



What's ahead for Washington this week: jobs, the FY '11 federal budget, & campaign finance

By Jon H. Harsch

© Copyright Agri-Pulse Communications, Inc.

Washington, Feb. 1 – President Obama kicks off the week Monday by unveiling his federal budget proposals for fiscal 2011 which will include a three-year freeze on non-defense discretionary spending, along with plenty of emphasis on finding ways to create more jobs quickly. Then Agriculture Secretary Vilsack and other Cabinet members will spend the rest of the day explaining budget details concerning their own departments.

Starting Tuesday, Cabinet members led by Treasury Secretary Geithner will be on Capitol Hill in a series of congressional hearings on the proposed FY '11 budget. Expect to hear plenty of congressional complaints about proposed cuts – as well as complaints about the federal deficit. There may be a lack of bipartisanship otherwise, but at least the complaints will be coming from both Democrats and Republicans. There also may be complaints from Sen. Byron Dorgan (D-ND) and others that it's a stretch to forecast hundreds of billions of dollars in new federal revenue from selling carbon-emissions allowances to polluters when Congress appears unable to pass cap-and-trade climate legislation this year.

Congress will be busy with hearings this week to examine both the 2011 budget and the Supreme Court's controversial ruling which unleashes more corporate spending to elect or defeat political candidates.

Tuesday Feb. 2

- Senate Finance Committee hearing to examine the President's proposed budget request for fiscal year 2011, with Treasury Sec. Geithner.
- Senate Budget Committee hearing to examine the President's proposed budget request for fiscal year 2011, with OMB Director Orszag.
- Senate Banking Committee hearing "to examine prohibiting certain high-risk investment activities by banks and bank holding companies," with derivatives under scrutiny.
- Senate Rules Committee hearing on "Corporate America vs. The Voter: Examining the Supreme Court's Decision to Allow Unlimited Corporate Spending in Elections."

Wednesday, Feb. 3

- Senate Finance Committee hearing on the President’s proposed budget request for fiscal year 2011 for health care proposals, with Health and Human Services Sec. Sebelius.
- House Ways and Means Committee hearings on the President’s Fiscal Year 2011 Budget with Treasury Sec. Geithner and OMB Director Orszag
- House Administration Committee hearing on “Defining the Future of Campaign Finance in an Age of Supreme Court Activism.”
- House Judiciary Committee hearing on “First Amendment and Campaign Finance Reform After *Citizens United*.”

Thursday, Feb. 4

- Senate Budget Committee hearing on “The President’s Fiscal Year 2011 Budget and Revenue Proposals,” with Treasury Sec. Geithner.
- Senate Finance Committee hearing to examine the President’s proposed budget request for fiscal year 2011, with OMB Director Orszag.
- Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee hearing on the President’s proposed budget request for fiscal year 2011 for the Department of Energy, with Energy Sec. Chu.
- Senate Banking Committee hearing on “Implications of the ‘Volcker Rules’ for Financial Stability.”
- House Energy & Commerce hearing “Health And Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius: Department of Health and Human Services Fiscal Year 2011 Budget.”

Friday, Feb. 5

- House Committee on Financial Services and the Committee on Small Business joint hearing on “Condition of Small Business and Commercial Real Estate Lending in Local Markets”

On the agriculture front, the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture will be meeting Washington this week and USDA’s National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) reports will cover:

- Tuesday, Feb. 2, Weather-Crop Summary, Dairy Products
- Wednesday, Feb. 3, Broiler Hatchery
- Friday, Feb. 5, Dairy Products Prices, Peanut Prices

For other *Agri-Pulse* news stories, go to: www.agri-pulse.com.

#30