

To: CabinetAffairs@who.eop.gov[CabinetAffairs@who.eop.gov]
From: Mashburn, Lori
Sent: 2017-10-25T13:09:53-04:00
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DAILY UPDATE FOR CABINET AFFAIRS 10-25-17.docx

**DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR DAILY UPDATE FOR CABINET AFFAIRS –
10/25/17**

Lori Mashburn, White House Liaison
Natalie Davis, Special Assistant to the Secretary

STATUS OF THE SECRETARY

TODAY:

- Meeting with USAID Administrator
- Remarks to Weyrich Lunch
- Meeting with Representative Cramer (ND)
 - o Red River Valley Water Supply Project
- Meeting with Education Secretary Betsy DeVos

THIS WEEK:

10/26 DC Meeting with Danish Minister for Energy, Utilities, and Climate, Mr. Lars Christian

- American Heroes Roundtable
- Meeting with Tom Hutchison

10/27 DC Call with Governor Mary Fallin (OK)

- Meeting with the President

STATUS OF THE DEPUTY SECRETARY

TODAY: The Deputy Secretary is in DC conducting internal meetings

WH COMMS REPORT (submitted Tuesday, 10/24)

Press Inquiries:

- Small inquiries and logistical inquiries.

- **Multiple Inquires** (NBC-Gabe Gutierrez, NYT- Deborah Acosta, Reuters-Emily Flitter)—REQUEST--** Would someone from Secretary Zinke's office call me to discuss Whitefish Energy. Here are my questions: 1) Did Sec. Zinke play any role in securing the contract for Whitefish Energy to work in Puerto Rico? 2) Does Sec. Zinke know the company's chief executive, Andy Techmanski? 3) The Washington Post reported that one of Sec. Zinke's sons once worked a summer job at one of the company's construction sites. Is that correct? Also, confirming this statement provided to the Post: "The Secretary always politely listens when citizens and the small business community approach him with concerns and ideas. Neither the Secretary nor anyone in his office have taken any meetings or action on behalf of this company."**—RESPONSE--** On background, Neither the Secretary nor anyone in his office have taken any meetings or action on behalf of this company. The Zinkes and the Techmanskis know each other because they both live in a small town (population 6,000) where everyone knows everyone and his son joined a friend who worked a summer job at one of their construction sites.
- CNN: (Rene Marsh)—REQUEST 1--** CNN is looking for information/clarity on Secretary Zinke and his familiarity with Andrew Techmanski, the CEO of Whitefish Energy. Have the two worked together before? In what capacity? How Does the Secretary know Techmanski? Has Techmanski or any of his business partners worked with Zinke on any projects either as Secretary or when Zinke was a member of congress? Did Zinke recommend Whitefish Energy for the contract to help restore Puerto Rico? Did Zinke have any influence or involvement either directly or indirectly with Whitefish securing the contract in Puerto Rico? Has this company or any of its leadership, including the CEO, had any political connections to Zinke or his wife during their political careers. Donations directly or indirectly? What was/is the Secretary's involvement in the overall recovery process for Puerto Rico?**—RESPONSE 1--** On background, Neither the Secretary nor anyone in his office have taken any meetings or action on behalf of this company. The Zinkes and the Techmanskis know each other because they both live in a small town (population 6,000) where everyone knows everyone and his son joined a friend who worked a summer job at one of their construction sites. **REQUEST 2—** Did the Secretary work with or communicate with Techmanskis in the aftermath of the hurricane? Were they in communication after the hurricane discussing any aspect of the recovery effort or anything else?**—RESPONSE 2--** Background: No. The gentleman sent an email but there was not action taken on it (no reply, forward, discussion, etc). Not for a statement, just for your context - The secretary's phone number and email address have been published multiple times over the years so he gets a lot of emails/cold calls/letters.**—REQUEST 3--** One additional question beyond the content of the email sent from Techmanski to Zinke. I understand in 2016, then-Congressman Rep. Zinke's office reached out to local officials in Montana about a Whitefish Energy project. Can you the Secretary provide you with insight on why he intervened? What sort of assistance did Zinke's office provide to Whitefish?**—RESPONSE 3--** On background: That is not accurate. No intervention was taken by Zinke or his office. I'm understand a local field

representative in the Congressional office was contacted by an employee of the business, the field rep listened politely took no action and referred him to the Senators' offices.

