

October 30, 2015

TO: NRECA Board of Directors  
Distribution CEOs  
Statewide Managers  
G&T Managers

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**WORKFORCE FACT:** With drive, efficiency, skills, training and strong leadership ability, veterans rise to the top as great employees. Interested in hiring a veteran? Talk to your local Chamber of Commerce Hiring our Heroes organization and review their [Employer Roadmap](#) for hiring and retaining veterans.

### ***Regional Meetings Finish Strong in Mississippi***

Thank you to Regions 2 and 3 for a fantastic meeting in Biloxi and a strong finish for the Regional Meetings. Special thanks to former Rep. John Tanner (D-TN) for speaking at the ACRE® breakfast about debt and partisanship bogging down our country and Congress. We're sending the compendium of proposed resolutions to the NRECA Member Standing Committees for their consideration in January. Committee recommendations will get a review by the National Resolutions Committee and then the membership will vote on them at the 2016 Annual Meeting.

### ***House Speaker Election a Reset for Republicans; New Ways and Means Chair Next Week***

New House Speaker Paul Ryan's (R-WI) pledge of a fresh start in the House included renewed promises to Republicans: Change the House rules, move bills under regular order, and overhaul the decision-making process to allow more member input. We hope eased caucus tensions will provide an opening for the House to move broader legislation. With a new budget agreement and debt ceiling approved this week, most major fiscal issues that have divided the party are off the table until after the 2016 elections, with the exception of the unfinished FY16 appropriations bills.

There were no other leadership changes. House Republicans are considering how to fill the House Ways and Means Committee chairmanship left open by Ryan becoming Speaker. Rep. Sam Johnson (R-TX) is serving as interim chairman now, and party leaders and the Republican Steering Committee will meet next week to make a permanent appointment. Reps. Brady (R-TX) and Tiberi (R-OH), both popular among Republicans, are vying for the chairmanship. Ryan's departure also opens a Republican seat that will eventually be filled. Rep. Rice (R-SC) has expressed interest.

### ***Senate Passes Cyber Information Sharing Bill, Conference Next***

We thank the Senate for passing (74-21 [vote](#)) the Cybersecurity Information Sharing Act (S. 754) we support. The Senate passed a relatively clean bill with two amendments. The bill now goes to conference with similar House bills (H.R. 1560, H.R. 1731). Senate and House sponsors expect a conference report will be completed as early as December.

### ***Co-ops Gearing Up for EPA Hearings on GHG Rule Federal Plan***

We're gearing up to stress our co-op message on reliability and flexibility at November hearings EPA just announced on its [draft](#) Federal Plan for complying with the final existing power plants GHG [rule](#). EPA [issued](#) a notice for public hearings in Pittsburgh on November 12-13, Denver on November 16-17, Washington, D.C. on November 18-19 and Atlanta on November 19-20. You must [register](#) if your co-op plans to speak at the hearings.

In related action, House and Senate disapproval resolutions were introduced under the 1996 Congressional Review Act (CRA) to block EPA's GHG rules. A disapproval resolution needs a simple majority vote to pass in the House and Senate and cannot be derailed by procedural moves, like a filibuster that needs 60 Senate votes to end. However, the odds are low for Congress overriding a certain presidential veto. This disapproval process under the CRA has been successfully used just once. But, we'll use the opportunity to voice our affordability, reliability message. The House is moving a little faster than the Senate in this process.

### ***Congress Passes Budget-Debt Limit Package, FY16 Spending Bill Deadline Ahead***

Congress passed a two-year budget package (H.R. 1314) that raises spending caps and suspends the debt limit until early 2017. The deal clears the way for work on an FY16 omnibus spending bill with several issues in play for electric co-ops. Congress must consider the omnibus bill before the current continuing resolution expires on December 11, and the President says he won't sign another funding extension. Appropriations Chairman Rogers (R-KY) said his committee is starting work on revising FY16 spending levels for each subcommittee. We're working to ensure our core co-op programs are adequately funded and to support policy riders that address concerns with EPA regulations, the Waters of the U.S. rule and Endangered Species Act listings.

### ***Pole Attachment Proposals Raise Concerns for Co-ops***

We see major problems on draft pole attachment legislation that was floated earlier this week prior to a House Energy and Commerce subcommittee hearing. Some of the proposals would impact electric co-op pole attachment costs and requirements. We're talking with committee leaders to explain co-op pole attachment positions and to block the draft bill from advancing.

In related Senate action, Federal Communications Commission issues of concern to electric co-ops were aired at a Senate Commerce Committee hearing on FCC Commissioner Jessica Rosenworcel's nomination for a second term. The committee asked how the FCC is ensuring non-traditional broadband providers, like electric co-ops, can participate in programs to bridge the digital divide in rural areas. They also asked about FCC's enforcement of the Telephone Consumer Protection Act rules that require customers' "prior express consent" to contact them by autodial calls and text messages to provide information they need and want.

### ***Highway Bill Extension Passes with Freight Rail Provisions***

We welcome Congress passing a three-week highway bill extension (H.R. 3819) with language that ensures shipments to power plants will not be slowed due to the freight railroads' inability to meet a December deadline to update locomotives and tracks with automated control equipment. The bill gives railroads until December 2018 to complete the upgrades. Without the extension,

BNSF Railway said it would shut down its lines to avoid penalties, and other major freight railroads said they would need to take some freight cars off certain lines. The resulting delays could slow coal shipments and threaten grid reliability.