

To: Jackson, Ryan[jackson.ryan@epa.gov]
From: POLITICO Pro Energy
Sent: Wed 9/13/2017 9:52:30 AM
Subject: Morning Energy: EPA plans carbon rule replacement — Clinton's big energy idea that wasn't — Carper won't back Trump's EPA air pick

By Anthony Adragna | 09/13/2017 05:49 AM EDT

With help from Eric Wolff, Alex Guillén, Esther Whieldon and Darius Dixon

EPA PLANS FOR CLEAN POWER PLAN REPLACEMENT: EPA plans to take the first step toward replacing the Clean Power Plan by the first week of October as it publishes its plan to rescind the Obama administration's carbon limits for power plants, Pro's Emily Holden [reports](#).

EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt had been averse to replacing the rule, and sources tell Emily that when OMB first began reviewing the Clean Power Plan withdrawal in June the agency did not have plans to replace it. The decision to signal the agency will write a replacement comes after months of lobbying from electric company executives and suggests Pruitt may not challenge the legal finding that EPA must regulate greenhouse gases. One likely approach to a new emissions regulation would focus on improving coal-plant efficiency, so generators make more power while burning less coal.

The repeal-and-replace proposals come as patience was wearing thin at the D.C. Circuit, which has avoided issuing an opinion on the Clean Power Plan itself while EPA reconsidered the rule. In an August warning shot to EPA, judges said failing to propose a replacement meant the agency was avoiding a "statutory duty" to regulate carbon emissions, though it agreed to keep the case on ice through Oct. 7. EPA spokeswoman Liz Bowman said she "would not comment on proposals going through interagency review."

TRUMP OFFICIAL TO HOST CLIMATE MEETING: National Economic Council Director Gary Cohn will host a breakfast meeting to discuss "international energy and climate issues" the day before the opening of the U.N. General Assembly next week, POLITICO's Andrew Restuccia [reports](#). The invitation obtained by POLITICO says the huddle is an "opportunity for key ministers with responsibility for these issues to engage in an informal exchange of views and discuss how we can move forward most productively." But an administration official stressed the meeting will not focus solely on climate change.

WELCOME TO WEDNESDAY! I'm your host Anthony Adragna, and the Analysis Group's Sue Tierney was first up to identify Massachusetts as the home of eight previous House speakers. For today: Two speakers have gone on to serve as vice president. Name them. Send your tips, energy gossip and comments to aadragna@politico.com, or follow us on Twitter [@AnthonyAdragna](#), [@Morning_Energy](#), and [@POLITICOPro](#).

New! Legislative Compass: A powerful, easy-to-use tool that simplifies federal and state legislative tracking. [Learn More.](#)

HILLARY'S CAMPAIGN IDEA THAT ALMOST WAS BUT THEN WASN'T: Among other revelations contained in her new book, Hillary Clinton said she was intrigued by Peter Barnes' proposal to create a sort of Alaska Permanent Fund for the whole country. The idea, dubbed by her campaign "Alaska for America," would have taken royalties from oil and gas production — plus receipts from a carbon tax, financial transactions taxes, fees on airwaves used by cell phones and broadcasters, and other resources — and used them to give Americans a guaranteed minimum income. But, alas, as she and Bill worked the calculator, they found the math didn't work.

"We decided it was exciting but not realistic, and left it on the shelf. That was the responsible decision," she wrote in "What Happened." "I wonder whether we should have thrown caution to the wind and embraced 'Alaska for America' as a long-term goal and figured out the details later."

About that carbon tax: Clinton says her campaign also looked more specifically at the idea of a carbon tax dividend, but once again could not get math to work out without new costs for the middle class, which she had vowed against. "Still," she added, "it's tantalizing."

Canary was the coal mine: Clinton argues the Obama team's slow efforts to counter the emerging Republican narrative that his administration began a "war on coal" hurt Democrats in 2016, Pro's Alex Guillén reports. "The Obama administration was slow to take on this false narrative," she wrote. Clinton encouraged Obama to roll out the Clean Power Plan in 2015 in coal country, and pair it with a major initiative to bring new investments and jobs to the region as a way of softening the blow.

Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke also makes a cameo: Clinton recounts an awkward encounter at the inauguration when she said she was surprised Zinke came over to greet her because in 2014 he had called her the "Antichrist." "Maybe he'd forgotten, because he didn't come equipped with any garlic or wooden stakes, or whatever one uses to ward off the Antichrist. But I hadn't forgotten," Clinton writes, adding that she absolutely reminded Zinke of his remark. "He was taken aback and mumbled something about not having meant it. One thing I've learned over the years is how easy it is for some people to say horrible things about me when I'm not around, but how hard it is for them to look me in the eye and say it to my face." (Zinke's wife, Lola, disputed the story.)

CARPER WON'T BACK WEHRUM: Top EPW Democrat Tom Carper told reporters Tuesday he won't back Trump's nominee to run the EPA's air office, Bill Wehrum. "This nominee is troubling," he said. "I don't say that about all of this administration's nominees, but this one is troubling." Chairman John Barrasso told reporters the committee would have "four or five" confirmation hearings next week, though he wouldn't specify which nominees that includes. He separately said EPW was "working on a time" for EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt to come testify before it.

NELSON: GOP 'DENYING REALITY' ON CLIMATE CHANGE: Even as he said he didn't want to play partisan politics in the aftermath of Hurricane Irma, Florida Sen. Bill Nelson knocked Republicans — including his likely 2018 opponent Gov. Rick Scott — for opposing

action to address manmade climate change, POLITICO's Michael Grunwald [reports](#). "It's denying reality," Nelson said. "You can call it politics or whatever, but the Earth is getting hotter. This storm is another reminder of what we're going to have to deal with in the future." He added it would be a crucial issue during his reelection contest.

EPA-INTERIOR VOTES EXPECTED: You'd be forgiven for forgetting the House is still working through its mega-spending package [H.R. 3354 \(115\)](#), but five outstanding EPA and Interior-related amendments should get votes today. The amendments would bar EPA from enforcing its methane rule, block the social cost of carbon from future rule makings, prohibit the closure of EPA regional offices and slash the agency's budget by an additional \$1.87 billion, among others. Full list of all pending amendments to the bill [here](#).

CCS WEEK KICKS OFF IN EARNEST: Senate EPW today holds a [hearing](#) on how to accelerate deployment of carbon capture and sequestration technologies around the country. Look for lots of discussion of the FUTURE Act, [S. 1535 \(115\)](#), one of the few pieces of legislation ME can remember that boasts the support of both Barrasso and [Sheldon Whitehouse](#). Witnesses include Matthew Fry, a policy adviser to Wyoming Gov. Matt Mead and former DOE senior official Julio Friedmann.

HELPING OUT THE LITTLE GUYS? The House Energy and Commerce Committee's environment panel will hold a hearing today on a quartet of bills aimed at postponing or loosening various emissions regulations. [H.R. 1917 \(115\)](#) would delay the brick MACT until legal challenges have played out (coincidentally, the D.C. Circuit revealed Tuesday that oral arguments over that rule will take place Nov. 9). [H.R. 1119 \(115\)](#) would expand Cross-State Air Pollution Rule compliance options for 19 plants, mostly in Pennsylvania, that burn coal waste for electricity. [H.R. 453 \(115\)](#) would extend some deadlines for a residential wood heater emissions rule. And [H.R. 350 \(115\)](#) aims to clarify that anti-tampering provisions in vehicle emissions rules do not apply to vehicles used only for racing, an issue that flared up last year under EPA's Phase 2 heavy-duty truck rule. Some of these bills passed the House in previous years, but failed to gain traction in the Senate. If you go: The hearing kicks off at 10 a.m. in Rayburn 2123.

ENDANGERED SPECIES MEASURES GETTING MARKED UP: A litany of controversial measures get [marked up](#) today at the House Natural Resources Committee, including [H.R. 3668 \(115\)](#) a sportsmen's package that Democrats have condemned as enabling the deregulation of gun silencers and five bills taking bites at the Endangered Species Act. They are: [H.R. 424 \(115\)](#), which would redo Interior rules delisting the gray wolf; [H.R. 2603 \(115\)](#), which would bar non-native species from being listed as endangered or threatened under the statute; [H.R. 3131 \(115\)](#), which would lower attorney fees that could be awarded in ESA litigation; [H.R. 717 \(115\)](#), which would allow federal agencies to factor cost into listing decisions and prioritize listing petitions rather than decide them in the order they're received; and [H.R. 1274 \(115\)](#), which would require the availability of all data used in listing decisions to impacted states. The fun kicks off at 10 a.m. in Longworth 1334.

