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The TRP Tip Sheet

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Featuring a daily Capitol Hill update, news clips from our Washington insiders, and links to our trove of federal policy resources.

QUICK TAKES

— **EXAMINING THE POSSIBLE USE OF 'RECESS APPOINTMENTS' IN THE NEXT TRUMP ADMINISTRATION.** Click to view TRP's [memo](#) outlining how "recess appointments" work and the political considerations at play.

— **SCALISE UNVEILS HOUSE 2025 SCHEDULE.** Click [here](#) to view the House legislative schedule for next year.

— **INSIDE LEADERSHIP'S PLANS FOR GOVERNMENT FUNDING.** Congress is honing in on a CR that would keep government funded until late March, according to Speaker Johnson.

— **HOUSE, SENATE GOP CLASH OVER RECONCILIATION TIMELINE.** At issue is what should go first: A tax bill or a package composed of the President-elect's other legislative priorities.

— **LAWMAKERS RELEASE BIPARTISAN WATER RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT ACT.** Click [here](#) to read a section-by-section summary of the 2024 WRDA.

— **GOP STEERING COMMITTEE APPROVES WAIVER FOR T&I CHAIR.** T&I Chair Sam Graves will be allowed to bypass GOP Conference rules and run for another term.

— **2024 ELECTION ANALYSIS AND CONGRESSIONAL OUTLOOK.** With the race for CA-13 finally settled, click to view TRP's updated [special report](#) examining the results of the 2024 election and the upcoming power dynamics for the 119th Congress.

CAPITOL HILL UPDATE

— **EXAMINING THE POSSIBLE USE OF RECESS APPOINTMENTS IN THE NEXT TRUMP ADMINISTRATION.** President-elect Donald Trump recently announced a slate of Cabinet nominees for his second administration. While making these selections, he has been open about considering the use of “recess appointments,” a tool that would allow nominees to temporarily assume Cabinet positions without going through the Senate confirmation process. While it is possible that the future Republican-controlled House and Senate will allow the incoming president to meet the conditions necessary to make recess appointments, several factors could prevent President-elect Trump from using the power. We recently pulled together a [memo](#) that provides clients with: an overview of how “recess appointments” work, the political considerations in Congress, as well as a running list of appointees that have been announced for the next Trump administration. Please email Carmen Ojeda (cojeda@thornrun.com) if you would like a copy of the memo in Word format.

- **Committee tidbit.** Intel from Capitol Hill suggests that the House Republican Steering Committee will meet on Dec. 13 and 16 to fill spots on the key “A” committees: Appropriations, Ways and Means, Financial Services, and Energy & Commerce (E&C). Democrats are also gearing up to meet for organizing activities over the course of this week and next, starting with Steering Committee votes on Ranking Members for the aforementioned “A” committees.
- **On the floor.** The House gavels back in today to take up [30 bills](#) under suspension of the rules, including legislation to reauthorize the Office of National Drug Control Policy. Meanwhile, the Senate will continue churning through pending judicial nominations.

WHAT WE'RE TRACKING

NEW TODAY...

— **LAWMAKERS RELEASE BIPARTISAN WATER RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT ACT.** The Chairs and Ranking Members of the Committees on Transportation and Infrastructure (T&I)

and Environment and Public Works (EPW) [released](#) a final compromise version of the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA). Click [here](#) to read a section-by-section summary of this legislation.

— **GOP STEERING COMMITTEE APPROVES WAIVER FOR T&I CHAIR.** The House Republican Steering Committee voted yesterday to approve a waiver for T&I Chair Sam Graves (R-MO) that will allow him to bypass Conference term limits and serve as chair for another two years on the committee.

- Chair Graves still faces a challenge from Rep. Rick Crawford (R-AR), who is next in seniority for the gavel.

— **TRP SPECIAL REPORT: TRUMP DEPUTY HHS SECRETARY HEALTH POLICY STANCES.** TRP's newest [special report](#) examines Jim O'Neill's health policy positions and the potential actions he may take as deputy secretary, if confirmed.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS...

— **RASKIN ANNOUNCES BID TO LEAD JUDICIARY DEMS.** Rep. Jamie Raskin (D-MD), the current Ranking Member of the House Committee on Oversight and Accountability, [announced](#) that he will challenge incumbent House Judiciary Committee Ranking Member Jerry Nadler (D-NY) for his position in the 119th Congress.

