To: Dravis, Samantha[dravis.samantha@epa.gov]
From: POLITICO Pro Energy
Sent: Mon 6/12/2017 9:43:39 AM
Subject: Morning Energy: Pruitt briefly attends G-7 environment meeting — Final call on Bears Ears expected imminently — More cities join climate data transparency push

By Anthony Adragna | 06/12/2017 05:41 AM EDT

With help from Sara Stefanini and Anca Gurzu

CIAO! ARRIVEDERCI! EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt will not appear alongside his counterparts from the rest of the G-7 today to close out the environmental ministers meeting in Bologna, Italy, because he left after the first few hours of the confab on Sunday. "As planned, Administrator Pruitt is returning home to attend the first full cabinet meeting at the White House," EPA spokesman Lincoln Ferguson told ME. "Senior staff will remain in Bologna and continue to engage in proactive discussions with our international partners." President Donald Trump is scheduled to convene his full Cabinet for the first time today.

Stark divisions remain — and aren't likely to bridged: The G-7 environment ministers meeting comes less than two weeks after Trump announced he would pull the U.S. out of the Paris climate agreement, a decision that has strained diplomatic relations. Ministers are still expected to issue a communiqué today, but the other nations have made clear their displeasure at the U.S. leaving the Paris pact. German Environment Minister Barbara Hendricks told reporters there will be one, but that it will "differentiate the opinions " (which sounds like what G-7 leaders did in their statement last month). Italian Environment Minister Gian Luca Galletti described the differences in perspectives on Paris between the U.S. and the other six nations as "distant."

All welcome to Paris: Patricia Espinosa, head of the United Nations climate change secretariat, told the ministers she intends to open the door for regions, cities and other sub-national players to join the international talks, said Carlo Carraro, a member of the U.N.'s International Panel on Climate Change Bureau. "This is obviously important, because cities like New York and states like California that intend to pursue the same direction — of reducing emissions very ambitiously — will have a voice and will be able to sign agreements inside the international convention on climate change."

So, what'd Pruitt do while in Italia? EPA has declined to provide information on Pruitt's schedule during his taxpayer-funded trip, but he tweeted about a series of meetings in Europe. They included ones with Japan's environment minister, Britain's Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs minister Therese Coffey, Galletti, more business representatives, judicial officials in Rome and Vatican representatives. Espinosa and Hendricks posted their own photos of meetings with Pruitt. Family portrait here.

"The United States has always been a world leader when it comes to environmental stewardship, and that was demonstrated on a global stage today," Pruitt said in a statement after he left. "I believe engaging in international discussion is of the utmost importance to the United States when it comes to environmental issues."

WELCOME TO MONDAY! I'm your host Anthony Adragna, and ClearPath Foundation's Spencer Nelson was first to identify Sen. Ron Wyden as the senator whose spouse co-owns the Strand Bookstore. For today: What state has gone the longest since its last Democratic senator? Send your tips, energy gossip and comments to aadragna@politico.com, or follow us on Twitter @AnthonyAdragna, @Morning_Energy, and @POLITICOPro.

BEARS EARS ANNOUNCEMENT COMING: Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke's recommendation on the fate of 1.4 million-acre monument Bears Ears National Monument was due to the White House last weekend, and the Trump administration is expected to announce its decision shortly. Sen. Orrin Hatch, dean of the Utah congressional delegation, said in a weekend statement he was "prepared to support whatever recommendation Secretary Zinke offers to the president at the conclusion of a thorough review process." Zinke's recommendations could be to shrink or completely revoke the monument designation, moves sure to be staunchly opposed by green groups and Democrats in Congress, or he could press for lawmakers to craft a legislative solution.

ICYMI: Pro's Esther Whieldon scored an interview with former Interior chief Sally Jewell, who said the Obama administration opted to designate Bears Ears because "no credible effort was put forth by the Utah delegation to do it through congressional means in spite of repeated offers and efforts to help them do that." Republicans strongly dispute that contention, saying it was environmentalists who walked away from legislative negotiations.

