DELEGATION: Rep. Lynn Woolsey Announces Retirement

On June 28, 2011, Congresswoman Lynn Woolsey (Petaluma) announced her intention to retire from Congress at the end of this term. The Congresswoman, 73, represents California’s 6th District, which encompasses all of Marin County and parts of Sonoma County. Woolsey is in her tenth term in Congress.

She currently serves on the Committee on Education and the Workforce, and is ranking member of the Subcommittee on Workforce Protections. She is also a member of Committee on Science, Space and Technology.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY: House Passes Patent Reform Law

The House passed H.R. 1249, the America Invents Act on June 23, 2011 by a bipartisan vote of 304-117. The bill makes significant changes to the U.S. patent system. Among some of the larger changes included in this overhaul, the bill includes a change that would give priority to the first-to-file for a patent, instead of the first-to-invent. It also creates a new method for challenging previously issued business method patents, and limits the venue in which suits could be filed for patent infringement, including providing primary jurisdiction to federal courts. The bill also requires the Director of the Patent and Trademark Office to submit an annual spending plan as well as an annual year-end report to the House and Senate Appropriations and Judiciary Committees.

H.R. 1249 also makes changes in the area of fees. It allows the USPTO to set or adjust all of its fees, including those related to patents and trademarks, instead of having Congress set fees. Before House floor consideration, the bill originally allowed the agency to keep all of the funds it raised through these fees. The Smith (TX) Manager's amendment, however, approved on the floor, changed the
underlying bill to allow that the fees collected by the USPTO would be set aside in a reserve fund, but would not be available to be expended until appropriated by Congress.

An amendment offered on the floor that would have changed the first-to-file standard back to a first-to-invent standard was defeated 129-295. An amendment that would have struck the section of the bill that would create a transitional program for certain business method patents was also rejected 158-262.

The Senate passed, 95-5, a similar bill (S. 23) in March, including language by Oklahoma Republican Tom Coburn that would allow the patent office to keep and spend its fees. The differences in the two versions of the legislation will have to be resolved during conference.

More information can be found at: http://judiciary.house.gov.

APPROPRIATIONS: HOUSE PASSES FY 2012 ENERGY AND WATER APPROPRIATIONS BILL

On June 15, 2011, the House Appropriations Committee approved the fiscal year 2012 Energy and Water Appropriations bill, by a vote of 26-20 (H.R. 2354/H.Rpt. 112-118). The legislation provides the annual funding for the Department of Energy, as well as the Army Corps of Engineers, the Interior Department’s Bureau of Reclamation, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, and various regional water and power authorities. The legislation totals $30.6 billion – a cut of $5.9 billion below the President’s request and $1 billion below last year – which brings the total cost of the bill to nearly the 2006 funding level.

Some major funding provisions in the bill include:

Department of Energy
The funding for DOE within the legislation totals $24.7 billion - $850 million below last year’s level and $5.9 billion below the President’s request.

Science Research – The bill includes $4.8 billion for science research, a slight reduction of $43 million below last year’s level. This funding supports basic energy research, development of high performance computing systems, and research of clean energy sources.

Fusion Energy Sciences - Fusion Energy Sciences conducts basic science research and experimentation seeking to harness nuclear fusion for energy production purposes. The Committee recommends $406,000,000 for fusion energy sciences, $30,537,000 above fiscal year 2011 and $6,300,000 above the request.

The Committee report states: “The budget request proposes $105,000,000 for ITER, the first full-scale test reactor for fusion energy. The Committee supports this project as an important step in the development of fusion energy and takes seriously the Department's commitments to international collaborations. However, the Department of Energy's required contribution to ITER is expected to increase substantially in the next several years, and the Committee is concerned that, while funding for ITER will yield important advances to domestic superconductor and other manufacturing capabilities, it may leave little budgetary room to continue supporting critical American fusion science expertise. Further, the Department has not preemptively indicated how it is planning for this impending budgetary challenge, nor has it created a clear prioritization of activities within Fusion Energy Sciences to guide tradeoffs when budgets are tight. The Department is therefore directed to submit a 10-year plan, not
later than 12 months after enactment of this Act, on the Department’s proposed research and development activities in magnetic fusion under four realistic budget scenarios. . . ."

