



WASHINGTON WIRE

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Government Shutdown Ends

On November 12, President Trump signed legislation to end the longest U.S. government shutdown in history, hours after the House passed the measure 222-209. The bipartisan bill, which cleared the Senate earlier in the week, extends federal funding through January 30, provides full-year funding for agriculture, military construction, and the legislative branch, and reverses Trump-era layoffs. It also guarantees back pay for furloughed workers and resumes critical operations, including food assistance and air traffic control.

President Trump laid blame for the shutdown on Democrats and iterated to Republicans in the Senate to eliminate the filibuster to prevent future lapses, a strategy that received cool reception by most in the GOP.

The shutdown stemmed from Democratic demands to renew expiring Affordable Care Act subsidies, opposed by most Republicans, and ended without that renewal, though Democrats secured a promised Senate vote in December. House Speaker Mike Johnson (R-LA) called the standoff “pointless” and accused Democratic leaders of prioritizing politics over people.

The shutdown exposed continued deep partisan fractures and the high stakes cost of funding fights, though President Trump signaled openness to future health care talks.

VET Act Update

The VET Act, a bill introduced by Congresswoman Jen Kiggans (R-VA) and Congresswoman Chrissy Houlahan (D-PA), now has 13 cosponsors in the U.S. House of Representatives.

This is a good start, but more support is needed. NAED, NEMA, NECA and others are working to secure additional support for this legislation that, if passed, would provide manufacturers, distributors, and electrical contractors with a grant of up to \$10,000 for recruiting, onboarding, training, certification, and relocation costs for military personnel transitioning from service, veterans, or their spouses.

If your organization has unique veteran hiring programs or success stories, or you want to get engaged with outreach to lawmakers, we would love to hear from you. Please contact Bud DeFlaviis at bud@naed.org to learn more.

Electricity Prices

The American Action Forum (AAF), a Washington DC think tank that focuses on policy research and analysis, recently looked at the issue of rising electricity prices across the country.

Recent media reports have highlighted concerns about surging electricity prices due to data center proliferation, with some energy analysts warning of potential brownouts and significant cost increases for Americans without intervention.

However, analysis by AAF provides a fact-based perspective that tempers some of this alarm.

Nationally, retail electricity prices rose 10% nominally in the first half of 2025, far exceeding prior periods. They confirm that commercial and industrial demand, driven by AI data centers and manufacturing, will likely outpace residential usage, posing challenges for the power sector.

Despite this, residential electricity prices are the highest and growing fastest across sectors, explaining the intense media focus. Yet, in inflation-adjusted terms, U.S. electricity costs have remained relatively flat, suggesting the issue may be less urgent for policymakers than commonly portrayed.

State News

California EV Pivot

California regulators are reevaluating the state's 2035 deadline for phasing out new gas-powered car sales, with California Air Resources Board (CARB) chair stating the agency will "rethink" the ambitious goal as part of new emissions rulemaking.

Although Governor Newsom's 2020 executive order banning new internal combustion engine sales by 2035 remains in place, CARB emphasized flexibility, noting the target is open for discussion with stakeholders, automakers, and legislators following the federal revocation of related standards.

The new Drive Forward Light-duty Vehicle Program, launched last week, will replace the revoked rules and apply starting with model year 2031. CARB is considering an industrywide EV and plug-in hybrid sales floor

instead of company-specific targets, with automakers actively involved. A staff report is expected in late 2026, a board proposal in summer 2027, and public comments are being accepted until November 21.

New Jersey Nukes

New Jersey lawmakers introduced the "New Jersey Energy Security and Affordability Act" to establish a state-backed incentive program for developing 1.2 gigawatts of new nuclear power, enough to power over a million homes. The bill would require utility customers to fund part of the construction costs and requires the Board of Public Utilities to solicit bids from nuclear companies within nine months. It aims to meet rising energy demand from data centers and offset setbacks in the state's offshore wind program, though new plants could take a decade or more to build.

The legislation will likely favor companies with existing sites and expertise, particularly PSEG, which operates nuclear facilities in the state. Holtec, decommissioning the former Oyster Creek plant, is also positioned to benefit with its small modular reactor technology.

The bill includes additional measures to promote battery storage and reduce peak grid demand, coming in the final weeks of Governor Phil Murphy's administration amid a lame-duck session.