BLAST FROM THE PAST: ME got to briefly chat with former EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy after she met with Senate climate caucus members to "catch up" on various environmental issues. She declined to weigh in on Pruitt's comment that it's "insensitive" to

discuss climate change in the aftermath of hurricanes Harvey and Irma, but said, "I think we all know that storms like that get as intense as those storms were because of an impact on climate. If you want safe and healthy communities, you're going to have to address the issue of climate change. Period."

ICAHN'T BELIEVE EPA: Sen. [Sheldon Whitehouse](#) cast a jaundiced eye over Pruitt's [letter](#) denying email communication with billionaire Carl Icahn. "On its face, this letter suggests Mr. Icahn had far less control over RFS policymaking than he had suggested publicly," Whitehouse spokesman Rich Davidson told ME. "On the other hand, Pruitt has a long-established skill in obscuring his contacts with the industry that pulls his strings." Pruitt said the agency searched the inboxes of 39 agency officials and came up empty on Icahn emails.

RESHUFFLED ELECTRICITY BOARD REVS UP TODAY: DOE's [newly configured](#) Electricity Advisory Committee assembles this afternoon to kick off a meeting with a half dozen fresh faces and a [two-day agenda](#) that will cover the agency's much-discussed electric grid study, include a two-hour panel on cybersecurity and a rundown of a National Academies report on grid resiliency. Perry let the membership of 14 EAC members lapse recently and installed six new members, effectively shrinking the board's overall size. But the person Perry tapped as the new EAC chairman, Michael Heyeck of American Electric Power, isn't apparently able to attend, according to the agenda, which describes ERCOT engineer John Adams as acting chairman this week. Most of the cybersecurity talk — including panel discussion and a presentation on a draft DOE multiyear energy sector cybersecurity plan — is slated for Thursday morning. The meeting starts at 1:30 p.m. at the offices of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association in Arlington, Va.

GAO TO PROBE PERRY'S HEALTHCARE TWEETS: GAO has [agreed to a request](#) from Rep. [Frank Pallone](#), top Energy and Commerce Democrat, to issue a legal opinion on whether DOE's use of its Twitter account to promote an op-ed by Secretary Rick Perry on health care violated the Antideficiency Act, the Anti-Lobbying Act and the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2017. Pallone first made the request in late July.

ZINKE TELL STAFF TO UP GAME ON FIRE PREVENTION: Zinke directed staff on Tuesday to be much more proactive on fire prevention, including by hiring contractors if necessary to clear dead trees, removing vegetation away from roads and buildings that could prove quick fire fodder and to include fire prevention in resource management planning. The move comes as wildfires rage in the West. "It makes little sense to be thinning to protect structures when we see flames on the ridge and smoke in the air—fuel management is more effective when undertaken before fires break out," Zinke said in the memorandum.

ITC VOTE ON SOLAR TRADE CASE COMING NEXT WEEK: The U.S. International Trade Commission will vote Sept. 22 on whether the U.S. solar industry has been injured by low-cost imports, according to an ITC website [announcement](#). The case has the solar industry on tenterhooks, as domestic companies that install cheap foreign-made panels believe raising equipment costs will harm business. A Trump administration official has already signaled the administration would likely impose tariffs if the ITC determines there has been injury.

MAIL CALL! HOUSE SCIENCE PROBES OBAMA APPOINTEE: After DOE's inspector general found the government spent \$138,000 on an employee's graduate degree unrelated to his job, House Science Chairman [Lamar Smith](#) sent a [letter](#) requesting documents on what the agency is doing to prevent something similar from happening again. "The Committee is concerned this could be an indication of a more widespread occurrence of inappropriate training authorizations and expenditures within DOE," Smith wrote.

McCOLLUM HITS PRUITT OVER ATTACK ON JOURNALIST: Rep. [Betty McCollum](#), who oversees the Appropriations Interior and EPA Subcommittee, sent a [letter](#) to Pruitt Tuesday condemning the agency's personal attacks on an AP reporter as an "inappropriate use of taxpayer resources" and urging the agency to "act in a more professional manner and refrain from such unacceptable personal attacks."