• **E&E News: (Pamela King)—REQUEST--** I was wondering if Interior has any initial thoughts to share on the HOARD Act introduced today by Rep.

Lowenthal: https://www.eenews.net/assets/2017/10/24/document_gw_03.pdf.

The bill would require annual reports to Congress on APD data.—**RESPONSE--**

The Department has not taken an official position on the bill at this time. FYI - So far this year the BLM has decreased their processing time for APDs by an average of 46 days.

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• **Politico:** [Zinke funneled millions to questionable PACs](#)

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Top Issues and Accomplishments

• Interior continues to support all Hurricane Harvey, Hurricane Irma, Hurricane Maria, and Hurricane Nate efforts. All bureaus are executing their emergency plans and assisting in Hurricane relief.

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Timing: October 25, 2017

Contact: Amanda Kaster, Policy Adviser, Congressional Affairs

UPCOMING HNRC HEARING: The House Natural Resources Indian, Insular, and Alaska Native Affairs Subcommittee is set to host a legislative hearing on Rep. Don Young's H.R. 215, American Indian Empowerment Act of 2017. Witness is John Tahsuda, Acting Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs.

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POLITICAL APPOINTEE UPDATE (updated)

DOI politicals on board = 61

3 PAS confirmed as of 9/18.

5 nominated awaiting confirmation:

- Pending Senate floor vote: Susan Combs, Assistant Secretary Policy Management and Budget.
- Pending Senate floor vote: Brenda Berman, Commissioner, Bureau of Reclamation.
- Pending Senate floor vote: Joe Balash, Assistant Secretary, Land and Minerals
- Pending Senate floor vote: Ryan Douglas Nelson, Solicitor
- Pending Hearing: Tara Sweeney, Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs

Overall:

- Schedule C: 34 of 68 onboard; 2 starting; 6 in process
- NC-SES: 24 of 44 onboard; 4 starting; 1 in process
- PAS: 3 Confirmed; 5 Announced; 14 of 17 Submitted to PPO

SECRETARY SPEAKING INVITATIONS

Accepted:

Open (date TBC)- Americans for Tax Reform (DC)

Open (date TBC)- Detroit Economic Club

Event Postponed by organizers due to fire - 10/21 DEPA BOD Meeting (CA)

Outstanding Invitations in Process:

10/28 Remarks at Washington International Horse Show (DC)

10/29 Friends of Theodore Roosevelt Island (DC)

11/7-9 National Ranger Council Annual Meeting (Gettysburg, PA)

11/9 National WWI Memorial at Pershing Park (DC)

11/13 Montana Farm Bureau Federation Annual Meeting (Billings, MT)

11/29 Association of California Water Agencies 2017 Fall Conference and Exhibition (Anaheim, CA)

12/5-7 America Outdoors Association's 29th Annual Marketing and Management Conference for Outfitters and Adventure Resorts (Reno, NV)

12/6 American Exploration and Mining Association Annual Meeting (Reno, NV)

12/8 - Valley Industry and Commerce Association Annual Meeting (Los Angeles, CA)

Declining

10/26 - Montana Chamber Annual Meeting (Great Falls, MT)

10/28 Cattle Producers of Washington Annual Meeting (Airway Heights, WA)

10/30-11/3 International Mining and Resources Conference (Melbourne, Australia)

10/31 - George B. Hartzog, Jr. Awards and Speaker Program Clemson University (SC)

11/1 - 2017 SHIFT (Shaping How we Invest For Tomorrow) Festival (Jackson Hole, WY)

11/4 Governor Reynolds Annual Pheasant Hunt

11/8 WY Governor Annual Business Forum (Cheyenne, WY)

11/9 - America First Energy Conference hosted by Heartland Institute (Houston, TX)