CLIMATE HITS THE C SUITES: Pro's Ben Lefebvre examines growing momentum from activist investors calling on major energy companies to disclose how government efforts to limit global warming to 2 degrees Celsius would affect their businesses. Majority owners of three major energy companies — Exxon Mobil, Occidental Petroleum and Pennsylvania-based PPL Electric Utilities — backed resolutions along those lines this year and similar efforts came within percentage points of passage at Ameren, Dominion Energy, Duke Energy and DTE.

LATEST VOLLEY IN EXXON V. SCHNEIDERMAN: Exxon Mobil said in a Friday filing it was appropriate to use different carbon prices in calculations conducted for different purposes, including some taking global energy demand and prices into account and others calculating possible project investments, Pro's Ben Lefebvre reports . "ExxonMobil has not said that it relied on one set of figures for all purposes, and a reasonable investor would not draw such a conclusion from ExxonMobil's public statements," the fossil fuel giant's attorneys wrote. New York Attorney General Eric Schneiderman has argued Exxon may have defrauded investors by keeping its in-house research on climate change hidden, though the company has refused to comply with all of the his subpoena requests and accused Schneiderman of using the litigation to further his career.

HITTING THE FAST LANE: The Senate Environment and Public Works Committee plans to vote on the renomination of Nuclear Regulatory Commission Chairwoman Kristine Svinicki on June 15, separating her nomination from those of two other NRC picks, Pro's Darius Dixon reports. Lawmakers will hold a rescheduled nomination hearing for Svinicki, NRC nominees Annie Caputo and David Wright and EPA enforcement nominee Susan Bodine on Tuesday.

SCIENTIFIC INTEGRITY MEETING PUSHED: EPA will invite more industry participants to a meeting hosted by the agency's scientific integrity official after House Science Chairman Lamar Smith complained the guest list was too tilted toward environmentalists, Pro's Alex Guillén reports. EPA "recently sent invitations to additional organizations representing the regulated community and state governments," Robert Kavlock, the acting assistant administrator for research and development, wrote last week to Smith. The meeting was initially planned for Wednesday, but it has been postponed and will be rescheduled. The scientific integrity official, Francesca Grifo, has been out sick in recent weeks.

DOZEN MORE CITIES POST CLIMATE DATA: Following the lead of Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel, 12 more cities are joining efforts to post EPA climate change information that the Trump administration has removed from its website. "I will continue to work with these Mayors and all those involved in the Climate Alliance to take action at the local level, including honoring the Paris Agreement," Emanuel said in a statement. Cities joining the effort are Atlanta; Boston; Evanston, Ill.; Fayetteville, Ark.; Houston; Milwaukee; New Orleans; Philadelphia; Portland, Ore.; San Francisco; Seattle; and St. Louis.

DEFENSE'S ENERGY WIZARD TAPPED: Trump late Friday announced his intent to nominate Lucian Niemeyer to serve as assistant secretary of Defense for Energy, Installations and Environment. He was previously a long-time staffer on the Senate Armed Services Committee where he ran the military installation portfolio and conducted oversight of federal energy and environmental programs. He currently works as a senior adviser to the Roosevelt Group, according to the defense consulting firm's website.

MINOR ENERGY BILLS HIT HOUSE FLOOR: Lawmakers today vote on 10 minor energy bills in the House with most having to do with extending the deadlines for hydroelectric power projects. A couple of exceptions: H.R. 338, which aims to have DOE prioritize training for modern energy and manufacturing jobs; H.R. 1109, which would amend the Federal Power Act to set $10 million as the minimum threshold for mergers and acquisitions subject to FERC jurisdiction and H.R. 627, which aims to spread information about federal programs available to help schools fund energy efficiency efforts. Full list of bills available here.

SCHUMER PUSHES REPUBLICANS ON OVERSIGHT REQUESTS: Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer hailed Sen. Chuck Grassley's letter calling an administration policy pushing agencies to only respond to Republican oversight requests "nonsense " and urged other Republican chairmen to follow of the Iowan's lead. "We believe the administration has a responsibility to be responsive to oversight requests regardless of party," Schumer said in a statement. "We hope other Republican chairmen will follow Chairman Grassley's lead in demanding the administration withdraw this misguided memo."