**Energy Programs** – The bill includes funding of $1.3 billion – $491 million below last year’s level – for programs to help lower the cost of renewable energy technologies and to develop new technology. The bill also includes $734 million for nuclear energy research, development, and demonstration activities to further the next generation of safe, secure, and economically beneficial nuclear power. In addition, the legislation provides $477 million – $32 million above last year’s level – for research and development to advance coal, natural gas, and other fossil energy power generation technologies. The bill also includes $100 million to support the activities of the Advanced Research Projects Agency—Energy, and $160 million to support loan guarantees for innovative projects.

**Yucca Mountain** – The bill provides $35 million to support Yucca Mountain activities, including $10 million for the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to continue their review of the license application. The bill also includes provisions to prevent the use of funds to close down the program.

**Environmental Management** – Included in the legislation is $5.6 billion for environmental management activities – a reduction of $101 million below last year. This includes $4.9 billion for Defense Environmental Cleanup to safely remediate sites contaminated by previous nuclear weapons production.

**Army Corps of Engineers** – The Army Corps of Engineers is funded at $4.8 billion, a decrease of $89 million below last year’s level and $195 million above the budget request. There are no congressionally earmarked projects within the bill.

The legislation provides more than $1.75 billion for navigation projects and studies. The bill also funds flood and coastal storm damage reduction activities at $1.54 billion – including $474 million for critical dam safety improvements.

The bill does not fund all of the presidentially requested projects for the Army Corps – redirecting $59 million to navigation and flood control activities that the Committee believes will have a more immediate impact on job creation and the economy.

**Bureau of Reclamation** - The legislation contains $934 million – $161 million below last year’s level and $117 million below the President’s request – for the BOR. The funding is intended to help manage, develop and protect the water resources of the western states.

During the mark-up, Rep. Lucille Roybal-Allard offered an amendment that was approved by voice vote. The amendment allows the Corps of Engineers to receive and use non-federal contributed funds to continue or complete ongoing federal studies. The Corps already has this ability for the design, construction, and operations and maintenance on projects that have received federal funding. The amendment was adopted on a voice vote.

**California Bay-Delta Restoration**

The Committee recommends $35,928,000, $3,992,000 below fiscal year 2011 and $3,723,000 below the budget request.

**Central Valley Project Restoration Fund**

For fiscal year 2012, the Committee recommends $53,068,000, $3,154,000 above fiscal year 2011 and the same as the budget request.

For more information, visit: [http://appropriations.house.gov/](http://appropriations.house.gov/).

The California Institute will prepare a more detailed report on the legislation in the near future.

**TRADE: WHITE HOUSE THINKS IT HAS DEAL ON TRADE AGREEMENTS, BUT SENATE REPUBLICANS BOYCOTT**

Following a deal reached with the White House earlier this week to allow free trade agreements with South Korea, Colombia and Panama to move forward after months of delay, Senator Max Baucus, Chair of the Senate Finance Committee, scheduled a “mock markup” for June 30, 2011. But the meeting had to be
aborted at the last minute because the Committee’s Ranking Republican Orrin Hatch (UT) told Baucus that no Republican Senator would attend, thus denying the Committee the quorum necessary to conduct business. In announcing the cancellation to the public and press in the hearing room, Baucus and other Democratic Senators expressed their disappointment and anger. Baucus, nevertheless, committed to continuing to work to move the agreements.

