



Committee: Senate Environment & Public Works Committee
Event: [Business Meeting to Consider S.5045, S.3135, and S.5249](#)
Date: September 16, 2026

Executive Summary:

On September 16, 2026, the Senate Committee on Environment & Public Works hosted a business meeting to consider the following three bills:

- Wildfire Emissions Prevention Act of 2026 ([S.5045](#))
 - Sponsored by Sen. John Curtis (R-UT)
- Cold Weather Diesel Reliability Act of 2025 ([S.3135](#))
 - Sponsored by Sen. Dan Sullivan (R-AK)
- MORE American Fuel Act of 2026 ([S.5249](#))
 - Sponsored by Sen. Mark Kelly (D-AZ)

Members were broadly supportive of legislation to streamline the approval of prescribed burns for wildfire mitigation and to modernize the licensing process for domestic uranium enrichment facilities.

However, the Committee was divided on S.3135, which would suspend diesel emissions control requirements during periods of extreme cold. Republicans argued the bill is necessary to prevent drivers from being stranded in dangerous conditions, while Democrats opposed the measure as overly broad.

Member Toplines:

Full [Committee Chair Shelley Moore Capito \(R-WV\)](#): Capito underscored the importance of streamlining the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) exceptional events process for prescribed burns, overriding diesel derates in cold weather environments, and eliminating outdated regulations to strengthen the domestic nuclear fuel supply chain.

*Full Committee Ranking Member Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI)*¹: Whitehouse supported bipartisan efforts to facilitate prescribed burns as a climate adaptation measure and to bring uranium enrichment facilities to parity with other nuclear facilities. He criticized S.3135 for having an overly broad scope.

Chemical Safety, Waste Management, Environmental Justice, and Regulatory Oversight Subcommittee Ranking Member Jeff Merkley (D-OR): Merkley discussed the increasing devastation of wildfires in Oregon and praised the inclusion of the Smoke Ready Communities Program in S.5045 to help provide clean air spaces for vulnerable populations.

¹ Opening statement not available at the time of this memo's distribution.

Clean Air, Climate, and Nuclear Innovation and Safety Ranking Member Kelly: Kelly supported legislation to expand the use of prescribed burns to prevent catastrophic wildfires and flooding, as well as his bill to secure the domestic nuclear fuel needed for expanded power capacity.

Sen. Curtis: Curtis highlighted the necessity of prescribed burns to contain wildfires in the West, arguing that states should not be penalized for the resulting emissions.

Sen. Sullivan: Sullivan championed his legislation to suspend diesel emissions mandates in extreme cold, arguing that the EPA's one-size-fits-all rules cause automatic engine shutoffs that strand drivers in life-threatening conditions.

Sen. Alex Padilla (D-CA): Padilla emphasized that while EPA regulations have allowed prescribed fires to qualify as exceptional events since 2016, the agency has never approved a demonstration, making a dedicated statutory pathway necessary for California to manage its forests.

Legislation Considered:

Wildfire Emissions Prevention Act of 2026 ([S.5045](#))

- *Member Toplines*
 - Whitehouse and Capito supported the bill as a necessary climate adaptation measure to facilitate prescribed burns and reduce wildfire intensity.
 - Curtis noted that prescribed burns dramatically reduce emissions by preventing larger fires, arguing that states should not be penalized for using them.
 - Merkley highlighted the bill's Smoke Ready Communities Program, which provides grants to establish clean air spaces for people with asthma during smoke events.
 - Kelly emphasized that prescribed burns are one of the best tools to prevent catastrophic wildfires and the severe flooding that often follows.
 - Padilla explained that while EPA regulations have allowed prescribed fires to qualify as exceptional events since 2016, the agency has never approved a demonstration, making a dedicated pathway necessary.
- **The bill passed out of Committee by a 19-0 vote.**

Cold Weather Diesel Reliability Act of 2025 ([S.3135](#))

- *Member Toplines*
 - Capito emphasized that S.3135 will improve safety by authorizing manufacturers to override derates in diesel vehicles and farm equipment operating in targeted cold weather environments.
 - Whitehouse cited concerns with the bill's broad scope, though he expressed a desire to keep working toward a bipartisan solution.
 - Sullivan argued that EPA regulations requiring diesel exhaust fluid (DEF) and automatic shutoffs create dangerous situations in extreme cold, as DEF freezes at 12 degrees Fahrenheit.
- *Amendments*

- [Sullivan ANS](#) - Makes technical clarifications to S.3135
 - The ANS was adopted by voice vote.
- **The bill, as amended, passed out of Committee by a 10-9 vote.**

MORE American Fuel Act of 2026 ([S. 5249](#))

- *Member Toplines*
 - Capito emphasized the need to eliminate “outdated” regulations to support expansion of the domestic nuclear fuel supply chain.
 - Whitehouse discussed the importance of bringing the licensing process for uranium enrichment facilities to parity with other parts of the nuclear fuel cycle.
 - Kelly explained that S.5249 would accelerate the acquisition of nuclear fuel needed to support expanded nuclear power capacity.
- *Amendments*
 - Kelly ANS² - Make technical clarifications to S.5249
 - The ANS was adopted by voice vote.
- **The bill, as amended, passed out of Committee by a 18-1 vote.**

² Amendment not available at the time of this memo’s distribution.