11/9 - Bass Fishing Hall of Fame Induction Dinner at the Wonders of Wildlife (Springfield, MO)

11/14 George Rogers Clark National Historical Park Quarter Launch (Vincennes, Indiana)

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT (new)

Port Aransas, Texas Fatal Barge Fire and Oil Spill:

The Barge remains off the Port Aransas Channel along with two support vessels. High volume foam is being placed in the void space to keep lower explosive limits (LEL) at acceptable levels until lightering and transit operations are complete. The Barge has released no additional product and no floating oil was observed during the afternoon overflight. Approximately 2,146 barrels (bbls) of oily water mixture were skimmed from the water and 1,900 feet of containment and deflection boom remain in place within the Port. Wildlife teams continue to conduct evaluations in the field.

NPS reports a slight amount of oil has been identified on the beaches within the first 10 miles of the Padre Island National Seashore. The park has observed a small number of oiled birds and a northeastern wind is keeping the bulk of the oil off shore at this time; however, the situation could change when the wind shifts to a normal southeastern direction. The oil is described as a heavy fuel oil that has a long residence time in the environment. Yesterday, one of the two individuals killed in the explosion washed ashore near mile marker 6 in the park and was discovered by U.S. Border Patrol Agents. The body was removed, and given the amount of debris in the area, the second individual is likely to come ashore on NPS lands as well. The USCG is the lead for the investigation of the incident overall.

Hurricane Response/Recovery:

The Department of Homeland Security reports that, in Puerto Rico, power has been restored to approximately 24 (+6)-percent of customers and the expectation is that 95-percent of Puerto Rico will be restored by December 15. Potable water has been restored to more than 73 (+1)-percent of clients served by the Puerto Rico Aqueduct and Sewer Authority. Telecommunications officials estimate 87 (+2)-percent of the population lives in areas where wireless voice and text service has been restored.

The USNS Robert E. Peary is expected to arrive today to bring the 3rd Expeditionary Sustainment Command, 800 pallets of water, and MREs. In the U.S. Virgin Islands, grid power has been restored for 30 (+1)-percent of the population on St. Thomas, 2.9 (+1.3)-percent on St. Croix, and efforts on St. John are now expected to begin in two to three weeks. The Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority estimates 90-percent of the power will be restored by November 23. In total, there are over 20,000 federal personnel that are directly supporting recovery operations in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Wildland Fire National Preparedness Level:

As of 12:00 p.m. EDT, October 23, the National Preparedness Level (PL) was decreased to Level 2. Large wildland fire and attack activity has decreased nationally and demobilization is occurring on the majority of large fires. Competition for resources has significantly decreased, allowing this reduction in level to occur.

OUTSIDE MEDIA OF INTEREST (new)

Democrats Call For Investigation Of \$300 Million Contract For Firm With Ties To Zinke.

There was significant coverage of Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke's ties to a small company from his hometown that was awarded a major contract to help restore power to Puerto Rico's power grid. [ABC World News Tonight](#) (10/24, story 7, 2:10, Muir) reported a "Montana company [was] given the contract to get the power back on" in Puerto Rico "with just two workers when it landed that contract." ABC (Thomas) added, "Whitefish Energy, a private Montana company with just two full-time employees, awarded a \$300 million contract by the Puerto Rico Electric Power Authority. The company showcasing its work on Twitter," but "some Democrats are already calling for an investigation into that contract" to Whitefish Energy a firm from the "hometown of Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke."

Interior Proposes Raising Fees At Popular National Parks.

[The Hill](#) (10/24, Henry) reports the Interior Department is considering higher peak-season fees at 17 of its most popular national parks "during their busiest five-month periods." The agency said the increased fees would "help ensure that they are protected and preserved in perpetuity and that visitors enjoy a world-class experience that mirrors the amazing destinations they are visiting." In a statement, Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke said, "The infrastructure of our national parks is aging and in need of renovation and restoration." Zinke added, "We need to have the vision to look at the future of our parks and take action in order to ensure that our grandkids' grandkids will have the same if not better experience than we have today. Shoring up our parks' aging infrastructure will do that." President Trump proposed trimming the National Park Service's budget by 12.9 percent this year, "despite concerns from officials with the department and in Congress about the state of the Park Service's infrastructure."