The Republicans’ opposition centers around that part of the deal that calls for extending Trade Adjustment Assistance Act funding through 2013. TAA provides benefits, including cash payments, to workers whose jobs are lost as a result of foreign trade. The White House has refused to send the three Free Trade Agreements to the Senate for approval without concomitant extension of TAA. Republicans are equally adamant that the FTAs should move separately from TAA.

Under the deal reached with the White House earlier this week, Republicans would have had a chance to vote on separating TAA from the agreements, but in return would have let the agreements move forward even if their bifurcation efforts failed.

At a press conference announcing the Republican members’ decision to boycott the Committee meeting, Hatch was also angry with the way the Democrats tried to jam the mockup into the final hours before Senators left for the holiday weekend, limiting their opportunity to offer amendments indicating what they would like the FTAs to look like when the White House does send them to Congress. Ninety-six amendments had been filed for possible consideration by the Committee at the “mock-up.”

**Appropriations: Financial Services Appropriations Prohibits Implementation of Net Neutrality Rules**

The House Appropriations Committee has included in its FY12 Appropriations for Financial Services a provision prohibiting the implementation of the Federal Communications Commission’s Rules on net neutrality. The Committee reported the appropriations bill, as yet unnumbered, on June 23, 2011, by a vote of 27-21.

The FCC issued a proposed rule in December 2010 that will prevent broadband service providers from blocking certain Internet traffic or prioritizing the speed or access at which the traffic is available on the Internet. In April, the House approved a joint resolution of disapproval (H J Res 37) against the FCC rules. The Senate has taken no action on the issue.

The bill provides funding for the Treasury Department, the Executive Office of the President, the Judiciary, the District of Columbia, the Small Business Administration, the General Services Administration, the Securities and Exchange Commission, and several other independent agencies. It includes a total of $19.9 billion in funding for the agencies, which is nearly $2 billion - or 9% - below last year’s level, nearly $6 billion below the President’s fiscal year 2012 request, and more than $700 million below the pre-stimulus, pre-bailout levels enacted in 2008.

The Committee also added an amendment during markup that prohibits funding for federal hires if the employee is not first verified through the E-Verify program. The amendment passed by voice vote.

For more information, go to: http://appropriations.house.gov.

**Appropriations: House Passes FY 2012 Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration Appropriations**

On June 16, 2011, the House of Representatives passed H.R. 2112, the FY2012 Appropriations for the Departments of Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration and Related Agencies (H.Rpt. 112-101). The legislation provides $125.5 billion in both discretionary and mandatory funding, a reduction of more than $7 billion from the President’s request. The bill reduces discretionary spending by $2.7 billion from last year’s level – a cut of more than $5 billion from the President’s request. The bill passed on a vote of 217-203.
For information on the specific provisions in the bill, go to:

STATE ACTIVITY: CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE PASSES 2011-2012 BUDGET

On Tuesday, June 28, 2011, the California legislature passed a $86 billion budget plan, closing California's remaining $9.6 billion budget deficit. The plan was endorsed by Governor Jerry Brown after he earlier vetoed another budget passed by the legislature. The final budget was approved by just over half of each house of the legislature, the first such budget since California voters last year reversed a decades-old law requiring budget approval by two-thirds of lawmakers. That change meant the budget could pass with support from only Democrats, which it did.

The plan includes $15 billion in expenditure reductions, including $1.7 billion in cuts to higher education and $1.6 billion in cuts to health care for low-income Californians. It also includes collecting $1.7 billion from community redevelopment agencies. In addition, the budget assumes $8.3 billion in additional state revenue more than an earlier January estimate.

An additional $3.8 billion will come from areas such as delayed loan repayments, revenue shifted from other funds, and a higher vehicle-registration fee. Finally, the plan decreases the state's reserve fund to $500 million from the $1 billion the Governor previously wanted. The budget relies on $4 billion in increased revenues that may not materialize, which could then force a round of midyear cuts. If the Governor signs the budget before Friday, as expected, it would mark the first time since 2006 that a California budget was approved before the start of the fiscal year.