POLIS LAUNCHING COLORADO GOVERNOR BID: Colorado Rep. Jared Polis will this week jump into a crowded Democratic field seeking to replace term-limited John Hickenlooper, POLITICO's Rebecca Morin reports. One of the key planks of his bid, he told the Denver Post, will be getting the state to 100 percent renewable energy by 2040.

MORE STAFFING UP: Veteran Hogan Lovells energy attorney Patrick Traylor has joined EPA as a deputy in the Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance, Pro's Alex Guillén reports, citing the agency's website and Traylor's LinkedIn profile . He's specialized in Clean Air Act issues, environmental litigation and infrastructure at Hogan Lovells, where he's worked since 1997. Previous clients include: utility Southern California Edison; Venture Global LNG, a natural gas exporter; Flint Hills Resources, a Koch subsidiary refiner; Koch Nitrogen, maker of synthetic fertilizer; and several wind companies seeking Endangered Species Act permits.

ELECTRIC BIGWIGS GATHER: The Edison Electric Institute gathers today in Boston to kick off its annual conference. Keynote speakers include NBC's Tom Brokaw and retired general Keith Alexander. Full schedule here.

QUICK HITS

— Russia, Saudis See Oil Inventories Falling After Price Drop. Bloomberg.

— 193 nations urge action to protect oceans — with US protest. Washington Post.

— Climate change seen as posing risk to coastal areas. AP.

— Even in Nebraska, which hasn't shied away from coal, other energy sources are gaining use. Omaha World-Herald.

— Drilling near W. Texas springs spurs intense scrutiny. Longview News-Journal.

— Toshiba to Cough Up $3.68 Billion to Finish Troubled U.S. Nuclear Plant. Wall Street Journal.

HAPPENING THIS WEEK

MONDAY

9:00 a.m. — "8th Annual Citizens' Climate International Conference & Lobby Day," Citizens Climate Lobby, Omni Shoreham, 2500 Calvert Street NW

9:30 a.m. — "China's Great Green Grid? Capturing Wasted Wind and Solar Power for Bluer Skies and Clearer Waters," Wilson Center, One Woodrow Wilson Plaza, 1300 Pennsylvania Ave. NW

12:00 p.m. — "A Conversation with Meg Gentle, President & CEO, Tellurian Inc.," The Atlantic Council, 1030 15th Street NW, 12th Floor

TUESDAY

9:00 a.m. — "The Methanol Policy Forum," National Press Club, 529 14th St. NW, 13th Floor

10:00 a.m. — Senate committee hearing on NRC and EPA nominations, Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, 406 Dirksen

10:00 a.m. — "Small Watershed Infrastructure: Continuing the Mission, Building upon Success," House Agriculture Committee's Conservation and Forestry Subcommittee, 1300 Longworth

WEDNESDAY

10:00 a.m. — "States' Perspectives on Energy Security Planning, Emergency Preparedness, and State Energy Programs," House Energy and Commerce Energy Subcommittee, 2123 Rayburn

10:00 a.m. — "Legislative Hearing on S. 517, the Consumer and Fuel Retailer Choice Act," Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, 406 Dirksen

10:00 a.m. — Legislative hearing on "Sportsmen's Heritage and Recreational Enhancement (SHARE) Act," House Natural Resources Federal Lands Subcommittee, 1324 Longworth

2:00 p.m. — Subcommittee legislative hearing to receive testimony on various bills, Senate Energy and Natural Resources Subcommittee on Water and Power, 366 Dirksen

2:30 p.m. — Senate Appropriations Committee hearing on the National Nuclear Security Administration, 138 Dirksen

THURSDAY

9:30 a.m. — "U.S. launch of the BP Statistical Review of World Energy 2017," Atlantic Council, 1030 15th Street NW, 12th Floor

10:00 a.m. — "Legislative Hearing on Discussion Draft of Resilient Federal Forests Act of 2017," House Natural Resources Subcommittee on Federal Lands, 1324 Longworth

10:00 a.m. — "Hearing to examine the President's budget request for the U.S. Forest Service for Fiscal Year 2018," Senate Energy and Natural Resources, 366 Dirksen

11:00 a.m. — "Environmental Protection Agency - Budget Hearing with Administrator Scott Pruitt," House Appropriations Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Subcommittee, 2007 Rayburn

12:30 p.m. — Natural Gas Roundtable with BP Group Chief Economist Spencer Dale, American Gas Association, University Club, 1135 16th Street, NW

FRIDAY

12:00 p.m. — "The Western Energy Imbalance Market," Women's Council on Energy and the Environment, FERC, 888 First Street, NE

THAT'S ALL FOR ME!