Trump's 'Energy Independence' Order: Where Do Things Stand?

E&E Publishing (10/24) reports that this month, the Trump administration “hit two milestones in their wide-ranging examination of Obama-era rules” that could be considered burdensome to U.S. energy producers. EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt “formally proposed a repeal of the Clean Power Plan” just days after the Bureau of Land Management “unveiled its plan to postpone key parts of a rule the Obama administration introduced to limit venting, flaring and leakage of natural gas from energy operations on public and tribal lands.” President Trump is also credited with disbanding “an interagency working group that focused on the social cost of carbon and related tools that put a dollar amount on the impacts of carbon, nitrous oxide and methane.”

Can Solar Save A Huge Coal Plant? Zinke's Thinking About It.

E&E Publishing (10/24, Patterson, Storrow) reports Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke met with South African billionaire Dr. Patrick Soon-Shiong and two members of his company, NantWorks, to discuss the possibility of using high-powered solar technology at the Navajo Generation Station, one of America's largest coal plants, “as the Trump administration searches for a way to keep the facility from closing.” The northeast Arizona facility is “scheduled to retire in 2019 after four utilities with a stake in the facility voted to close it earlier this year.” The Interior Department is a minor owner in the plant, which the Trump Administration opposes shuttering. According to the article, Zinke's meeting “appeared to catch some of the administration's allies off guard.” For example, the “economies of the Navajo and Hopi tribes are heavily reliant on the coal industry, and tribal leaders have loudly opposed plans to close NGS.” In an email, Interior spokeswoman Heather Swift wrote that the department is interested “in an economic pathway where NGS operates post-2019.”

Developers Plan Wind Farms Off Jersey as Christie Era Ends.

Bloomberg News (10/24, Ryan) reports, “after years of being sidelined by New Jersey Governor Chris Christie, wind farm developers are dusting off plans for massive offshore turbines that may someday generate more electricity than a nuclear reactor.” As governor, Christie “effectively blocked wind farms off his state's coast by never fully implementing a program that would subsidize the projects.” Bloomberg writes that Christie's departure “presents a potentially rich market for offshore wind,” with low power prices and a geographical position “midway between offshore wind development sites in New England and the Southeast, making the state a potential hub for ferrying supplies to build projects in other states.” The article quotes US Wind Director of Project Development Paul Rich, “New Jersey has all the classic elements for offshore wind to work. The time is right, and the market is ripe.”

Celebrity Ambassadors Put Lesser-Known U.S. National Parks In The Limelight.

The Washington Post (10/23, Sachs) reports that for its 101th birthday, the National Parks Service and National Park Foundation “launched Parks 101, an ongoing online

series that will introduce the masses to lesser-known destinations within the 417-site system.” The goal of the series is to encourage visitors to start attending its minor locations. “The places that are iconic are well worth visiting,” said Will Shafroth, president and chief executive of the foundation, “but we wanted to spark interest in the places that hardly anyone knows about.” He explained the series includes videos and social media posts by celebrity ambassadors and focuses on destinations that offer a diversity of experiences.

FEDERAL REGISTER LISTINGS:

Notices submitted to the Federal Register for Monday, October 23rd:

REG0007542 BIA Agency Information Collection Activities; Indian Child Welfare Quarterly and Annual Report -- This Notice, under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, announces that the BIA will ask the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to renew its approval of the collection of information for the Indian Child Welfare Quarterly and Annual Report. The BIA is requesting public comments on the renewal for 60 days. Notice 10/24/2017

REG0007543 BIA Agency Information Collection Activities; Tribal Probate Codes -- This Notice, under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, announces that the BIA will ask the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to renew its approval of the collection of information pertaining to Tribal Probate Codes. The BIA is requesting public comments on the renewal for 60 days. Notice 10/24/2017