For more information, visit: http://www.ebudget.ca.gov.

TRANSPORTATION: HOUSE SUBCOMMITTEE EXAMINES RESEARCH PRIORITIES

The House Science, Space and Technology Subcommittee on Technology and Innovation Subcommittee held a hearing titled "Transportation Research Priorities: Maximizing Return on Investment of Taxpayer Dollars" on Tuesday, June 14, 2011. Witnesses included: Peter Appel, Administrator, Research and Innovative Technology Administration, U.S. Department of Transportation; John Halikowski, Director, Arizona Department of Transportation, and Chairman, Standing Committee on Research, American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials; Lynn Peterson, Transportation Policy Advisor, Office of Governor John Kitzhaber (OR); David Gehr, Senior Vice President, Highway Market Section, Parsons Brinckerhoff, and Chairman, Transportation Policy Committee, American Society of Civil Engineers and Irwin Feller, Professor Emeritus of Economics, Pennsylvania State University.

The Department of Transportation (DOT) annually supports more than $600 million in research, development, and technology deployment (RD&T) activities focused on surface modes of transportation. Witnesses debated whether the long-term research needs of the nation are being adequately addressed. In November 2008, the Transportation Research Board produced a report making a number of recommendations for change to highway research programs, including improved engagement of the research community in the priority-setting process and subjecting research programs to merit-review. While supporting a competitive approach, some Members of the subcommittee also stressed the need for continuity of research investments, particularly within the University Transportation Center (UTC) program. DOT recently announced changes to the program that will impact FY11 funding for all 59 existing UTCs, as well as several other research programs.

These programs were last authorized in 2005 and are primarily supported through the Highway Trust Fund and Mass Transit Fund. However, according to the subcommittee, since 2009, funding shortfalls have required DOT to transfer nearly $30 billion from the general fund to maintain all U.S. highway programs. In his opening statement, Chairman Ben Quayle (AZ) said concerns exist about how research priorities are identified and the means used to quantify and measure performance. The purpose of the hearing was to
examine if these RD&R activities are well executed and integrated across the Department, and whether they are efficiently addressing the long-term research and technology needs of the country.

According to Mr. Appel, who testified on behalf of DOT, the research, development and technology priorities of the Department are:

– Safety - DOT's number one priority;
– State of Good Repair - optimal condition and performance of our infrastructure;
– Economic Competitiveness - targeted investments to better serve the traveling public and facilitate freight movement, while supporting American jobs and exports;
– Livable Communities - increasing travel choice and providing access to affordable transportation;
and
– Environmental Sustainability - addressing transportation's impacts on air, water and natural ecosystems.

Mr. Appel told the subcommittee that DOT's Research and Innovative Technology Administration plans to simplify the existing surface transportation research program, maximize research funding flexibility so that available resources are applied to Departmental and stakeholder priorities, use full and open competition to get the best possible researchers and technologists working on top priorities, and emphasize performance-based management of programs.

Mr. Halikowski said that "Innovation through research allows state agencies – even with today's fiscally challenging circumstances – to efficiently deliver a safe, reliable and sustainable transportation system while continuously improving facilities and services." Stressing the importance of research implementation and technology transfer, he said that "multiple and varied efforts are underway to move research into practice, and the variety of methods to do this are dependent on the actual results and specific solutions."

Dr. Feller stated that existing research programs "are overly restrictive, prescriptive, and inflexible." He argued that new research provisions "should be based on setting forth broad national transportation objectives" giving researches greater flexibility in solving problems.

For more information, please visit: http://science.house.gov/.

IMMIGRATION: SENATE SUBCOMMITTEE HEARS DREAM ACT TESTIMONY

The Senate Judiciary Committee Subcommittee on Immigration, Refugees and Border Security held a hearing June 28, 2011 on the Dream Act, the legislation that would allow undocumented immigrant children brought to the U.S. at an early age to attend colleges and universities and eventually gain citizenship. Various iterations of the Dream Act have circulated for a decade, with the first proposal being introduced in 2001. In the closing days of the 111th Congress, the House passed the bill, but it failed in the Senate. The current bill is S. 952, introduced by Sen. Dick Durbin (IL).


