

APRIL 2019
PUBLIC POLICY REPORT

FEDERAL UPDATE

Drug company protections are latest stumbling block for NAFTA rewrite

Intellectual property rules for new pharmaceutical products could derail President Donald Trump’s push to get his revised North American Free Trade Agreement through Congress. Democrats are looking for revisions to the trade deal’s pharmaceutical provisions, in particular a measure providing an advanced class of drugs called biologics with 10 years of protection from cheaper alternatives. A similar conflict over drug industry protections helped delay and ultimately sink the prospects for another trade deal, the Trans-Pacific Partnership.

New governance communications guide from NRECA

As a result of organizations such as “We Own It” pursuing governance issues with electric cooperatives, particularly in the southern states, NRECA has released a new guide to assist cooperatives and their boards in dealing with the issue. The [guide](#) is available on Cooperative.com for all members.

Spring fly-in legislative topics announced

The primary topics to be discussed with Iowa’s senators and representatives during the upcoming fly-in include protecting electric co-op tax-exempt status; promoting the needs of rural community infrastructure, protecting co-op pension plans; and a need to reject the proposed cuts to the Power Marketing Administration.

STATE UPDATE

Utilities Board extends shutoff moratorium

The Iowa Utilities Board has extended the winter moratorium on electric and gas shutoffs to May 13 due to flooding. The action applies to investor-owned, municipal and cooperative utilities. The extension was designed to help customers in declared disaster areas.

Multiple disaster declaration in Iowa

As of April 16, the Governor has issued disaster proclamations for 53 Iowa counties. Seven of the hardest hit areas, including Pottawattamie, Shelby, Fremont, Harrison, Mills, Monona and Woodbury counties, are included in the Presidential Disaster Declaration as well.

Legislative Update

SF583/HF669 – “MidAmerican Energy Bill” – allows rate-regulated utilities to charge distributed generation customers a different rate to ensure the costs of maintaining the grid are spread evenly among customers.

- Currently passed the Senate
- Waiting for debate in the House. An amendment has been offered to require a “value of solar” study.
- If this bill passes, it will be during a last-minute debate.

SF473/HF767 – EV Registration fees – increases the registration fees on all-electric and hybrid vehicles to support road maintenance. Proposed fees are an additional \$130 for all-electric and \$65 for hybrid.

- The House version, which has a modified three-year implementation, passed 78-20.
- The House bill is currently sitting in the Senate Ways & Means Committee.
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HF772/SF625 – “Empower Rural Iowa” – the Governor’s initiative is actually spread across multiple bills. This one addressed the broadband and housing tax credit proposals.

- The Senate version has been approved by the Ways & Means Committee.
- The House version is still sitting in the Ways & Means Committee with a number of introduced amendments.

Upcoming Activities

NRECA Legislative Conference/IAEC Fly-in – Washington, DC	April 28 – May 1, 2019
NRECA Connect Conference – Houston, TX	May 7 – 9, 2018
IAEC Human Resources Spring Conference – West Des Moines, IA	May 8 – 9, 2019
IAEC Accountants’ Spring Conference – West Des Moines, IA	May 9 – 10, 2019
CIPCO Board Committee Meetings – Des Moines, IA	May 20, 2019
CIPCO Board Meeting – Des Moines, IA	May 21, 2019
ACES 2019 Members Conference – Indianapolis, IN	May 30 – 31, 2019

Consumer Price Index

Month	Seasonally Adjusted Change from Previous Month
March 2019	0.4%
February 2019	0.2%
January 2019	0.0%
December 2018	-0.1%
November 2018	0.0%
October 2018	0.3%
Unadjusted Rolling 12 Month Average: 1.9%	