REG0007557 BIA Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community's Amendment to the Alcoholic Beverage Control Ordinance -- This Notice publishes an amendment to the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community's Alcoholic Beverage Control Ordinance. The amendment will be applicable 30 days after publication of this Notice in the Federal Register. Notice 10/24/2017

REG0007539 BLM Notice of Public Meeting: Alaska Resource Advisory Council -- The Alaska Resource Advisory Council is scheduled to meet on November 16-17, 2017. Notice must be approved NLT October 26, 2017 in order to meet FACA 15-day advance notice of public meeting requirement. Notice 10/24/2017

Lori K. Mashburn
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Department of the Interior
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Timing: October 25, 2017

Contact: Amanda Kaster, Policy Adviser, Congressional Affairs

UPCOMING HNRC HEARING: The House Natural Resources Indian, Insular, and Alaska Native Affairs Subcommittee is set to host a legislative hearing on Rep. Don Young's H.R. 215, American Indian Empowerment Act of 2017. Witness is John Tahsuda, Acting Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs.

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POLITICAL APPOINTEE UPDATE (updated)

DOI politicals on board = 61

3 PAS confirmed as of 9/18.

5 nominated awaiting confirmation:

- Pending Senate floor vote: Susan Combs, Assistant Secretary Policy Management and Budget.
- Pending Senate floor vote: Brenda Berman, Commissioner, Bureau of Reclamation.
- Pending Senate floor vote: Joe Balash, Assistant Secretary, Land and Minerals
- Pending Senate floor vote: Ryan Douglas Nelson, Solicitor
- Pending Hearing: Tara Sweeney, Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs

Overall:

- Schedule C: 34 of 68 onboard; 2 starting; 6 in process
- NC-SES: 24 of 44 onboard; 4 starting; 1 in process
- PAS: 3 Confirmed; 5 Announced; 14 of 17 Submitted to PPO

SECRETARY SPEAKING INVITATIONS

Accepted:

Open (date TBC)- Americans for Tax Reform (DC)

Open (date TBC)- Detroit Economic Club

Event Postponed by organizers due to fire - 10/21 DEPA BOD Meeting (CA)

Outstanding Invitations in Process:

10/28 Remarks at Washington International Horse Show DC)

10/29 Friends of Theodore Roosevelt Island (DC)

11/7-9 National Ranger Council Annual Meeting (Gettysburg, PA)

11/9 National WWI Memorial at Pershing Park (DC)

11/13 Montana Farm Bureau Federation Annual Meeting (Billings, MT)

11/29 Association of California Water Agencies 2017 Fall Conference and Exhibition (Anaheim, CA)

12/5-7 America Outdoors Association's 29th Annual Marketing and Management Conference for Outfitters and Adventure Resorts (Reno, NV)

12/6 American Exploration and Mining Association Annual Meeting (Reno, NV)

12/8 - Valley Industry and Commerce Association Annual Meeting (Los Angeles, CA)

Declining

10/26 - Montana Chamber Annual Meeting (Great Falls, MT)

10/28 Cattle Producers of Washington Annual Meeting (Airway Heights, WA)

10/30-11/3 International Mining and Resources Conference (Melbourne, Australia)

10/31 - George B. Hartzog, Jr. Awards and Speaker Program Clemson University (SC)

11/1 - 2017 SHIFT (Shaping How we Invest For Tomorrow) Festival (Jackson Hole, WY)

11/4 Governor Reynolds Annual Pheasant Hunt

11/8 WY Governor Annual Business Forum (Cheyenne, WY)

11/9 - America First Energy Conference hosted by Heartland Institute (Houston, TX)

11/9 - Bass Fishing Hall of Fame Induction Dinner at the Wonders of Wildlife (Springfield, MO)

11/14 George Rogers Clark National Historical Park Quarter Launch (Vincennes, Indiana)

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT (new)

Port Aransas, Texas Fatal Barge Fire and Oil Spill:

The Barge remains off the Port Aransas Channel along with two support vessels. High volume foam is being placed in the void space to keep lower explosive limits (LEL) at acceptable levels until lightering and transit operations are complete. The Barge has released no additional product and no floating oil was observed during the afternoon overflight. Approximately 2,146 barrels (bbls) of oily water mixture were skimmed from the water and 1,900 feet of containment and deflection boom remain in place within the Port. Wildlife teams continue to conduct evaluations in the field.