To qualify for legal status under the bill, individuals would need to prove that they came to this country at the age of 15 or younger, are 35 or younger at the time of enactment, and have been physically present here for a continuous period of at least 5 years before the date of enactment. They would also have to be admitted to an institution of higher education, or have obtained a high school degree or its equivalent, have demonstrated good moral character since their initial entry into the United States, and pass a background check to show that they are not a security threat and have not committed any crimes that either would make them inadmissible to this country or resulted in imprisonment or potential imprisonment that
exceeds certain amounts of time. Youth who fulfill these requirements would receive a conditional lawful permanent resident status for six years. The DREAM Act would give students a chance to earn unconditional lawful permanent resident status if they complete two years of higher education in good standing. They would need to pass additional background checks and demonstrate good moral character for the entire period of their conditional lawful permanent resident status. Only after meeting these requirements could they obtain lawful permanent resident status without conditions and be able to apply for citizenship; those who come up short along the way would be disqualified and could be subject to deportation.

Secretaries Napolitano and Duncan supported the legislation on behalf of the Administration, as did Dr. Stanley of DOD. Col. Stock also supported the legislation and testified that it would be useful in enlarging the pool of qualified recruits for the armed services. She also testified that military officials expect that DREAM Act beneficiaries will be motivated to stay in the military, once they are enlisted. Non-citizens in general have a 36-month retention rate that is 9-20% higher than white US citizens.

Dr. Camarota, however, testified against the legislation, citing several problems he saw with the bill. For instance, he said, it would increase costs to state and local governments, because Dream Act students would be allowed to attend college at in-state tuition costs. The bill also contains no provisions to discourage future illegal immigration, rewards the undocumented parents of Dream Act students, and perhaps will encourage more to enter the U.S. illegally with minor children. Additionally, and importantly, Camarota argued the bill as written is an invitation to fraud. First, the law prevents prosecution for willfully providing false information. Second, it does not provide a clear list of acceptable documents that can be used to determine eligibility. And third, anyone can apply under the Act. There is no way to preclude even ridiculously inappropriate applications, he argued.

For the testimony of all the witnesses, go to: http://judiciary.senate.gov.

**RESOURCES: SENATE COMMITTEE DISCUSSES WILDFIRE SAFETY**

On Tuesday, June 14, 2011, the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee held a hearing on the wildfire management programs of the federal land management agencies. Witnesses included: Tom Tidwell, Chief, Forest Service, Department of Agriculture; and Ms. Kim Thorsen, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Law Enforcement, Security, Emergency Management and Wildland Fire, Department of the Interior.

Nationally, already this fiscal year, more than 46,000 fires have burned more than 4.5 million acres (this calendar year, more than 31,000 fires have burned over 4 million acres), predominantly in the southeast (Texas and Oklahoma) and now the southwest (Arizona and New Mexico) on federal and non-federal lands, according to the Department of the Interior (DOI). Ms. Thorsen testified that drought is forecast to persist or worsen across much of the southern half of the nation, exacerbating the problem.

For the 2011 fire season, available firefighting forces within DOI – firefighters, equipment, and aircraft – are comparable to those available for the last several years. Among its bureaus, the Department can deploy approximately 3,500 firefighters, 135 smokejumpers, 17 Type-1 crews, 750 engines, more than 200 other pieces of heavy equipment (dozers, tenders, etc.) and about 1,300 support personnel (dispatchers, fire cache, etc), for a total of nearly 5,000 personnel. Where possible, the Department emphasizes the hiring of returning veterans to fill the ranks of its firefighting forces, Thorsen said.