— **GRIJALVA DROPS BID TO LEAD HOUSE NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE DEMS.** House Natural Resources Committee Ranking Member Raul Grijalva (D-AZ) announced that he will not return to his current post for the 119th Congress.

- Rep. Jared Huffman (D-CA) is currently the only Democrat running to replace Ranking Member Grijalva and has the seniority to ascend to the position.

— **TRP SPECIAL REPORT: HEALTH EXTENDERS IN THE 2024 LAME DUCK.** TRP's latest [special report](#) offers an analysis of expiring health care programs and their likelihood of extension before the end of the year.

— **TRP SPECIAL REPORT: TRUMP FDA NOMINEE HEALTH POLICY STANCES.** TRP's newest [special report](#) examines Dr. Marty Makary's key health policy positions and potential actions he may take as Commissioner, if confirmed.

— **CMS PROPOSES COVERAGE OF OBESITY MEDICATIONS IN MEDICARE & MEDICAID.** The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) released a proposed rule that would, among several other provisions, cover anti-obesity medications for the treatment of obesity in Medicare and Medicaid. Click [here](#) to read TRP's summary of the proposed rule.

— **TRP SPECIAL REPORT: HEALTH POLICY UNDER THE TRUMP ADMINISTRATION.** TRP's newest [special report](#) examines the president-elect's priorities and provides insights into the potential actions of the upcoming administration

— **TRP MEMO: HHS SECRETARY NOMINEE RFK Jr. HEALTH POLICY STANCES.** TRP has pulled together a [memo](#) outlining the health policy stances of Robert F. Kennedy Jr., President-elect Donald Trump's pick to lead HHS.

— **A LOOK AT THE CRA CONGRESSIONAL REVIEW PROCESS.** Click to view TRP's new [special report](#) examining the CRA Congressional Review Process and how recent rulemaking could be impacted.

— **CRAIG ANNOUNCES BID TO BE HOUSE AG RANKING MEMBER.** Rep. Angie Craig (D-MN) announced her candidacy for Ranking Member of the House Agriculture Committee, setting up a three-way race between Rep. Jim Costa (D-CA) and current Ranking Member David Scott (D-GA), who is currently away from Washington seeking medical treatment.

— **MCCONNELL TO CHAIR SENATE DEFENSE APPROPRIATIONS PANEL.** Former Senate Republican Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) [announced](#) that he will be Chair of the Senate Appropriations Defense Subcommittee during the 119th Congress.

- The announcement quells speculation that Sen. McConnell could leverage his seniority in the Committee to leapfrog Chair Susan Collins (R-ME) and claim the full committee gavel.

WHAT WE'RE READING

Punchbowl: House, Senate GOP clash over reconciliation timeline

Key House and Senate Republicans are already at odds over how and when to proceed with two reconciliation bills next year. At issue is what should go first: A tax bill or a package composed of President-elect Donald Trump's other legislative priorities. Incoming Senate Majority Leader John Thune pitched GOP senators Tuesday on first passing a filibuster-proof reconciliation package of non-tax priorities such as border security, energy and defense policies in the first 30 days of the Trump presidency. Hours later, House Ways and Means Committee Chair Jason Smith (R-Mo.) panned the idea. Smith's concern is that extending the Trump tax cuts in the second package later in the year could get messy. Most of the 2017 tax law expires at the end of 2025.

Punchbowl: Inside the GOP leadership's plans for government funding

House and Senate leaders are honing in on a CR that would keep government funded until late March. Speaker Mike Johnson told us in a brief interview late Tuesday that he anticipates the stopgap funding bill will expire in late March 2025. A final decision is expected in the coming days. House and Senate leadership would like to wrap up a CR deal at some point this week. The government runs out of money on Dec. 20. The CR is expected to carry a disaster aid package and a one-year extension of the farm bill. House Appropriations Committee Chair Tom Cole (R-Okla.) said no decisions have been made on the CR and he was out of the loop of the decision-making process. Connecticut Rep. Rosa DeLauro, the top Democrat on Appropriations, said top budget writers are "all of the view that the earlier" the CR expires in 2025 "the better."