NPS reports a slight amount of oil has been identified on the beaches within the first 10 miles of the Padre Island National Seashore. The park has observed a small number of oiled birds and a northeastern wind is keeping the bulk of the oil off shore at this time; however, the situation could change when the wind shifts to a normal southeastern direction. The oil is described as a heavy fuel oil that has a long residence time in the environment. Yesterday, one of the two individuals killed in the explosion washed ashore near mile marker 6 in the park and was discovered by U.S. Border Patrol Agents. The body was removed, and given the amount of debris in the area, the second individual is likely to come ashore on NPS lands as well. The USCG is the lead for the investigation of the incident overall.

Hurricane Response/Recovery:

The Department of Homeland Security reports that, in Puerto Rico, power has been restored to approximately 24 (+6)-percent of customers and the expectation is that 95-percent of Puerto Rico will be restored by December 15. Potable water has been restored to more than 73 (+1)-percent of clients served by the Puerto Rico Aqueduct and Sewer Authority. Telecommunications officials estimate 87 (+2)-percent of the population lives in areas where wireless voice and text service has been restored. The USNS Robert E. Peary is expected to arrive today to bring the 3rd Expeditionary Sustainment Command, 800 pallets of water, and MREs. In the U.S. Virgin Islands, grid power has been restored for 30 (+1)-percent of the population on St. Thomas, 2.9 (+1.3)-percent on St. Croix, and efforts on St. John are now expected to begin in two to three weeks. The Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority estimates 90-percent of the power will be restored by November 23. In total, there are over 20,000 federal personnel that are directly supporting recovery operations in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Wildland Fire National Preparedness Level:

As of 12:00 p.m. EDT, October 23, the National Preparedness Level (PL) was decreased to Level 2. Large wildland fire and attack activity has decreased nationally and demobilization is occurring on the majority of large fires. Competition for resources has significantly decreased, allowing this reduction in level to occur.

OUTSIDE MEDIA OF INTEREST (new)

Democrats Call For Investigation Of \$300 Million Contract For Firm With Ties To Zinke.

There was significant coverage of Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke's ties to an small company from his hometown that was awarded a major contract to help restore power to Puerto Rico's power grid. [ABC World News Tonight](#) (10/24, story 7, 2:10, Muir) reported a "Montana company [was] given the contract to get the power back on" in Puerto Rico "with just two workers when it landed that contract." ABC (Thomas) added, "Whitefish Energy, a private Montana company with just two full-time employees, awarded a \$300 million contract by the Puerto Rico Electric Power Authority. The company showcasing its work on Twitter," but "some Democrats are already calling for an investigation into that contract" to Whitefish Energy a firm from the "hometown of Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke."

Interior Proposes Raising Fees At Popular National Parks.

[The Hill](#) (10/24, Henry) reports the Interior Department is considering higher peak-season fees at 17 of its most popular national parks "during their busiest five-month periods." The agency said the increased fees would "help ensure that they are protected and preserved in perpetuity and that visitors enjoy a world-class experience that mirrors the amazing destinations they are visiting." In a statement, Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke said, "The infrastructure of our national parks is aging and in need of renovation and restoration." Zinke added, "We need to have the vision to look at the future of our parks and take action in order to ensure that our grandkids' grandkids will have the same if not better experience than we have today. Shoring up our parks' aging infrastructure will do that." President Trump proposed trimming the National Park Service's budget by 12.9 percent this year, "despite concerns from officials with the department and in Congress about the state of the Park Service's infrastructure."

Trump's 'Energy Independence' Order: Where Do Things Stand?