To view online:
https://www.politicopro.com/tipsheets/morning-energy/2017/06/pruitt-briefly-attends-g7-environment-meeting-023247

Stories from POLITICO Pro

Italian minister: G-7 'distant' on climate change Back

By Sara Stefanini | 06/11/2017 11:06 AM EDT

BOLOGNA, Italy — G-7 ministers are in "complete agreement" on all the environmental issues they're discussing today and Monday — except for climate change, Italian Environment Minister Gian Luca Galletti told reporters today.

The two-day G-7 environment ministers gathering comes 10 days after President Donald Trump confirmed that he would withdraw the U.S. from the Paris climate agreement.

But even before his announcement, American resistance to tackling climate change emerged as a sticking point at the G-7 leaders' summit last month and the G-7 energy meeting in April, where the ministers failed to agree on a communiqué.

"The positions, especially on Paris, are distant positions," said Galletti, host of the environment meeting.

"Here in Bologna we're doing very important work, we're mending. We'll only know at the end what result it will have, but we have already obtained a result because we continue to talk, to identify solutions and common objectives," he added. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt is in Bologna representing the U.S. but is leaving this afternoon.

Galletti said his early departure was always planned because of a meeting with Trump.

"The administrator has had bilateral meetings with a number of our G-7 partners discussing the importance of engagement and environmental issues including conservation, food waste, climate, marine litter and resource efficiency," Lincoln Ferguson, Pruitt's spokesman, told POLITICO by email.

Patricia Espinosa, head of the United Nations' climate change secretariat, told reporters that Pruitt said the U.S. wants to continue to make efforts to combat climate change and engage with the secretariat.

This article first appeared on POLITICO.EU on June 11, 2017.

To view online click here.

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Zinke's Bears Ears plan due this weekend Back

By Esther Whieldon | 06/09/2017 03:28 PM EDT

Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke is slated to send the White House his recommendations this weekend on whether to roll back the Bears Ears National Monument in Utah that was established in the waning days of the Obama administration.

The 1.4 million-acre monument was among the final conservation acts under former President Barack Obama, who added nearly 760,000 square miles to the nation's protected lands during his two terms, angering Republicans who accused him of overriding local opposition and abusing the Antiquities Act to put vast acreage off limits for commercial activity, including mining, oil and gas development.

Before the monument designation, oIl and gas producer EOG Resources had planned to drill new exploratory wells there as part of its operations in the lucrative Uinta Basin, a move that drew opposition from local groups that complained the work would spoil an important gateway to the Bears Ears site.

Zinke, who traveled to Bears Ears and the Grand Staircase-Escalante monuments last month, could recommend that President Donald Trump shrink or completely revoke the monument designation — moves that environmental groups and Democrats in Congress have vowed to fight — or he could press for lawmakers to come up with a legislative solution, a path that yielded no success in the past.

According to Zinke's predecessor, former Secretary Sally Jewell, the administration had held off establishing the Bears Ears Monument until it failed to reach a deal to address its concerns through the Utah Public Lands Initiative legislation proposed by Utah Republicans Rob Bishop and Jason Chaffetz.

"The Bears Ears Monument declaration was done in December because no credible effort was put forth by the Utah delegation to do it through congressional means in spite of repeated offers and efforts to help them do that," Jewell told POLITICO.

Jewell said her agency had been in discussions with Utah lawmakers on legislation that could pass both chambers, and that Obama had delayed creating the monument hoping for a compromise that would "recognize the areas that were very important for conservation and preservation" as well as those with "high development potential largely for oil, gas and mining."

But the legislation that emerged, she contended, did not include compromise language the administration hoped would garner bipartisan support in Congress. Instead, she said, Bishop's legislation had changed the definition of wilderness, transferred firefighting efforts over to the

state and allowed motorized equipment in wilderness areas for tree clearing.