POLITICO: FEMA critic Garret Graves is a contender to lead that agency under Trump (\$)

Louisiana Republican Rep. Garret Graves is emerging as a candidate to run the Federal Emergency Management Agency in the Trump administration, according to current and former senior FEMA officials. Graves, who is retiring from the House in January, is one of the most knowledgeable members of Congress about emergency management and has led bipartisan efforts to improve FEMA's response to disasters. ...Pete Gaynor, who ran FEMA from 2019 to 2021 in the first Trump administration, said Graves would be "an interesting selection" because he's spent 10 years in Congress and has been "pretty vocal about FEMA programs." "If you wanted to change the way FEMA delivers its disaster-recovery resources, ... he would be an intriguing selection because he knows how to get stuff done in Congress," Gaynor said Monday. "That may be a positive thing for the agency and disaster survivors." ...In response to several questions from E&E News on Monday, Graves spokesperson Paul Sawyer

said only, “Congressman Graves has advised President Trump’s campaign and transition team on transportation, infrastructure, energy and resilience policy.” President-elect Donald Trump’s transition team did not respond to a request for comment.

[E&E News: Republicans plot energy-focused reconciliation package](#)

Senate Republicans are plotting an ambitious course in the first 30 days of the next Congress as they seek to pass a package expanding domestic energy production while potentially clawing back portions of the Democrats’ 2022 climate law. Those energy provisions would be included in a larger border security and defense spending bill to be advanced through budget reconciliation, a process with many procedural hurdles but that has the advantage of circumventing the Senate filibuster. Incoming Senate Majority Leader John Thune (R-S.D.) shared the plans during a lawmaker policy retreat on Capitol Hill. The effort would be a bold undertaking for the GOP, which will need to deal with a host of other matters early next year like confirming President-elect Donald Trump’s Cabinet and the likelihood of finalizing fiscal 2025 spending. “The one thing I will say is: I think members left with a better understanding of just how complex reconciliation is,” said Susan Collins of Maine, the Senate’s top Republican appropriator, following the closed-door meeting Tuesday. “So, there’s going to be a lot to do.” The gambit is being made considerably more complicated by the fact that Senate Republicans want to actually pass two reconciliation bills: the first dealing with energy, immigration and military readiness and the second focused on extending and expanding upon the expiring tax cuts Republicans passed in 2017.

[E&E News: Lawmakers reach final deal on WRDA bill \(\\$\)](#)

The Senate and House reached a final agreement Tuesday on a major bipartisan water infrastructure bill, which authorizes a range of federal projects to reduce flooding, improve ports and restore ecosystems. The “Thomas R. Carper Water Resources Development Act of 2024” would direct the Army Corps of Engineers to carry out 17 new water infrastructure projects and to study dozens of other potential ones. The newly authorized ventures include a \$2.7 billion storm risk reduction effort in Miami, a \$26.7 million stormwater management initiative outside Memphis, Tennessee, and \$2.1 billion toward restoration of the Everglades, among others. The bill would also direct the Army Corps to make changes to projects that are already underway or being studied.

[The Wall Street Journal: Trump Mulls Replacing Pete Hegseth With Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis \(\\$\)](#)

President-elect Donald Trump is considering Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis as a possible replacement for Pete Hegseth, his pick to run the Pentagon, according to people familiar with the discussions, amid Republican senators' concerns over mounting allegations about the former Fox News host's personal life. Picking DeSantis, a 2024 GOP primary rival for the presidency, would amount to a stunning turn for Trump. But he would also find in the governor a well-known conservative with a service record who shares Trump's—and Hegseth's—view on culling what they see as “woke” policies in the military. Trump allies increasingly think Hegseth may not survive further scrutiny, according to people close to the president-elect's team, which considers the next 48 hours to be crucial to his fate. DeSantis was on an earlier list of potential defense secretary candidates that transition officials presented to the president. Trump ultimately went with Hegseth. But as Hegseth's nomination has faltered, that list has been revived and DeSantis is again among the choices Trump is considering, the people said.

E&E News: China hits US with mineral export ban (\$)

China on Tuesday moved to immediately restrict the export of metals the U.S. needs to build military equipment, solar panels and semiconductors — aggravating trade tensions mere weeks before President-elect Donald Trump takes office. China's Commerce Ministry issued a directive that bars “dual-use” materials from being exported to the U.S. military, including gallium, germanium, antimony and superhard materials. The memo also calls for stricter end-user and end-use review for exports of graphite, a key ingredient in electric vehicle batteries. The ministry warned that any organization or individual that violates the directive would be “held accountable in accordance with the law.” China's move drags critical minerals tied to the energy transition and national security even closer to the core of a trade war between the U.S. and China just 48 days before Trump is sworn in, said Simon Moores, CEO of Benchmark Mineral Intelligence.

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