WEIGHING IN ON TAX REFORM: Citizens For Responsible Energy Solutions Forum sent letters to [House](#) and [Senate](#) tax writers outlining their priorities as tax reform efforts get off the ground in earnest. Atop their wish-list? Maintaining existing energy investment and production tax credits, sunseting tax credits for mature energy industries and reducing the corporate tax rate to at least 25 percent.

PRIORITIES OUTLINED FOR STATE ENVIRONMENTAL REGULATORS:

Wyoming's Todd Parfitt became president of the Environmental Council of the States on Tuesday and said in a [welcome note](#) a key priority would be "reorienting the state-U.S. Environmental Protection Agency relationship." He's also a rumored candidate for regional EPA administrator.

MOVER, SHAKER: Sam Hirsch, former principal deputy at DOJ's Environment and Natural Resources Division, has rejoined Jenner & Block as a partner in its Washington office.

FREE FOOD ALERT! Stop by 406 First Street SE today between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. for some Old Bay, Parmesan garlic and sea salt french fries courtesy of the National Biodiesel Board and some of the city's best food trucks. You'll also learn how the oil used to cook the fries can be turned into clean-burning biodiesel.

QUICK HITS

- OPEC Discusses Extending Oil Cuts by More Than Three Months. [Bloomberg](#).
- Pompton Lakes DuPont site needs Superfund status, advocates say. [NorthJersey.com](#).
- EPA long-term plans to manage Hanford office in limbo. [Tri-City Herald](#).
- Harvey toppled storage tanks in the oil patch, spilled nearly 2,000 barrels. [Houston Chronicle](#).
- Florida Power & Light Co. nuclear reactors still down, but unharmed by Hurricane Irma. [TC Palm](#).

HAPPENING TODAY

8:30 a.m. — API holds an event on the natural gas and oil industry's impact in all 50 states, G11 Dirksen

10:00 a.m. — "Big Relief for Small Business: Legislation Reducing Regulatory Burdens on Small Manufacturers and Other Job Creators," House Energy and Commerce Environment Subcommittee, Rayburn 2123

10:00 a.m. — The full House Natural Resources Committee holds a markup of pending calendar business, Longworth 1334

10:00 a.m. — "Expanding and Accelerating the Deployment and Use of Carbon Capture, Utilization, and Sequestration," Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, Dirksen 406

11:00 a.m. — National Biodiesel Board holds its BioFry event for congressional staff, 406 1st St. SE

12:00 p.m. — Save the U.S. EPA holds a press conference and march to the EPA, National Press Club, Zenger Room, 529 14th Street N.W., 13th floor

2:30 p.m. — "The Venezuela Crisis: The Malicious Influence of State and Criminal Actors," The House Foreign Affairs Committee Western Hemisphere Subcommittee, 2200 Rayburn

3:00 p.m. — "The Economic Impacts of Climate Change on Tourism and Recreational Activities," House Climate Solutions Caucus, Longworth 1142

THAT'S ALL FOR ME!

To view online:

<https://www.politicopro.com/tipsheets/morning-energy/2017/09/epa-plans-carbon-rule-replacement-024564>

Stories from POLITICO Pro

EPA to replace Clean Power Plan [Back](#)

By Emily Holden | 09/12/2017 09:04 PM EDT

EPA plans to publish its proposal to rescind the Clean Power Plan and take its first step to replace the rule by the first week of October, according to a source familiar with the process.

The decision to publish an advance notice of EPA's intent to issue a new regulation on carbon emissions from power plants comes after months of lobbying from electricity company executives who think it would be the smart legal move. EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt had previously been resistant to replacing the Obama-era rule.

Without a rule on the books, environmental advocates could sue the agency — leaving businesses in limbo while the courts sort out the issue, industry officials had warned.

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit has frozen consideration of lawsuits against the Clean Power Plan while asking for status updates from EPA. In August, judges told EPA that without a replacement rule in place it was avoiding a "statutory duty" to regulate carbon emissions under the Clean Air Act. The judges agreed to keep the case on hold through Oct. 7.

EPA's decision to pursue a replacement rule suggests Pruitt may not challenge a legal finding that EPA must regulate greenhouse gases.