Bishop denies that his legislation surprised anyone, saying it was the environmental community that "bailed on us" early in 2016. Bishop's committee passed the Public Lands Initiative in September, but the measure never made it to a floor vote.

Obama's move to create the monument drew an angry reaction from the Utah delegation, including Chaffetz, who called Bears Ears a "midnight monument" that disregarded economic development and multiple land use provisions that had been in a bill.

Sen. Orrin Hatch (R-Utah) also disputed Jewell's contention, saying in an emailed statement that it was the previous administration that did not work in good faith with the Utah delegation and ultimately "chose to run down the clock."

To view online click here.

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As Trump exits Paris accord, investors bring climate change into boardrooms Back

By Ben Lefebvre | 06/09/2017 03:33 PM EDT

As President Donald Trump reduces the pressure on businesses to deal with climate change, activist investors are flooding company shareholder meetings to apply it themselves.

The grassroots campaign has picked up significant momentum, even as it has been overshadowed by Trump's decision to abandon the Paris climate accord and his efforts to dismantle federal policies to limit heat-trapping emissions. This year, for the first time, majority owners of three major energy companies endorsed resolutions calling for them to disclose how government efforts to limit global warming to 2 degrees Celsius would affect their businesses.

Exxon Mobil shareholders endorsed one such resolution just the day before Trump's Rose Garden announcement that he would pull the U.S. out of the global climate agreement because, he said, it would harm manufacturing. Similar resolutions were adopted by investors in Occidental Petroleum and Pennsylvania-based PPL Electric Utilities. And at utilities Ameren, Dominion Energy, Duke Energy and DTE, climate-focused shareholder resolutions came within a few percentage points of succeeding.

The resolutions sprung from efforts among dozens of institutional investors — including the New York Comptroller, the California Public Employees' Retirement System and the Church of England — who teamed up with activist groups including Ceres and As You Sow. This year they targeted 15 publicly traded energy companies with shareholder resolutions calling for companies to disclose how changes in government climate policies could change their businesses.

"There's a growing realization of this systemic risk that climate change poses to investors," said

Adam Matthews, head of engagement for the Church of England's commissioners and pension boards, which owns stock in Exxon Mobil as part of an overall $10 billion in holdings. "You've got a lot of dialogue between asset owners and major funds, and there's a clearer realization of the importance of addressing climate change. It's a shame what happened in the terms of the U.S. and the position of Donald Trump withdrawing from Paris, but the message to investors is this is longer-term than any one President. The train has left the station."

To be sure, the resolutions are non-binding, but corporate boards typically respond to the wishes expressed by shareholders.

Investors worried that a company isn't doing enough to deal with falling demand for gasoline, for example, may sell their shares to invest in a competitor. Or green-minded investors may support a hostile takeover of the company by activist investors who promise to take climate change more seriously.

Part of what helped the climate resolutions this year was growing support from cool-eyed capitalists, alongside the more liberal-minded shareholders who have championed them in the past. That was the case this year with Occidental Petroleum and investment firm Blackrock, one of its major shareholders.

Blackrock, which manages $5.4 trillion in its overall portfolio, decided in 2015 that climate change could pose a significant risk to some of the companies it owns. Still, the firm sided with Occidental's management last year to help stave off a climate related resolution to give the oil company more time to address the issue on its own.

By the time this year's shareholder meeting came around, Blackrock decided to endorse activist investors' effort to get the company to do more. A resolution urging Occidental to publish annual assessments of how government climate change policies could risks its business passed with support from 67 percent of voting shareholders.

"Our patience is not infinite — when we do not see progress despite ongoing engagement, or companies are insufficiently responsive to our efforts to protect the long-term economic interests of our clients, we will not hesitate to exercise our right to vote against management recommendations," Blackrock said in a letter to clients endorsing the resolution.

Blackrock's support demonstrated the growing economic appeal of climate resolutions that activist shareholders have been organizing around for years.

The win at Exxon only occurred after the Church of England sought potential allies via Ceres, a Boston-based nonprofit that helps connect investors interested in various social causes. The Church eventually made contact with New York State Comptroller, which holds Exxon shares through its retirement fund.

