

## WEEKLY HIGHLIGHTS AT-A-GLANCE

### FEDERAL – Legislative

- **U.S. H.R. 8 - North American Energy Security and Infrastructure Act of 2015.** This comprehensive energy bill is scheduled for a full floor vote as early as December 1. Of particular importance to the landman industry, this bill revives H.R. 702, which seeks to lift the American crude oil export ban, by way of a bi-partisan amendment under current consideration by the Rules Committee, and put forth by the original bill's sponsor, Rep. Joe Barton (R-TX). Although H.R. 702 overwhelmingly passed the House in October, it failed to garner enough Senate support to override a presidential veto, and this time around Republicans hope that it will be enacted as part of the broader H.R. 8 measure. [Read more.](#)

### FEDERAL – Regulatory

- **Public Lands; Leasing – Ohio.** Last week, the BLM held three public meetings regarding leasing federal minerals located in the Wayne National Forest. The meetings were held over the course of three days: the first meeting took place in Marietta, followed by Athens, and Ironton, Ohio. While the Marietta and Ironton meetings were attended by more than 300 landowners and stakeholders who were generally supportive of oil and gas resource development, the Athens meeting was interrupted by unruly activists whose disruptions forced the BLM to shut down the meeting early. [Read more.](#)
- **Senate panel to review watershed Alaska conservation law.** On December 3, the U.S. Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee will hold an oversight hearing on the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act, a 1980 law that protected more than 100 million acres of federal lands in the state, but that many Alaskans today feel has been flouted by the Obama administration. Committee Chairwoman, Sen. Lisa Murkowski (R-Alaska), claims that the administration's public lands policy in Alaska has violated the letter and spirit of the law by repeatedly attempting to designate onshore areas as "wilderness" to thwart energy development. [Read more.](#)

### FEDERAL – Judicial

- **Public and Tribal Lands; Leasing – Montana.** The Interior Department announced plans to cancel a long-suspended oil and gas lease near Glacier National Park that's on land considered sacred to the Blackfoot tribes of the U.S. and Canada, according to court documents filed on November 23 (*Solenex, LLC v. Jewell*). (continued next page)

The lease owner, Solenex, LLC of Baton Rouge, LA, said it would challenge any attempt by the federal government to cancel the lease which the government argues was improperly sold more than three decades ago, in part because an environmental study did not consider the impact of drilling on the tribes. Solenex sued the government in 2013 to force a decision after the dispute dragged on for years. The court filing did not address the fate of 17 remaining leases in the same area, most of which are held by Devon Energy. [Read more.](#)

**INDUSTRY NEWS FLASH:** According to a recent report by Jackson Lewis, a national employment law firm, employers' risk of liability for the misclassification of workers continues to grow, as employee misclassification remains a top enforcement priority for the U.S. Department of Labor. Last week, the law firm offered a "Top-10" list of questions to ask to assess whether a company may face worker misclassification risks. [Read more.](#)

## State-by-State Legislative Session Overview

**Illinois, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Jersey, Ohio, the Pennsylvania House and Wisconsin** are in regular session. The **District of Columbia** Council and the **U.S. Congress** are also in regular session.

The following governors have bill signing deadlines on the dates provided: **South Carolina** Republican Gov. Nikki Haley has until January 14 to act on legislation or it becomes law without signature. **Maine** Republican Gov. Paul LePage has until January 16 to act on any bills sent to him on July 16. All other legislation has been acted on. **Montana** Democratic Gov. Steve Bullock has 10 days from presentment to act on legislation or it becomes law without signature. **New York** Democratic Gov. Andrew Cuomo has 10 days from presentment to act on legislation or it becomes law without signature. **Tennessee** Republican Gov. Bill Haslam has 10 days from presentment, Sundays excepted, to act on legislation or it becomes law without signature.

**Alabama, Arizona, Florida, the Georgia House and Senate, Indiana, the Kansas House, Kentucky, Oklahoma, the Tennessee House and Senate and Virginia** are now pre-filing for the 2016 legislative session.

The following states are currently holding interim committee hearings: **Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, the California Assembly and Senate, Colorado, Connecticut, the Florida House and Senate, the Georgia House and Senate, Idaho, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Minnesota, the Mississippi House and Senate, the Missouri House and Senate, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire House and Senate, New Mexico, the New York Assembly, North Dakota, the Oklahoma House and Senate, Rhode Island, the South Carolina House and Senate, South Dakota, Tennessee, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia and Wyoming.**