

October 15, 2025

Updates on the Government Shutdown - 2025 Edition

Rachel Pick and Frida Mendez, DCLRS

The federal government has entered its third week of shutdown with no resolution in sight, as partisan divisions over health care and spending continue to stall negotiations. Senate Republicans have intensified pressure on Democrats, blocking a Democratic funding proposal and framing the impasse as a failure to support military families ahead of the Oct. 15 payday. President Trump has directed agencies to ensure continued military and Coast Guard pay, while Democrats argue Republicans caused the shutdown by refusing to include Affordable Care Act subsidy extensions. [Keep reading.](#)

// GOVERNMENT

House Democrats Push to Reopen Government, Restore Healthcare Funding

Rachel Pick

House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries (D-NY-08) has called on members to return to Washington to press for a bipartisan spending agreement that would reopen the government and address what he described as a “Republican healthcare crisis.” In a [letter to colleagues](#), Jeffries warned that millions of Americans are facing higher insurance premiums, copays, and deductibles as Affordable Care Act (ACA) tax credits expire and Medicaid funding faces deep cuts. He urged immediate action to extend ACA subsidies and reverse the Medicaid reductions that are forcing hospitals and community health centers to close nationwide.

Jeffries outlined plans for a full slate of Democratic activities beginning October 14–15, including caucus meetings, a Capitol Steps event, a Steering & Policy Committee hearing on healthcare costs, and a national town hall to engage the public. The Democratic caucus, he said, remains committed to reopening the government, ensuring pay for active-duty troops and federal employees, and lowering healthcare costs for working- and middle-class families.

Pesticide Policy Coalition Endorses Douglas Troutman for EPA Leadership Role

Rachel Pick

The Pesticide Policy Coalition (PPC), of which AmericanHort is an active member, sent a [letter of support](#) for the nomination of Douglas M. Troutman as Assistant Administrator for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention (OCSPP). The PPC highlighted Troutman’s extensive leadership experience and deep understanding of key environmental statutes, including the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act and the Toxic Substances Control Act. His background in managing chemical safety and regulatory compliance makes him well-qualified to lead OCSPP in advancing policies that protect public health and the environment while ensuring access to critical pest management tools. The coalition urged the U.S. Senate to move swiftly in confirming his nomination.

Rep. Gabe Evans (R-CO-08) visits Olson’s Greenhouse of Colorado

Jordan Rolfe and Brandon Olson of Olson's Greenhouse Gardens hosted Rep. Gabe Evans (R-CO-08) at their Fort Lupton, CO greenhouse on Friday, October 10. Rolfe is the current chair of the AmericanHort Advocacy Committee.

If you would like to host your Member of Congress at your facility, please contact the AmericanHort Advocacy and Government Affairs team.



Left to right: Rolfe, Rep. Evans, and Olson

// TARIFFS

US–China Trade Tensions Escalate Ahead of Planned Trump–Xi Meeting

Kamron Newberry

President Donald Trump announced plans to impose a 100% tariff on all Chinese imports starting November 1, following Beijing's decision to restrict exports of rare earth minerals critical to U.S. manufacturing. The move sharply heightens trade tensions and casts doubt on a planned late-October meeting between President Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping. China has warned of "corresponding measures," including new port surcharges on U.S.-owned ships, but has not yet announced retaliatory tariffs. The horticulture industry faces further uncertainty as both nations edge closer to another tariff standoff. Analysts warn that any progress in relations will hinge on de-escalation around tariffs and export controls, rather than broader issues like technology or market access.

USMCA Comment Period Now Open

Kamron Newberry

The Office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) has opened the public comment period for the upcoming U.S.–Mexico–Canada Agreement (USMCA) Joint Review, scheduled for July 1, 2026. This review gives the horticulture industry an important opportunity to share how stable, duty-free trade supports the movement of plants, inputs, and materials across North America. Stakeholders are encouraged to submit written comments by November 3, 2025, or request to testify at the public hearing on November 17, 2025, through [USTR's online portal](#). *We encourage companies that rely on efficient North American trade to submit comments on behalf of their company. AmericanHort will be submitting comments on behalf of the industry.*

// WORKFORCE & LABOR

DOL Interim Final Rule on Agricultural Wages

Matt Mika, Lynn Jacquez, JPH Law and Shawn Packer, JPH Law

The Department of Labor (DOL) has suspended enforcement of its 2024 rule aimed at expanding H-2A guest worker protections and has proposed rescinding it entirely. Concurrently, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has introduced a new rule, effective October 2, 2025, to streamline the H-2A filing process.

In addition to the rule-making referenced above on Oct 2, DOL published a long-awaited interim final rule (IFR) revising the wage methodology for determining the Adverse Effect Wage Rate (AEWR). This rule was issued quickly in response to recent litigation that vacated the 2023 wage rule and the USDA's termination of the Farm Labor Survey, which had previously determined AEWR rates. The new methodology now relies on the Occupational Employment Wage Statistics survey, a three-year running average updated annually in July, and a state's minimum wage. [Read the full update.](#)

Watch the Webinar on IFR Revising AEWR in H-2A Program

Watch the [webinar recording](#) on the proposed Interim Final Rule (IFR) revising Adverse Effect Wage Rate (AEWR) in the H-2A program with experts Lynn Jacquez and Shawn Packer of JPH Law Firm.

To watch the webinar, you will need to log in to your [AmericanHort profile](#).

// AmericanHort

Volunteer Leaders Come Together to Collaborate in Columbus

Rachel Pick and Jennifer Gray

AmericanHort volunteer leaders gathered in Columbus, Ohio, this week for the annual Fall Community Connector Meeting and Board of Directors Meeting. Community Connector coordinators and board members who represent every segment of the horticulture industry reflected on the past year's successes and begin shaping programs for 2026.

The Community Connectors serve as the voice of the industry within AmericanHort, ensuring that programs, advocacy efforts, and educational resources align with the real-world needs of businesses across the supply chain. Volunteer input during this meeting helps guide efforts to deliver the resources, connections, and advocacy that strengthen member businesses and the industry as a whole.

AmericanHort staff joined these volunteer leaders to provide updates, gather feedback, and collaborate on upcoming initiatives. To learn more about how the Community Connectors represent your interests and how you can get involved, visit [AmericanHort Community Connectors](#).



Keep Boxwood Blight Out of Your Nursery

Jennifer Gray

Boxwood blight continues to pose major production and regulatory challenges for nurseries nationwide. Learn how your production practices—spacing, cultivar selection, moisture management, and more—affect your risk of outbreaks. Join Dr. Jerry Weiland,

Research Plant Pathologist with USDA-ARS, for practical, research-based guidance on identifying and controlling key risk factors before disease spreads.

Webinar: Herbal Distancing — Keeping Boxwood in Your Nursery Free from Blight
October 23, 2025 | 1:00 PM ET

This Horticultural Research Institute (HRI) webinar, presented in partnership with the Boxwood Blight Insight Group (BBIG), a USDA-NIFA-funded research collaboration, delivers the latest science to help growers protect the nation's #1 evergreen ornamental shrub crop. [Register for the webinar.](#)

AmericanHort Advocacy & Government Relations Team

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