The agency told the court it would publish a rule to withdraw the Clean Power Plan this fall. The OMB first reviewed the rule withdrawal in June. At that time, EPA did not have plans to replace the Clean Power Plan, sources said.

Pruitt, as attorney general of Oklahoma, joined other states' lawyers in arguing that the Obama administration went too far in trying to curb carbon levels by encouraging states to shift away from burning coal and toward renewable power and natural gas.

One likely approach to a replacement rule would focus on improving coal-plant efficiency, so generators make more power while burning less coal.

"We aren't going to comment on proposals going through interagency review," EPA spokeswoman Liz Bowman said via email.

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Cohn to participate in energy, climate discussion at United Nations [Back](#)

By Andrew Restuccia | 09/12/2017 03:37 PM EDT

National Economic Council director Gary Cohn will host an energy and climate change discussion with international officials in New York next week, an administration official confirmed.

The Monday meeting comes the day before the opening of the United Nations General Assembly, where President Donald Trump and dozens of other world leaders will speak.

Cohn invited officials from more than a dozen countries to the breakfast meeting to discuss "international energy and climate issues," according to a copy of the invitation obtained by POLITICO.

The invitation, which Cohn sent on Sept. 7, says the huddle is an "opportunity for key ministers with responsibility for these issues to engage in an informal exchange of views and discuss how we can move forward most productively."

The administration official stressed that the meeting, first reported by the New York Times, will not focus solely on climate change.

Trump infuriated foreign diplomats when he announced in June that he would withdraw from the Paris climate change agreement, which has won the support of nearly 200 nations. Cohn was among White House officials pushing Trump not to exit the Paris agreement at the time.

But so far, the United States has not formally withdrawn, and Trump administration officials have sent mixed signals about whether it is willing to reach a deal to remain in the pact.

The State Department announced last month that the U.S. would continue participating in international climate change negotiations, including talks aimed at implementing the Paris pact, "to protect U.S. interests and ensure all future policy options remain open to the administration."

Trump, who has called climate change a "hoax" perpetrated by the Chinese, has said the United States is getting an unfair deal in the Paris agreement.

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Clinton: Obama was too slow to counter 'war on coal' narrative [Back](#)

By Alex Guillén | 09/12/2017 03:30 PM EDT

Hillary Clinton says in her new book that former President Barack Obama took too long to challenge Republican criticism that his administration had started a "war on coal," which hurt Democrats in last year's election.

"The Obama administration was slow to take on this false narrative," she wrote in "What Happened."

But Clinton did admit that her infamous comment at a March 2016 town hall event that "we're going to put a lot of coal miners and coal companies out of business," was a gaffe and an "unfortunate comment."

And she argued that the politics around coal are a microcosm of how Democrats have fallen out of touch with white working class voters.

Democrats' support for air and water pollution regulations made them an "easy scapegoat" for long-term misfortunes in coal country, Clinton wrote, "despite strong evidence that government

regulation is not the primary cause for the industry's decline."

The former secretary of State wrote that she suggested Obama roll out the Clean Power Plan in 2015 in coal country, and pair it with a major initiative to bring new investments and jobs to the region. "That might have softened the blow a little," she wrote.

Obama ultimately announced the regulation from the White House alongside EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy, which Clinton argued was "seen by many folks in West Virginia as another signal that Democrats didn't care about them. Once that perception takes hold, it's hard to dislodge."

Embracing a narrative about how industrial areas can "reinvent" themselves for 21st century jobs was a vote-winner, according to Clinton. Clinton lost Pennsylvania, but won a landslide victory in Pittsburgh, the city President Donald Trump cited as a concern when he pulled out of the Paris climate agreement earlier this year.

"Trump may think of that city as an emblem of the industrial past ... but the reality is that Pittsburgh has reinvented itself as a hub of clean energy, education, and biomedical research," Clinton writes.

Pittsburgh's mayor has committed the city to meeting the Paris deal's reduction goals, even as the U.S. withdraws from the agreement.

But ultimately, the coal issue remains as one of her top disappointments, particularly since it contributed to her losses in Pennsylvania and Ohio.

"Did they turn against me because I served as Obama's Secretary of State and believed climate change was a real threat to our future? Or did their rage flow from a deeper tribal politics?" she wrote. "All I knew for certain was they were angry, they were loud, and they hated my guts."

