaper and more efficient, according to a February study by the National Renewable Energy Laboratory. The cost of onshore wind energy has fallen by about 40% since 2010, according to the International Renewable Energy Agency.

“To unlock the economic and health benefits of clean electricity, Esposito said, ambitious federal policy support is needed. The analysis comes as the Biden administration aims to pass a $3.5 trillion budget reconciliation package that includes a Clean Electricity Payment Program, which would pay utilities to expand their clean electricity sales and fine them if they fail to meet certain targets.

“These results show that a Clean Electricity Payment Program is kind of a rare win-win policy opportunity for members of Congress across the political spectrum because these benefits aren’t occurring in one particular state,” Esposito said. “They’re occurring in every state. That [CEPP] policy design is a vehicle by which the U.S. could actually get to 80% clean electricity by 2030 and unlock all these benefits.”

“But the prospects for new funding in Congress is uncertain, and there’s some skepticism about the benefits of clean energy standards generally. A recent study out of Arizona, for example, said that while clean energy progress in the state is “achievable and cost-effective,” reaching 100% decarbonized power by 2050 could cost customers of the electric utility Arizona Public Service an additional $25 a month in today’s dollars.

“The report, by Ascend Analytics, says that “results in the distant future must be taken somewhat with a grain of salt” as the impact of emerging technologies is still unclear.

“In a letter to Congress in August, Jim Matheson, CEO of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, which represents more than 900 U.S. electric cooperatives, wrote that NRECA supports tax incentives that encourage moving toward low-carbon technology, but including a clean energy standard “could jeopardize co-ops’ ability to provide reliable and affordable electricity.”

“The costs to serve rural America are significantly higher than other electric utilities and a CES could create a disproportionate burden on millions of low- and moderate-income families and small businesses,” Matheson wrote.

“Esposito said that a CEPP, unlike an enforceable standard like a CES, would shift the cost burden of transitioning to clean electricity from electricity customers to the federal taxpayer, protecting low- and middle-income people from significant bill increases.

“As we look around the country and see a lot of the climate-driven disasters that are happening today, the urgency is stronger than ever to pass something of this level,” he said.”