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Leading the News

Pesticides

Bee Pesticide Ban Debate Could Arise in Next Farm Bill

Rep. Earl Blumenauer (D-Ore.) wants to include a ban on pesticides linked to declining bee health in next year's farm bill, one of several initiatives he is pushing in the legislation to reauthorize agriculture and nutrition programs.

News

Air Pollution

Germany Considering Fund to Pay for Reducing Diesel Emissions

Chancellor Angela Merkel's government is considering setting up a fund to help pay for programs to cut diesel emissions as cities consider bans and allegations of cheating by German automakers cast doubts on the survival of the technology.

Brownfields

Brownfields Funding Bills Advance to Floor on Bipartisan Effort

Brownfields bills headed to the House and Senate floors would continue funding projects that put contaminated land back into productive use.

Climate Policy

Ontario's 'Green' Building Code Could Cause Sticker Shock

Construction costs could rise in Ontario for contractors and their customers under proposals to "green" the province's building codes.

Coal Mining

House Bills Easing Coal Industry Burden Likely to Move in Fall

Two House bills intended to ease regulatory burdens on the coal industry appear to be the next pieces of environmental legislation that the Natural Resources Committee will take up following the August recess.

Congress

Russia Sanctions Bill Passes Senate With Limits on Trump

The U.S. Senate gave final approval to legislation strengthening sanctions on Russia and giving Congress the power to block President Donald Trump from lifting them, setting up a possible clash with the White House.

Contribution

Expert Pins Down Car Dealer's Superfund Liability

A car dealership's affidavit is no match for an expert opinion that waste from the business contained hazardous materials, the Southern District of Texas ruled July 26 (USOR Site PRP Grp. v. A&M Contractors, Inc., 2017 BL 259050, S.D. Tex., No.14-cv-2441, 7/26/17).

Drinking Water

Water Infrastructure Bill Draws Bipartisan House Panel Support

The House this fall is expected to take up a rare bipartisan bill involving the Environmental Protection Agency.

Electronic Commerce

Amazon-Like Marketplaces Taxed Under Pennsylvania Proposal

The Pennsylvania Senate narrowly approved a proposal that would generate \$43.5 million by requiring internet marketplaces like Amazon.com Inc., Etsy Inc., and Ebay Inc., to collect a 6 percent sales tax on third-party sales facilitated through their platforms.

Energy

Alaska Threatened by Zinke on Senator's Health Bill Vote

Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke has threatened Alaska's senators with retribution on major energy and public lands decisions because one of them voted against repealing Obamacare.

Energy

GOP Renews Fight for Edison's Light Bulb as Industry Goes LED

Congressional Republicans renewed their effort to save the traditional light bulb, passing a measure to block federal energy standards that have come to symbolize government overreach for many consumers but are largely embraced by manufacturers as the cost of the newer bulbs has plummeted.

Energy

House Passes Energy Funding, But Stopgap Bill Possible

The House passed a \$37.6 billion energy and water spending bill to fund the Energy Department, the Army Corps of Engineers and related agencies as part of a larger spending package with an uncertain future.

Energy

Pipelines Awaiting Approval Pile Up at Federal Energy Regulator

The backlog of natural gas pipelines awaiting Federal Energy Regulatory Commission approval is piling up as the agency enters its sixth month without enough members to approve \$14 billion worth of infrastructure projects, and gas suppliers and pipeline companies could face longer-term impacts.

Mergers and Acquisitions

Dow, DuPont Mull Post-Deal Split into More Than Three Companies

Dow Chemical Co. and DuPont Co. are weighing whether to carve out more separate companies following their historic \$75 billion merger than the three originally envisioned.

Michigan

Enbridge Energy Wins Oil Spill Appeal

Enbridge Energy is entitled to summary dismissal of illness claims arising from a pipeline rupture that spilled 840,000 gallons of oil, the Michigan Supreme Court ruled July 25 (Lowery v. Enbridge Energy L.P., 2017 BL 258807, Mich., No. SC:151600, 7/25/17).

Motor Vehicles

Volkswagen Gets Green Light for Emissions Fix to Diesel Cars

Volkswagen can begin fixing an additional 326,000 diesel engine cars across the U.S. that included software to cheat on nitrogen oxides emissions tests after the EPA and California signed off on its buyback and repair plan July 27.

Natural Gas

If Petronas Can't Beat U.S. LNG Suppliers, It Could Join Them

By Natalie Obiko Pearson, Ryan Collins and Kevin Orland: Malaysia's Petroliaam Nasional Bhd has pulled the plug on its \$27 billion plan to ship liquefied natural gas from Canada's west coast to Asia, losing out to U.S. suppliers who got to market first.

Oil & Gas

Natural Gas Severance Tax Bill Passes in Pennsylvania Senate

Natural gas drillers in Pennsylvania would pay a severance tax and consumers will pay higher taxes on natural gas under a proposal the Pennsylvania Senate narrowly approved today. House Bill 542, which passed the Senate 26-24, would levy a severance tax on the extraction of natural gas on top of the state's existing impact fee, which is levied on natural gas producers per well drilled. The bill would also impose a new gross receipts tax on natural gas that will be paid by consumers.

Renewable Energy

Growth-Starved Utilities Have Found a New Way of Making Money

By Chris Martin, Jim Polson and Mark Chediak: There's a new model emerging for growth-starved utilities looking to profit from America's solar and wind power boom.

Renewable Energy

N.C. Governor Signs Solar Bill, Despite Wind Moratorium

North Carolina Gov. Roy Cooper (D) signed into law a bill aimed at expanding the solar industry, despite the inclusion of a moratorium on wind power generation that he opposed.

Renewable Energy

U.S. Wind Farms in Construction or Development Rises 41 Percent

U.S. wind farm developers increased the generation capacity under construction or in advanced development by 41 percent in the past year, according to an industry report.

Water Pollution

EPA Water Rule Repeal Based on Sloppy Cost Analysis: Economists

The Trump administration was sloppy in how it estimated the economic impact of a proposal to repeal an Obama-era water pollution regulation, relying on data and assumptions that industry previously criticized, according to economists and regulatory analysts interviewed by Bloomberg BNA.

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