

To: Jackson, Ryan[jackson.ryan@epa.gov]
From: POLITICO Pro Energy
Sent: Tue 9/12/2017 9:43:12 AM
Subject: Morning Energy: Democrats hold fire on climate amid hurricane devastation — Pruitt, Ross to meet with Trump today — Upton pushes Enbridge for immediate repairs

By Anthony Adragna | 09/12/2017 05:41 AM EDT

ALL QUIET ON THE CLIMATE FRONT: Even as the double whammy of Hurricanes Harvey and Irma offers the U.S. an up-front glimpse of the types of devastation the world faces due to a warming climate, Democrats are largely holding their fire on Republicans, Pro's Emily Holden and Elana Schor [report](#). Instead, they appear to be heeding the warnings of several of President Donald Trump's Cabinet officials that discussing climate change with large swaths of land still underwater would be insensitive. "The response to Hurricanes Harvey and Irma thus far has been more muted, likely in part because of a desire to keep the focus on immediate disaster relief," said Trevor Houser, former energy adviser to Hillary Clinton's presidential campaign.

Democrats say there will be opportunities to explore the linkage between extreme weather and manmade climate change moving forward. "We have a lot of time to make that point, and I think we also have a lot of legislative opportunities as we look at reauthorizing flood insurance and funding the disaster relief," Sen. [Sheldon Whitehouse](#), one of staunchest climate hawks, said. Environmental advocates have hit Trump's inaction on climate change online, but have shied away from criticizing Democrats. "The truth is, I'd settle for politicians not talking about climate at all, and instead actually doing something," Bill McKibben, founder of 350.org, said.

Tone shift at the White House? Tom Bossert, Trump's homeland security adviser, told reporters Monday that the cause of both devastating hurricanes is "outside of my ability to analyze" but he acknowledged a need to bolster flood and coastal defenses threatened by rising seas and powerful storms. "We continue to take seriously the climate change, not the cause of it, but the things that we observe," he said. "What President Trump remains committed to is making sure that federal dollars aren't used to build things that will be in harm's way later or that won't be hardened against the future predictable floods that we see." While those words may offer hope to some, ME would note Trump has erased climate considerations from government processes, nixed flood standards for federal projects, withdrawn the U.S. from the Paris climate change agreement, pulled back a regulation to limit carbon dioxide from power plants and halted funding to help poor nations adapt to new weather extremes.

More money needed? Asked if the administration would put more money into agencies like FEMA and EPA, Bossert expressed openness to requesting additional funds — "We'll put money in as money is needed to address the need," he said — but added "right now we have plenty of resources to get through this."

Irma could've been even worse: Even as millions lost power during Hurricane Irma, the head of the state's largest utility said outages could've been even worse if Florida Power & Light Co. had not spent \$3 billion to improve the energy grid, POLITICO Florida's Bruce Ritchie [reports](#). "With this kind of storm what I can tell you is, we would be facing a much longer restoration" without the work, FPL President and CEO Eric Silagy said Monday.

Nelson wants Perry's help: The federal government should establish a fuel reserve in Florida to help prevent the fuel shortages that occurred during the response to Irma, Sen. [Bill Nelson](#) wrote in a Monday [letter](#) to Energy Secretary Rick Perry. "A Florida gasoline supply reserve would ensure that residents and first responders have access to an emergency supply of fuel, and help prevent the shortages that may have kept some from evacuating and may hinder recovery efforts going forward," Florida's senior senator wrote. DOE created the [Northeast Gasoline Supply Reserve](#) in 2014 following similar issues during Hurricane Sandy, he noted.

Checking in on Texas: EPA reported late Monday that 35 of the 2,238 drinking water systems affected by Harvey remain shut down, while 35 of the 1,219 wastewater treatment plants in affected countries also remain inoperable. The agency further said it had "directed potential responsible parties or has independently started collecting samples at the 43 Superfund sites to further confirm any impacts from the storm" and said additional assessments continue at two sites — San Jacinto Waste Pits and U.S. Oil Recovery. In addition, Reuters [reported](#) federal officials are cleaning up spills of oil and chemicals spilled from a dozen industrial facilities in the aftermath of Harvey.

Yikes: Water testing arranged by The New York Times from two Houston neighborhoods showed alarmingly high levels of bacteria and toxins. Tests from the Briarhills Parkway in the Houston Energy Corridor showed levels of E. coli at levels four times of what's considered safe, while Clayton Homes public housing development downtown showed concentrations of E. Coli more than 135 times healthy levels, as well as elevated levels of lead, arsenic and other heavy metals. The EPA said Monday that 40 of 1,219 waste treatment plants affected by Harvey were not working.

