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Daily Environment Report

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Leading the News

Congress

Bernhardt Confirmed to No. 2 Interior Department Job

The Senate confirmed David Bernhardt, a lawyer, to the No. 2 job at the Interior Department July 24, providing Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke a much-needed deputy but underscoring the slow progress made on installing Trump administration nominees.

Oil & Gas

BLM Proposes to Kill 2015 Hydraulic Fracturing Rule

The Trump administration is proposing to rescind 2015 regulations on hydraulic fracturing put in place by the Obama administration for oil and natural gas operations on federal and Indian lands.

Solid Waste

China Says No to Even More Foreign Waste

Consumer plastics is among the 24 new solid waste imports China will ban by the end of the year amid increased public concern over environmental contamination and decreased need for scrap materials by industry.

Special Report

Water Pollution

PODCAST: Trump Rhetoric Gives Border Town Mayor Headaches

Small town mayor Serge Dedina has an international environmental problem: water pollution originating in Mexico flows across the border and into his Southern California town, hurting the ecosystem and causing health problems for residents.

Water Resources

Trump's Border Wall Could Trouble Waters With Mexico

A wall covered with solar panels may be President Donald Trump's solution to keep undocumented immigrants and illegal drugs out of the country, but critics say it also could cause flooding and stormwater runoff problems along the 2,000-mile U.S.-Mexico border.

News

Air Pollution

EPA Sued For Not Responding Quickly on Power Plant Permit

Environmental advocates sued EPA July 24 over what they said was the agency's inability to respond quickly enough to concerns over a central Pennsylvania power plant's air pollution permit.

Chemical Security

N.Y. Leads States Challenging EPA Chemical Safety Rule Delay

The EPA's two-year delay of a chemical facility safety rule exceeds the agency's Clean Air Act authority, New York's attorney general and 10 other states said in a July 24 lawsuit.

Climate Change

U.K. Braced for Record-Breaking Wet Winters, Blames Climate Shift

Britain faces a future of record-breaking wet winters, potentially leading to more of the widespread flooding seen in recent years, according to new modeling that incorporates changing climate patterns.

Climate Policy

Conservative Party Merger Alters Landscape in Canada's Oil Patch

The merger of Alberta's two main conservative parties creates a new political force in the heart of Canada's oil patch that threatens to unseat Premier Rachel Notley and kill the province's carbon tax.

Climate Policy

U.K. Seeking to Fill Climate Leadership Void Left by Trump

Britain should seek to fill the leadership void created by Donald Trump's decision to pull the U.S. out of the landmark Paris Agreement, Climate Change Minister Claire Perry said July 24.

Energy

EU Mulls Retaliation Against U.S. Over New Russia-Sanctions Plan

The European Union said it would be prepared to retaliate against the U.S. should Washington hit Russia with new sanctions that affect EU-based energy companies, risking a deeper trans-Atlantic split over economic and security policies.

Energy

Flood Risks Prompt Massachusetts Review of Enbridge Gas Facility

Massachusetts Gov. Charlie Baker (R) bowed to public pressure and ordered his administration to scrutinize a natural gas facility planned by Enbridge for its Pennsylvania to Canada pipeline.

Energy

Photos of Melted Fuel at Japan's Fukushima to Help Cleanup

Japan's likely discovery of melted fuel inside the wrecked Fukushima nuclear power plant is seen as a critical step in hastening the \$72 billion, 40-year cleanup of one of the worst atomic disasters in history.

Energy

White House Team Differs on Trump Support for Russia Sanctions

The Trump administration supports the current version of a bill to sanction Russia, the new White House press secretary said, although her boss, Anthony Scaramucci, wouldn't guarantee that President Donald Trump will sign it.

Environmental Taxes

Pennsylvania Eyes Shale Tax to Help Plug \$2 Billion Hole

The severance tax debate is heating up again in Pennsylvania.

Motor Vehicles

VW, Daimler Workers Step Up Pressure to Come Clean on Collusion

Germany's carmakers are coming under pressure from their employees to come clean on allegations that they colluded on technology for decades, as investors continued to sell the stocks on concern the industry faces another major scandal following the diesel emissions crisis.

Natural Resources

Ships to Test Slower Speed to Reduce Noise for Whales

Cruise liners, cargo ships and ferries plan to slow down for a two-month trial off Washington state and British Columbia to see if slower speeds and less underwater noise would help protect endangered killer whales.

Renewable Energy

Renewables Scientist Takes South Korea's Energy Helm

South Korea on July 24 inaugurated a sustainable energy scientist and scholar as minister for trade, industry and energy, a move expected to help the country meet stepped-up renewable energy goals by 2030.