Exxon CEO Darren Woods said before the company's annual shareholder meeting that the company supports the Paris provisions and would factor government climate policies into its business plan. But investors still wanted to ensure the company would keep that promise, New

York State Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli said.

"As investors, we want to be sure that companies like Exxon walk the walk when it comes to climate risk, and that's where our shareholder resolutions can be very effective," DiNapoli told POLITICO. "No company wants to be in a fight with a majority of its shareholders."

Exxon's board will reconsider the provision to disclose how climate policies would impact is business, Woods said after the vote, in which 62 percent of voting shareholders endorsed the climate resolution. The Church of England, whose other holdings include BP and Shell, will continue to focus on bringing climate-related risk disclosure resolutions up. But will also start looking at a potential next step — forcing companies to publicize how climate change is affecting their financial performance, Matthews said.

In many cases, investors and nonprofits are trying to convince energy executives to incorporate more climate-related disclosures outside the threat of resolutions.

As You Sow, a nonprofit that lobbies companies on the behalf of shareholders, filed a climate-related resolution with Anadarko Petroleum that would have gone to shareholders this year. It withdrew the resolution after getting a meeting with Anadarko's CEO and other executives at the company's headquarters outside Houston, according to representatives of both entities.

"We wanted to talk and work together to see if there way to move forward with carbon reporting," said Danielle Fugere, As You Sow's chief counsel. "We had a good discussion, and we will have another meeting or two."

Despite the few outright wins at shareholder meetings this year, the relatively strong showing has convinced some that the movement is gaining momentum. Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse (D-R.I.), who on the floor of the senate last week called American corporations "AWOL in the policies of climate change," said he is encouraged by the progress.

"For the first time, after hundreds and hundreds of these resolutions have gone to failure at the hands of company management, shareholders are starting to win," Whitehouse told POLITICO. "Part of what that's about is very big and very smart investors coming to the realization that they are not getting adequate information when it comes to fossil fuel liability. The power of a Blackrock, Goldman Sachs or CalPERS is engaged in a new and different way."

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Exxon says carbon cost differences did not mislead investors Back

By Ben Lefebvre | 06/09/2017 02:26 PM EDT

Exxon Mobil lawyers swung back at New York Attorney General Eric Schneiderman's

allegations that the oil giant used a separate carbon price that it did not disclose to investors, saying the practice did not mislead investors.

The company's filing today in the New York state Supreme Court is the latest round in the legal battle between Exxon and Schneiderman. The New York attorney general filed a suit against the oil giant alleging that it may have defrauded investors by keeping its in-house research on climate change hidden.

Exxon for its part has refused to comply with all of the attorney general's subpoena requests, accusing Schneiderman of using the case to further his career.

Exxon said it used different numbers as part of different calculations, including some taking global energy demand and prices into account and others calculating possible project investments. That meant it was appropriate to use various numbers, not just those included in its public filings, the company argued.

"Considering the different purposes of those two exercises, it is unsurprising that different figures would be used," Exxon's attorneys wrote in the filing. "ExxonMobil has not said that it relied on one set of figures for all purposes, and a reasonable investor would not draw such a conclusion from ExxonMobil's public statements."

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EPW to vote on Svinicki June 15 Back

By Darius Dixon | 06/09/2017 05:11 PM EDT

The Senate Environment and Public Works Committee intends to vote on the renomination of Nuclear Regulatory Commission Chairwoman Kristine Svinicki on June 15, a panel spokesman told POLITICO today.

Svinicki, a Republican whose term expires June 30, will move forward before the panel votes on fellow NRC nominees Annie Caputo and David Wright, said Mike Danylak, a spokesman for Environment and Public Works Chairman John Barrasso.

The committee will vote on the appointments of Caputo, Wright and EPA enforcement nominee Susan Bodine later in the month, but a June 13 hearing will still consider all four nominees.

Earlier this week, Sen. Tom Carper, Environment and Public Works' top Democrat, told reporters that he supports Svinicki's renomination and asked Barrasso that she get confirmed while the panel reviews the other two Republican nominees and packages them with a renomination of NRC Commissioner Jeff Baran, a Democrat whose term runs out next summer.

WHAT'S NEXT: The Senate Environment and Public Works Committee has scheduled a nomination hearing to review Bodine and all three GOP NRC nominees on June 13.