Mr. Tidwell explained the Department of Agriculture's recently completed National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy (Cohesive Strategy). The three main components of the strategy are restoring and maintain resilient landscapes, creating fire-adapted communities and wildfire response, he explained. Through a combination of mechanical treatment and managed fire, Tidwell testified that the Department of Agriculture could improve the health of some fire-adapted ecosystems and prevent heavy accumulations of highly flammable fuels. In FY 2010, the Forest Service treated over 2 million acres for
hazardous fuels reduction, with the majority in the Wildland Urban Interface. This fiscal year, it has already treated over 900,000 acres.

Tidwell explained the Fire-Adapted Communities Project, which gathers all wildland urban interface mitigation tools into one toolbox to assist in the implementation of Community Wildfire Protection Plans by providing communities, organizations, fire departments, and the public with the information they need to reduce their risk of wildfire. The Ready, Set, Go! and Firewise projects are part of the Department of Agriculture's Fire-adapted Communities program and are currently implemented in 600 communities.

In preparing for the 2011 fire season, Mr. Tidwell explained the Federal Government worked along with the tribes and the states to ensure adequate firefighting resources were prepared and positioned. He said fire managers assign local, regional, and federal firefighting personnel and equipment based on anticipated fire starts, actual fire occurrence, fire spread, and severity. When fire resources in one geographic area are in short supply, the National Wildfire Coordination Group helps to prioritize, allocate, and, if necessary, re-allocate the resources. More than twenty percent of the United States (490 million acres) is managed by the bureaus within the Department of the Interior, with fire management responsibilities that stretch from Florida to Alaska, and from Maine to California.

For more information, visit: http://energy.senate.gov.

**WATER: HOUSE RESOURCES HOLDS SECOND HEARING ON SAN JOAQUIN RIVER WATER BILL**

On Monday, June 13, 2011, the House Natural Resources Subcommittee on Water and Power held a hearing on pending legislation, including the San Joaquin Valley Water Reliability Act (HR 1837). Witnesses included: Will Stelle, Regional Administrator, National Marine Fisheries Service (Seattle, Washington); Tony Willardson, Executive Director, Western States Water Council (Murray, Utah); John Herrick, Counsel and Manager, South Delta Water Agency (Stockton); Dave Bitts, President, Pacific Coast Federation of Fisherman's Associations (Eureka).

H.R. 1837, introduced on May 11, 2011 by Rep. Devin Nunes (Tulare), would codify the 1994 agreement known as the Bay-Delta Accord and also includes a number of provisions aimed at updating the Central Valley Project Improvement Act (CVPIA). Nunes said his bill repeals the CVPIA tiered pricing system in order to provide incentives for water districts to expand conjunctive use of surface and groundwater to ensure they have an ability to survive during dry years. The legislation also reaffirms the original CVPIA commitment that a maximum of 800,000 acre-feet of water will be dedicated to fish, wildlife, and habitat restoration purposes, he said.

Mr. Herrick, testifying on behalf of the Central Delta Water Agency and the South Delta Water Agency, strongly opposed the bill. He said it would transfer responsibility for complying with State river flow and quality protections above the levels established for three years in the 1994 Bay-Delta Accord to those non-export project water rights holders who rely upon water in the San Francisco Bay-Delta watershed. Under California water law, Herrick explained, these water rights are generally senior to those of the exporters.

Mr. Bitts, from Eureka, California also opposed the bill, testifying that it would eliminate many of the protections now in place for Central Valley salmon in the San Joaquin River and the Bay-Delta Estuary. "It undermines efforts at protecting and recovering the Central Valley's listed salmon species," Bitts told the subcommittee. "It jeopardizes the restoration and productivity of fall-run Chinook populations. It likely will destroy California's salmon fishery and the jobs of thousands up and down the coast who depend on this resource and the fishing communities this fish supports."

Nunes sought to remind critics that there are many options on the table that can be considered in order to gain passage of the legislation.