Despite the campaign promises of Trump, "the hard truth is that coal isn't coming back," Clinton wrote, adding, "Politicians owe it to communities that have relied on the industry for generations to be honest about the future."

Clinton also criticized Don Blankenship, who headed Massey Energy when its Upper Big Branch disaster killed 29 workers in 2010. Shortly before he reported to prison last year, he showed up outside a Clinton campaign event in West Virginia.

"Blankenship endangered his workers, undermined their union, and polluted their rivers and streams, all while making big profits and contributing millions to Republican candidates," Clinton writes. "He should have been the least popular man in West Virginia even before he was convicted in the wake of the death of twenty-nine miners. Instead, he was welcomed by the pro-Trump protesters in Williamson. One of them told a reporter that he'd vote for Blankenship for President if he ran.

"Meanwhile, I pledged to strengthen the laws to protect workers and hold bosses like

Blankenship accountable — the fact that he received a jail sentence of one year was appalling — yet I was the one being protested."

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Trump picks Bush-era EPA official for air chief [Back](#)

By Alex Guillén | 09/07/2017 07:16 PM EDT

President Donald Trump has nominated Bill Wehrum, a George W. Bush-era EPA official who since has represented a variety of energy industry interests, to run EPA's powerful air office.

POLITICO [reported](#) in July that Wehrum was expected to receive the nod.

As head of EPA's Office of Air and Radiation, Wehrum will play a key role in undoing many of the Obama-era regulations most opposed by Republicans, including the Clean Power Plan, the 2015 ozone standard and forthcoming vehicle emissions rules. Wehrum has been critical of EPA's authority to regulate greenhouse gases, even after the Supreme Court's 2007 ruling saying EPA did have such authority.

He served as a counsel to Jeff Holmstead, Bush's first-term air chief, before replacing Holmstead in an acting capacity from 2005 to 2007. Bush nominated Wehrum to the job permanently, but Democrats blocked his nomination from proceeding in the Senate.

Wehrum spent the past decade as a partner at the Washington, D.C., law firm Hunton & Williams. His clients have included the American Petroleum Industry, American Fuel & Petrochemical Manufacturers, the Utility Air Regulatory Group, the American Chemistry Council, the National Association of Manufacturers and the American Forest & Paper Association.

WHAT'S NEXT: The Senate Environment and Public Works Committee will review Wehrum's nomination in what is certain to be a contentious process.

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Florida Sen. Bill Nelson: Republicans 'denying reality' on climate change [Back](#)

By Michael Grunwald | 09/12/2017 09:06 PM EDT

Democratic Senator Bill Nelson of Florida, after surveying the damage that Hurricane Irma

inflicted across his state, blasted Republican politicians who reject the science and minimize the importance of climate change—including his likely opponent in 2018, Governor Rick Scott.

In an interview Tuesday evening with POLITICO, Nelson said it's clear that manmade global warming made Irma worse by increasing the temperature and the height of the seas that fueled the storm. He said he didn't want to play partisan politics in the aftermath of a hurricane, but then went on to criticize Republicans in general and Scott in particular—though not by name—for opposing climate action. He noted that both the Trump administration in Washington and the Scott administration in Tallahassee have reportedly discouraged government employees from even talking about climate change.

"It's denying reality," Nelson said. "You can call it politics or whatever, but the Earth is getting hotter. This storm is another reminder of what we're going to have to deal with in the future."

Nelson, a former astronaut, launched into a detailed explanation of the science of climate change and the greenhouse effect, and how it has helped make the waters around Florida higher and warmer in recent decades. He said it would be a crucial issue in his reelection campaign, even as he avoided the words "Rick Scott."

"It's certainly going to be an important issue, and if certain people such as the one you mentioned is my opponent, there's a significant contrast in what we believe," Nelson said.

Florida is a swing state in presidential elections, but its state government and statewide offices tilt heavily Republican; Nelson has been an exception to the red wave, but a well-known, well-funded opponent like Scott would be by far his most difficult challenge to date. He clearly sees climate as a potential wedge issue in a state with a heavily coastal population and increasing vulnerability to Irma-type disasters. Scott did not discuss the issue in his frequent Irma briefings; a spokesperson for the governor, when asked about Nelson's comments, said, "Now is not the time for politics. This storm is not a partisan issue. Now is the time to focus on helping Florida rebuild."

