Week in Regulation

A Bit of a Slowdown

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Coming off the superlatively action-packed week before it, this past week of regulatory activity was likely destined to feel like a dud by way of comparison. And, well, it largely was. There were 11 rulemakings with some kind of measurable economic impact, but most of them had relatively light effects. The most substantial action of the week was an Environmental Protection Agency rule (EPA) adjusting renewable fuel standards based upon the amount of such fuels actually produced in 2024. Across all rulemakings, agencies published $167.5 million in total cost savings but added 188,316 paperwork burden hours.

REGULATORY TOPLINES

- Proposed Rules: 30
- Final Rules: 52
- 2025 Total Pages: 31,061
- 2025 Final Rule Costs: -$75.7 billion
- 2025 Proposed Rule Costs: $173.9 billion

NOTABLE REGULATORY ACTIONS

The most significant item of a relatively quiet week was the EPA rule regarding "Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS) Program: Partial Waiver of the 2024 Cellulosic Biofuel Volume Requirement." The agency is producing this waiver primarily "due to a shortfall in the volume of cellulosic biofuel in 2024." As discussed in a recent edition of the Week in Regulation, the public costs from the RFS program generally come from consumers essentially being required to purchase fuel at prices artificially inflated by the program. When that required fuel volume decreases – as in the case here for the relevant 2024 fuel

stock – then consumers can instead utilize fuels priced closer to the true market rate. EPA estimates that this shift will yield $187 million in cost savings.

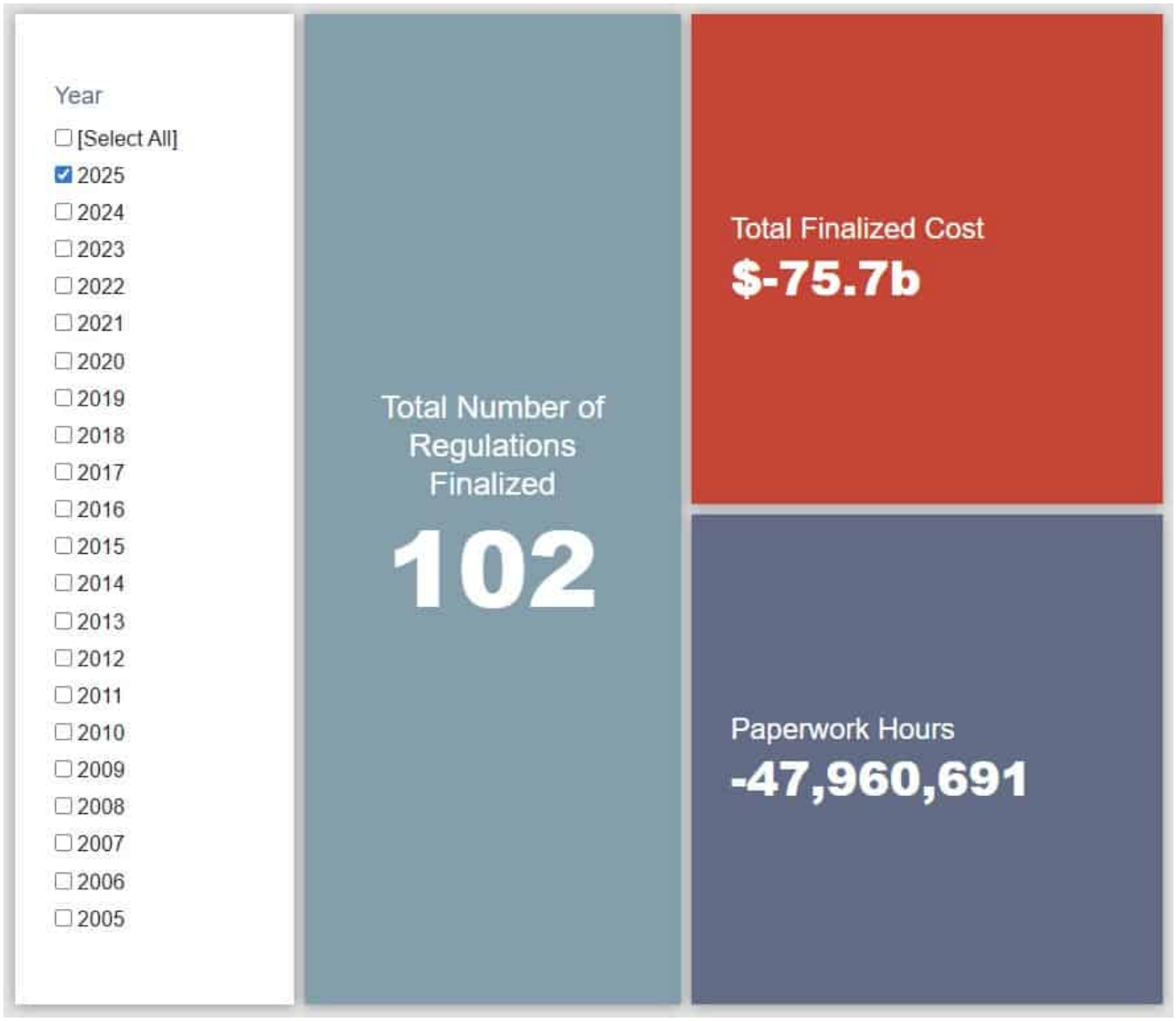
TRACKING TRUMP 2.0

There were no significant, broad-based regulatory policy pronouncements from the administration this past week. There was, however, some nominal action on the Congressional Review Act (CRA) front. Members of both chambers of Congress introduced CRA resolutions against a pair of "Resource Management Plan" determinations from the Department of Interior. While the underlying actions came in November 2024 and January 2025, respectively, and were not typical rulemakings published in the Federal Register, corresponding Government Accountability Office opinions on each item declared them both to be "rules" for the purposes of the CRA. As such, they represent potentially live pieces of CRA legislation now.

Be sure to check the American Action Forum (AAF) CRA tracker for a full survey of activity under the law during the first part of 2025. As of today, members of the 119th Congress have introduced CRA resolutions of disapproval addressing 47 Biden-era rules that collectively involve $138 billion in compliance costs. Of these, 16 have been passed into law, repealing a series of Biden Administration rules that had a combined $3 billion in associated compliance costs – roughly 2 percent of that potential $138 billion total. While the main window of CRA action has largely passed, there are still outstanding resolutions that could move legislatively. AAF will continue to monitor and update such developments as appropriate.

TOTAL BURDENS

Since January 1, the federal government has published $98.2 billion in total net costs (with $75.7 billion in cost savings from finalized rules) and 80.1 million hours of net annual paperwork cuts (with 48 million hours coming from final rules).


Year
[Select All]
2025
2024
2023
2022
2021
2020
2019
2018
2017
2016
2015
2014
2013
2012
2011
2010
2009
2008
2007
2006
2005
Total Number of Regulations Finalized
102
Total Finalized Cost
$-75.7b
Paperwork Hours
-47,960,691