For more information, visit: http://naturalresources.house.gov/.
EDUCATION: HOUSE SHOWCASES STEM EDUCATION

The House Science, Space and Technology Committee held a hearing titled "STEM [Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics] Education In Action: Learning Today . . . Leading Tomorrow,” on June 16, 2011. Witnesses included: Dr. Karen Lozano, Professor at University of Texas Pan American; Mrs. Brenda Conwell-Dudley, Parent to Jack Dudley and Mentor to the HEADS UP! Virginia Virtual Academy Team; Ms. Amy Attard; and Ms. Anne Manwell, Science Teacher.

This is the first in a series of hearings to highlight STEM education activities across the nation. This hearing showcased the finalists, parents, teachers, and mentors of the ExploraVision Awards National Competition, an innovative STEM competition that is inspiring and motivating K-12 students, sponsored by Toshiba and the National Science Teachers Association (NSTA).

Witnesses represented four of the eight ExploraVision winning teams, who as part of their prize, received an expense-paid trip to Washington, DC. Following the hearing, all teams set their winning projects on display for Members of Congress and staff to review. As part of the competition, students were asked to research a technology of their choice and explore what that technology could be like in 20 years. Teams explored how their visions of technology could work and what breakthroughs are necessary to make their ideas a reality.

For more information, visit: http://science.house.gov/.

ENVIRONMENT: SENATE EXAMINES CLEAN AIR HEALTH IMPACTS

The Senate Environment and Public Works Committee held a hearing titled "The Clean Air Act and Public Health," on Wednesday, June 15, 2011. Witnesses included: Lisa Jackson, Administrator, United States Environmental Protection Agency; Sarah Buicic, RN, MSN, American Nurses Association; Dr. Jerome Paulson, MD, FAAP, The American Academy of Pediatrics, Director of the Mid-Atlantic Center for Children's Health & the Environment at the Children's National Medical Center; Dr. Harvey Brenner, Ph.D, University of Texas; Cathy Woollums, Senior Vice President and Chief Environmental Counsel, MidAmerican Energy Holdings Company; and Dr. Alfred Munzer, MD, Washington Adventist Hospital.

In her opening statement, Chairwoman Barbara Boxer expressed her support for the reauthorization of the Clean Air Act. Boxer said that in 1976 there were 166 days when health advisories were issued in Southern California to urge people with asthma and other lung sensitivities to stay indoors. Over the last 36 years, the number of smog-related health advisories issued in Southern California dropped from 166 days to zero days in 2010, due in part to the Clean Air Act, she said.

Senator James Inhofe (OK) said, however, that the Clean Air Act is being implemented in a way that bears no resemblance to what Congress intended. He said that American Electric Power (AEP) announced it would close nearly 6,000 Megawatts of low cost (coal) power generation in response to EPA's rules. As a consequence, AEP estimates nearly 600 power plant workers will lose their jobs, totaling nearly $40 million in annual wages, Inhofe said. He cited a recent report by National Economic Research Associates (NERA) that anticipates this type of action will be replicated across the country, with an estimated 48 Gigawatts in plant closures.

EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson testified that in the 40 years since its enactment, the Clean Air Act has made steady progress in reducing the threats posed by pollution and allowing U.S. residents to breathe easier. Last year alone, she said, the Clean Air Act is estimated to have saved 160,000 lives and prevented more than 100,000 hospital visits. Ms. Jackson also said that expressed in dollar terms, the benefits of the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990 alone are projected to reach approximately $2 trillion in 2020 with an estimated cost of $65 billion in that same year – a benefit to cost ratio of more than 30 to 1.