But in the past, he has questioned climate science—or declined to affirm the scientific consensus that it's being caused by humans, often noting, "I am not a scientist"—and fossil-fuel interests have supported his campaigns. In 2015, the Miami Herald [reported](#) that Scott's administration had even banned the use of the terms "climate change," "global warming" and "sustainability" in official documents.

Nelson is not known in Washington as a leader on climate issues, but he said he's focused on them since he was Florida's insurance commissioner in the 1990s. He's fought against President Trump's proposed cuts to climate science at agencies like NOAA, NASA and EPA, and said he helped persuade the Obama administration to launch a satellite, first dreamed up by Al Gore, that takes continuous pictures of the Earth from deep space.

But Nelson didn't really argue that he deserved kudos for accepting the conclusions of the scientific community; he argued that Republicans on the other side of the issue need to explain why they think "99.5 percent of climate scientists" are wrong. Several prominent Republicans in

South Florida—including Miami-Dade County mayor Carlos Gimenez and Reps. Carlos Curbelo and Ileana Ros-Lehtinen—have made it clear they believe Washington needs to take climate seriously. Nelson pointed out that politicians don't question government scientists when they say a hurricane is coming—but when the same agencies use the same scientific instruments to measure long-term climate trends, opinions suddenly differ.

"It's ironic, isn't it?" Nelson said. "They accept the hurricane information, but deny the climate information ... Look, some people still think the Earth is flat."

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Pruitt: EPA had no emails communications with Icahn [Back](#)

By Eric Wolff | 09/12/2017 02:28 PM EDT

EPA had no email communication with billionaire and former Trump adviser Carl Icahn, EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt told Sen. [Sheldon Whitehouse](#) (D-R.I.) in a [letter](#) this week.

In the letter sent Monday and provided to POLITICO by an EPA official, Pruitt said EPA searched the inboxes of 39 high-ranking officials for messages to or from Icahn between Feb. 17 and Aug. 18, and they found no emails on any subject.

Pruitt's letter was a response to four different letters from Whitehouse and other Senate Democrats seeking information on Icahn's efforts to modify the Renewable Fuel Standard to benefit his refining company. Icahn was an unpaid adviser to Trump until last month, when he resigned his title after questions arose about his advocating for policies that would help his businesses.

Pruitt did acknowledge meeting with Icahn as part of his vetting process to join the Trump administration.

"Mr. Icahn was one of many of the president's advisors that I met with during my confirmation process," he wrote. "During that meeting, I made no assurances with regard to the point of obligation or any other substantive issue."

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DOE shrinks electricity advisory board [Back](#)

By Darius Dixon | 09/06/2017 05:34 PM EDT

Energy Secretary Rick Perry is installing new members to the Energy Department's Electricity Advisory Committee even as he whittles down the size of the board.

The 2016-17 roster for the board, which reports to the assistant secretary for electricity deliverability and energy reliability, had numbered 32 people, but including the new members, it will now total 24, since 14 members didn't have their terms renewed.

DOE says that three members had asked the agency not to renew their terms because of other commitments or because they had left the country.

Perry installed six new members: Mike Heyeck, a former AEP executive and founder of Grid Group; Paul Hudson, ex-chairman of the Texas Public Utilities Commission; Mladen Kezunovic, and engineering professor at Texas A&M; Bryan Olnick, an executive with Florida Power & Light; David Wade, CEO of the Electric Power Board of Chattanooga; and Tom Weaver, an official with AEP.

EAC members serve two-year terms, but about half of the positions are staggered so that some measure of continuity is maintained.

The board, which typically meets three times a year, is purely advisory and works on a range of power-related issues. The panel's charter states that there be "approximately 30" members.

Those not returning are: Ake Almgren, Merwin Brown, Paula Carmody, Paul Centolella, Carlos Coe, Phyllis Currie, Mark Lauby, Janice Lin, Anne Pramaggiore, Paul Roberti, Sue Tierney, Rebecca Wagner, Audrey Zibelman, and Carl Zichella.

WHAT'S NEXT: The electricity advisory committee will meet next Wednesday and Thursday in Arlington, Va.

To view online [click here](#).

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