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EPA reschedules science meeting to add industry voices after Smith cries foul Back

By Alex Guillén | 06/09/2017 03:43 PM EDT

EPA has postponed an upcoming meeting hosted by the agency's scientific integrity official and invited more industry officials and state representatives, following complaints from a senior Republican lawmaker.

The meeting is an annual event at which the scientific integrity official, Francesca Grifo, discusses her work and the agency's scientific integrity policy. House Science Chairman Lamar Smith last month flagged the meeting after discovering the guest list primarily consisted of environmentalists, science organizations, watchdog groups, certain media representatives and think tanks, but almost no one from regulated industries.

EPA "agrees that invitees to the EPA Scientific Integrity Stakeholder meeting should include a balanced representation of those organizations having an interest in scientific integrity at the EPA," Robert Kavlock, the acting assistant administrator for research and development, wrote this week to Smith.

Previous meetings included more industry attendees, and EPA "recently sent invitations to additional organizations representing the regulated community and state governments."

A separate email to invitees seen by POLITICO said the meeting would be rescheduled, but did not specify a timeline.

Grifo, a career official who was hired from the Union of Concerned Scientists in 2013, rose to prominence this spring when she was asked to investigate the Sierra Club's complaint that Administrator Scott Pruitt violated EPA's scientific integrity policy by saying on television that carbon dioxide is not a primary driver of climate change.

Earlier this week, the free-market group Cause of Action Institute filed a Freedom of Information request it says is meant to investigate alleged politicization in Grifo's office.

WHAT'S NEXT: EPA will invite more industry and state representatives and reschedule the meeting for a future date.

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Chicago mayor Emanuel posts EPA's deleted climate change page Back

By Edward-Isaac Dovere | 05/06/2017 10:42 AM EDT

Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel's response to the Trump administration pulling down its website detailing information about climate change: putting up his own.

The new section of the City of Chicago's website, launched this weekend, pulls data from the archived Environmental Protection Agency page, noting, "while this information may not be readily available on the agency's webpage right now, here in Chicago we know climate change is real and we will continue to take action to fight it." Emanuel is promising to build the site out more in the coming weeks, using city resources.

"The Trump administration can attempt to erase decades of work from scientists and federal employees on the reality of climate change, but burying your head in the sand doesn't erase the problem," Emanuel said.

Through both Republican and Democratic administrations in the past two decades, the EPA accepted and promoted climate change data. That changed under President Donald Trump, who's expressed doubts about the science and already eliminated regulations put in place by President Barack Obama, and EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt, who has repeatedly questioned global warming and fought environmental protections from the government he argues unfairly target businesses.

Last week, the EPA scrapped the climate-change website.

"We are currently updating our website to reflect EPA's priorities under the leadership of President Trump and Administrator Pruitt," a message on the "page is being updated" EPA site has read since.

Emanuel said he wants to see other cities and universities joining in preserving the data that the federal government is removing to ensure it stays public.

Emanuel, in office in 2011 after serving as Obama's first chief of staff, has a local environmental record reducing carbon emissions and waste that he likes to tout.
The new Chicago website has information about the science of climate change and its effects on the weather, human impact that has accelerated the problem and steps the federal government had been taking to reduce it.

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Grassley rips Trump administration for blowing off certain oversight requests Back

By Burgess Everett | 06/09/2017 11:25 AM EDT

The Trump administration's policy of ignoring the oversight requests of Democrats and rank-and-file members has earned it a powerful enemy: Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Chuck Grassley.

In a letter to President Donald Trump, the veteran Iowa Republican senator urged Trump to reverse a policy instituted by the White House and the Department of Justice's Office of Legal Counsel to answer oversight requests only from committee chairmen, all of whom are Republicans because of GOP control of Congress. Though Grassley said that the Obama administration did sometimes ignore him, he said the formalization of a policy of ignoring the minority party "doesn't drain the swamp, Mr. President. It floods the swamp."

"I respectfully request that the White House rescind this OLC opinion and any policy of ignoring oversight request from non-Chairmen. It harms not just the members who happen to be in the minority party at the moment, but also, members in the majority party who are not currently chairmen. It obstructs what ought to be the natural flow of information between agencies and the committees, which frustrates the constitutional function of legislating," Grassley wrote.