According to a March 2011 report by the Environmental Protection Agency's Office of Air and Radiation, under the 1990 Clean Air Act Amendment Programs, the economic value of the substantial air quality improvements that would be realized by the year 2020 is estimated at almost $2 trillion, an amount which vastly exceeds the cost of compliance with the law, Jackson testified. This same report estimates that
by 2020 the 1990 Clean Air Act Amendment Programs will have resulted in the prevention of 230,000 deaths, 2,400,000 incidences of asthma exacerbation, 120,000 emergency room visits, 3,200,000 lost school days and 13,000,000 lost work days. These statistics represent not only the Act's impact on health and quality of life, but its value in ensuring economic productivity, she said.

For more information, visit: http://www.epw.senate.gov.

REPORT: PHARMACEUTICAL R&D SPENDING DECLINES

The pharmaceutical industry spent less on drug R&D last year than at any time in the last three years, according to data released on June 27, 2011 from the 2011 Pharmaceutical R&D Factbook compiled by CMR International, a Thomson Reuters business.

The 2011 edition of the Factbook shows that R&D expenditure continued to drop in 2010 to an estimated three year low of $68 billion, in contrast to the growth rate leading up to 2008. The report also highlights that drug success rates continue to show the declining trends of the past decade. There were 55 phase III drug terminations during 2008-2010, more than double the number of terminations during 2005-2007; in addition the number of drugs entering phase III clinical trials fell by 55 percent in 2010.

“Faced with more than 110 drugs losing patent exclusivity in the US, including 14 ‘blockbusters’, the world’s leading pharmaceutical companies face considerable risk to their revenue streams in next three years,” Thomas Reuters states.

For further information, please go to: http://cmr.thomsonreuters.com/services/factbook.

BRIEFING: UCLA-USC TO HOLD BRIEFING ON GENERATIONAL DIVIDE: BABY BOOMERS VS. YOUNG LATINOS

The UCLA-USC Latinos and Economic Security Project will hold a briefing on July 7, 2011 entitled Re-Framing the Generational Divide: Baby Boomers vs. Young Latinos. The briefing will address the two rapidly developing demographic changes that will define the United States over the next quarter century: aging baby boomers and a growing population of young Latinos.

Are they on an economic collision course, or can they establish a new social contract that strengthens American society and its economic security? The briefing will assess the economic consequences for the nation, demonstrate the need to re-frame this debate, and seek a solution-oriented approach to the greatest inter-generational and inter-ethnic challenge of this century.

The briefing will be held from 11 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. on July 7th in Congressional Meeting Room South, Capitol Visitors Center, The Capitol, Washington, D.C.

The briefing is sponsored in conjunction with the Congressional Hispanic Caucus and Rep. Lucille Roybal-Allard (Los Angeles) and is made possible by support from the Ford Foundation. The Congresswoman will make welcoming remarks, with special remarks by Kilolo Kijakazi, PhD, Program Officer, The Ford Foundation. Other presenters include faculty of USC and UCLA, as well as representatives from the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, the National Journal, and Latinos and Economic Security.

For more information, please visit http://www.latinoeconomicsecurity.org or contact Max Benavidez at: latinoeconomicsecurity@gmail.com.

BRIEFING: DIESEL TECH FORUM TO BRIEF ON RENEWABLE FUELS & DIESEL TECHNOLOGIES

The Diesel Technology Forum will host a briefing on July 8, 2010 from 12:00 pm – 1:30 pm in Room B-338 of the Rayburn House Office Building. Lunch will be provided. The briefing will focus on using renewable fuels and advanced diesel technologies to reduce petroleum consumption. Issues addressed will include the prospects for greater diesel penetration in the U.S. and how growing use of renewable diesel fuel can bring fuel efficiency and CO2 emissions on a par with other advanced technology vehicles.
Speakers will include: Alexander Freitag, Director of Diesel Systems Engineering, Robert Bosch Corporation; Robert McCormick, Principal Engineer, Fuels Performance, National Renewable Energy Laboratory; and Stuart Johnson, Manager, Engineering and Environmental Office, Volkswagen Group of America, Inc.

To attend the briefing, please RSVP to dtf@dieselforum.org.