[E&E Publishing](#) (10/24) reports that this month, the Trump administration "hit two milestones in their wide-ranging examination of Obama-era rules" that could be considered burdensome to U.S. energy producers. EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt "formally proposed a repeal of the Clean Power Plan" just days after the Bureau of Land Management "unveiled its plan to postpone key parts of a rule the Obama

administration introduced to limit venting, flaring and leakage of natural gas from energy operations on public and tribal lands.” President Trump is also credited with disbanding “an interagency working group that focused on the social cost of carbon and related tools that put a dollar amount on the impacts of carbon, nitrous oxide and methane.”

Can Solar Save A Huge Coal Plant? Zinke’s Thinking About It.

E&E Publishing (10/24, Patterson, Storrow) reports Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke met with South African billionaire Dr. Patrick Soon-Shiong and two members of his company, NantWorks, to discuss the possibility of using high-powered solar technology at the Navajo Generation Station, one of America’s largest coal plants, “as the Trump administration searches for a way to keep the facility from closing.” The northeast Arizona facility is “scheduled to retire in 2019 after four utilities with a stake in the facility voted to close it earlier this year.” The Interior Department is a minor owner in the plant, which the Trump Administration opposes shuttering. According to the article, Zinke’s meeting “appeared to catch some of the administration’s allies off guard.” For example, the “economies of the Navajo and Hopi tribes are heavily reliant on the coal industry, and tribal leaders have loudly opposed plans to close NGS.” In an email, Interior spokeswoman Heather Swift wrote that the department is interested “in an economic pathway where NGS operates post-2019.”

Developers Plan Wind Farms Off Jersey as Christie Era Ends.

Bloomberg News (10/24, Ryan) reports, “after years of being sidelined by New Jersey Governor Chris Christie, wind farm developers are dusting off plans for massive offshore turbines that may someday generate more electricity than a nuclear reactor.” As governor, Christie “effectively blocked wind farms off his state’s coast by never fully implementing a program that would subsidize the projects.” Bloomberg writes that Christie’s departure “presents a potentially rich market for offshore wind,” with low power prices and a geographical position “midway between offshore wind development sites in New England and the Southeast, making the state a potential hub for ferrying supplies to build projects in other states.” The article quotes US Wind Director of Project Development Paul Rich, “New Jersey has all the classic elements for offshore wind to work. The time is right, and the market is ripe.”

Celebrity Ambassadors Put Lesser-Known U.S. National Parks In The Limelight.

The Washington Post (10/23, Sachs) reports that for its 101th birthday, the National Parks Service and National Park Foundation “launched Parks 101, an ongoing online series that will introduce the masses to lesser-known destinations within the 417-site system.” The goal of the series is to encourage visitors to start attending its minor locations. “The places that are iconic are well worth visiting,” said Will Shafroth, president and chief executive of the foundation, “but we wanted to spark interest in the places that hardly anyone knows about.” He explained the series includes videos and social media posts by celebrity ambassadors and focuses on destinations that offer a diversity of experiences.

FEDERAL REGISTER LISTINGS:

Notices submitted to the Federal Register for Monday, October 23rd:

REG0007542 BIA Agency Information Collection Activities; Indian Child Welfare Quarterly and Annual Report -- This Notice, under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, announces that the BIA will ask the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to renew its approval of the collection of information for the Indian Child Welfare Quarterly and Annual Report. The BIA is requesting public comments on the renewal for 60 days. Notice 10/24/2017

REG0007543 BIA Agency Information Collection Activities; Tribal Probate Codes -- This Notice, under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, announces that the BIA will ask the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to renew its approval of the collection of information pertaining to Tribal Probate Codes. The BIA is requesting public comments on the renewal for 60 days. Notice 10/24/2017

REG0007557 BIA Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community's Amendment to the Alcoholic Beverage Control Ordinance -- This Notice publishes an amendment to the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community's Alcoholic Beverage Control Ordinance. The amendment will be applicable 30 days after publication of this Notice in the Federal Register. Notice 10/24/2017

REG0007539 BLM Notice of Public Meeting: Alaska Resource Advisory Council -- The Alaska Resource Advisory Council is scheduled to meet on November 16-17, 2017. Notice must be approved NLT October 26, 2017 in order to meet FACA 15-day advance notice of public meeting requirement. Notice 10/24/2017