He was not near done. In the seven-page letter to the president, Grassley calls the administration's opinion "nonsense" and argues that the president is being "ill-served and ill-advised" by his staff.

"To so fundamentally misunderstand and misstate such a simple fact exposes its shocking lack of professionalism and objectivity. Indeed, OLC appears to have utterly failed to live up to its own standards," Grassley added.

The Justice Department declined to comment to Grassley's letter. The White House did not immediately respond.

Fearing the weaponization of oversight requests by Democrats amid a deepening investigation into the administration's ties to Russia, White House officials instructed government agencies not to respond to oversight requests from anyone other than chairmen last month. Also in May, OLC wrote a guidance memo that formally restricted the flow of information to Democrats.

"Individual members of Congress, including ranking minority members, do not have the authority to conduct oversight in the absence of a specific delegation by a full house, committee, or subcommittee," OLC wrote in the memo.

There have been some exceptions to this policy on subjects like national security and at the Treasury Department, according to Democratic and Republican Hill staffers. But Democrats released dozens of letters on Thursday that they said have gone substantively unanswered by the Trump administration.

Democrats are outraged at the moves by the Trump White House to squash their requests, which range from overtly partisan letters asking for information that would likely damage the president to parochial issues that will never grab headlines. And now, some Republicans are, too.

"Members of Congress simply do not treat executive branch officials with such contempt and they do not deserve such treatment in return," Grassley wrote. "Unlike virtually all executive branch officials, Members are elected to constitutional positions. Instead, the executive branch should work to cooperate in good faith with all congressional requests to the fullest extent possible."

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Polis to run for Colorado governor Back

By Rebecca Morin | 06/11/2017 01:41 PM EDT

Colorado Rep. Jared Polis will announce his bid for Colorado governor this week, according to an interview.

"This is a campaign of big, bold ideas, and I'm trying to make them happen," Polis told The Denver Post on Sunday. "We want a Colorado that works for everybody."

Polis, a Democrat, is jumping into a crowded field. Four other Democrats — Rep. Ed Perlmutter, former state Sen. Mike Johnston, former state Treasurer Cary Kennedy and businessman Noel Ginsburg — are also vying for the position in next year's election.

A number of Republicans are also running in the race, including Mitt Romney's nephew Doug Robinson; George Brauchler, the prosecutor in the Aurora theater shooting case; and former state legislator Victor Mitchell.

Democrat John Hickenlooper, the current governor, is ineligible to seek another term.

Polis, who would be Colorado's first openly gay governor if elected, told the Post his platform would focus on getting the state to 100 percent renewable energy by 2040, providing free access to full-day preschool or kindergarten for those 3 and older, and encouraging companies in Colorado to provide stock options to employees.

Polis tweeted Sunday that he would finish his term in the House.

"I currently plan to serve out my term to help the #resistance and fight Trump's radical agenda," he wrote.

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EPA hires energy attorney for enforcement office Back

By Alex Guillén | 06/09/2017 04:50 PM EDT

EPA has hired veteran Hogan Lovells energy attorney Patrick Traylor as a deputy in the Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance, according to the agency's website and his LinkedIn profile.

Traylor has been an attorney at Hogan Lovells since 1997 and specialized in Clean Air Act issues, environmental litigation and infrastructure.

According to his law firm biography, Traylor's clients included the utility Southern California Edison; Venture Global LNG, a natural gas exporter; Flint Hills Resources, a Koch subsidiary refiner; Koch Nitrogen, maker of synthetic fertilizer; and several wind companies seeking Endangered Species Act permits. The bio also says he "helped secure an 'against all odds' series of permits authorizing the expansion of a coal mine on the Navajo Nation for BHP Billiton."

Other clients included TransCanada, Dominion Energy, AES Corp., NRG Energy and the Anschutz Corporation, according to the Energy Bar Association.

Traylor earned his law degree from the South Texas College of Law in 1994 and received an advanced degree in environmental law from George Washington University in 1998.

President Donald Trump's nominee to run the enforcement office, Senate Environment and Public Works Committee staffer Susan Bodine, is slated to have a confirmation hearing next week.

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