Toxic Substances

BP, Marathon, Kinder Morgan Quash Negligence Claim

BP, Marathon Oil and Kinder Morgan won't face statutory negligence claims for environmental contamination, the Northern District of Oklahoma said July 21 (Bristow First Assembly of God v. BP PLC, 2017 BL 253710, N.D. Okla., No. 15-CV-523, 7/21/17).

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Daily Environment Report for EPA

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Energy and Climate Report

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News

Climate Regulation

Transportation Officials Move to Scrap Obama Climate Rule

The Trump administration is working to roll back another Obama-era climate regulation—this time a provision that would require state transportation planners to account for greenhouse gas emissions.

Climate Regulation

Trump Said to Begin Repeal of Obama Power Plant Emission Cuts

The Trump administration will propose repealing former President Barack Obama's signature plan for combating climate change by asserting that its expansive approach to addressing carbon emissions exceeds legal limits, according to a person familiar with the deliberations.

Coal-Fired Power Plants

Perry's Coal Proposal Seen Unlikely to Reverse Historic Decline

U.S. Energy Secretary Rick Perry's plan to reward coal-fired power plants that keep large stockpiles of fuel won't be enough to reverse the industry's long-term decline, analysts say.

Energy

Army of Women Tackles Electricity Thieves in Indian Slums

India's power companies have a problem largely responsible for \$10 billion a year in losses. Slum dwellers steal electricity and refuse to pay their bills. But company officials often can't go in without being chased by mobs—and sometimes beaten, tied up, urinated on, even murdered.

Energy

Electricity, Fossil Fuel Energy Nominees Head to Senate Floor

Energy Department nominees to lead the electricity and fossil fuel offices are headed for full Senate consideration after favorable votes by the Energy and Natural Resources Committee on Oct. 4.

Energy

Japan Regulator Clears Restart of World's Largest Nuclear Plant

Tokyo Electric Power Co. Holdings Inc. moved a step closer to resuming operations of the world's biggest nuclear facility after Japan's atomic regulator gave its tacit approval, delivering a much-needed boost for a company still strapped with the cost to clean up its wrecked Fukushima plant.

Energy

Nuclear Regulatory Panel Nominees Caught in Partisan Senate Spat

The nomination of a Democrat to continue on the Nuclear Regulatory Commission has become caught in a partisan disagreement over whether his nomination should be combined with those of two Republican nominees awaiting Senate action.

Energy

Theresa May's U.K. Energy Price Cap Signals Wafer Thin Margins

Britain's utilities are the new political punching bag after Theresa May proposed a price cap to insulate customers from higher prices.

Motor Vehicles

Western Governors Envision Electric Vehicle Corridor

Governors in seven Western states hope to coordinate an electric vehicle charging network that connects their major thoroughfares—and possibly boosts some the presence of some states in the electric vehicle industry.

Natural Resources

Energy Royalty Advisory Panel Starts Charting New Rules

A royalty policy committee that includes major oil companies will develop new Interior Department regulations on payments companies make for energy development on federal and tribal lands, an Interior official said at the committee's first meeting Oct. 4.

Oil & Gas

Here's the Hot Canadian Oil Play You Probably Never Heard About

There's a land grab quietly taking place in a little-known corner of the Canadian oil sands.

Oil & Gas

Interior Wants to Freeze Obama-era Methane Limits

The Interior Department wants to temporarily stop enforcing an Obama-era rule that limited methane emissions from oil and gas drillers operating on federal lands.

Oil & Gas

Private Oil Made a Big Find in Mexico, Now State Oil Wants a Cut

When private drillers struck oil off Mexico's coast this year, they didn't anticipate sharing it with the state oil company. It looks like they'll have to.

Real Property

Trans-Pecos Pipeline Will Proceed for Now

A Texas property owner whose land was taken by a natural gas utility can't stop its pipeline project for now, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit ruled Oct. 3 (Boerschig v. Trans-Pecos Pipeline, LLC, 2017 BL 354426, 5th Cir., No. 16-50931, 10/3/17).

Renewable Energy

Dawn of Solar Age Declared as Sun Power Beats All Others

Solar power blossomed faster than for any other fuel for the first time in 2016, the International Energy Agency said in a report suggesting the technology will dominate

renewables in the years ahead.

Renewable Energy

Storms Spur \$22 Billion Investment in Battery-Backed Grids

Growing demand for more resilient power supplies will spur \$22.3 billion of global investment in battery-backed local energy systems over the next decade, according to Navigant Research.

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Energy and Climate Report