SIREN! Trump meets this morning at 10 a.m. in the Oval Office with EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt and Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross. EPA and the White House did not respond to further requests about what they'll be chatting about.

WELCOME TO TUESDAY! I'm your host Anthony Adragna, and NRDC's Ana Unruh Cohen was the first (of many) to identify Sam Rayburn as the longest-serving House speaker. For today: Which state has had eight lawmakers go on to serve as speaker? Send your tips, energy gossip and comments to aadragna@politico.com, or follow us on Twitter [@AnthonyAdragna](#), [@Morning_Energy](#) and [@POLITICOPro](#).

EPA LAUNCHES PROBE INTO ARKEMA INCIDENT: Officials at EPA have requested information from Arkema to help them ascertain whether the chemical company properly followed Clean Air Act safety regulations before Hurricane Harvey. EPA asked in [its letter](#), obtained by ME Monday, for a response from the company within 10 calendar days of receipt. Among the information sought is what the company did before the storm to prepare for potential flooding and loss of electricity, as well as the quantities of chemicals stored on site. Several chemical containers at the Crosby, Texas, facility caught fire after the hurricane deluged it with water.

MINE PRUITT VISITED FURLOUGHS WORKERS: Consol Energy's Bailey Mine

complex, which EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt visited back in April as one of the first stops on his "Back to Basics" campaign, furloughed more than 300 workers Monday after Pennsylvania's Department of Environmental Protection failed to approve a permit modification in time, the Observer-Reporter reports. A company spokesman said it was the first time in the site's history that state environmental regulators failed to approve a permit in a "timely manner" to maintain operations.

THEY'RE BACCCCCCK: House lawmakers return for a day and a half of work, with a slate of 6:30 p.m. votes expected to include the Interior and EPA section of eight-title, spending package H.R. 3354 (115) under consideration.

SPORTSMEN'S PACKAGE PUSH BEGINS AGAIN: The House Natural Resources Federal Lands subpanel today considers a broad sportsmen's package, H.R. 3668 (115). It contains a controversial provision that would make it easier to obtain gun silencers, bars EPA from ever regulating lead ammunition under the Toxic Substances Control Act, and reauthorizes the North American Wetlands Conservation Act for five years at \$50 million per year. The subpanel cancelled the initial hearing on the bill following the June congressional baseball shooting, which the measure's sponsor, Jeff Duncan (R-S.C.), witnessed.

If you go: The session kicks off at 10 a.m. in Longworth 1334. Ranking member Raul Grijalva and Rep. Mike Thompson will discuss the gun silencer provision during a press availability following the hearing.

Other hearings shelved: After Hurricane Irma delayed the House's return, the Energy and Commerce Energy Subcommittee canceled what was to have been a blockbuster hearing on the grid's reliability. Witnesses would have included FERC Chairman Neil Chatterjee (in what would have been his first appearance since confirmation), as well as Gerry Cauley, president of the North American Electric Reliability Corporation, and a DOE official. In addition, the House Science Committee postponed a full committee hearing on the electric grid's resilience that had also been slated for 10 a.m.

SENATE ENERGY LOOKS AT LABS: Senators on the Energy and Natural Resources Energy Subcommittee take a look at the contributions of DOE's national laboratories at a hearing beginning at 3 p.m. Sens. Cory Gardner and Joe Manchin deliver opening remarks, followed by testimony from representatives of West Virginia University, Argonne National Laboratory, Duke Energy and National Renewable Energy Laboratory. More here.

MAIL CALL! UPTON PUSHES ENBRIDGE FOR REPAIRS: Rep. Fred Upton, chairman of the Energy and Commerce Energy Subcommittee, sent a letter Monday urging Enbridge to "conduct repairs immediately" on its Line 5 pipeline after revelations of gaps in the line's protective coating. "The more recent disclosure of a loss of protective coating and the likelihood that human error was a factor raises serious concerns about Enbridge's compliance with federal pipeline safety laws," Upton wrote. "Rest assured I will remain hyper-vigilant and expect prompt response to my request."

MORE VOICES WEIGH IN ON SOLAR TARIFF CASE: Six right-leaning policy groups

will urge the International Trade Commission not to back a bid from solar manufacturers Suniva and SolarWorld USA to impose tariffs on imported solar products in a [letter](#) today, Pro Trade's Megan Cassella [reports](#). The groups fear an affirmative ITC decision would double the cost of solar products in the U.S. and leave the country vulnerable to retaliation and challenges at the WTO. "Similar to steel in 2002, solar tariffs today would amount to nothing more than a crony capitalist giveaway to failing companies," they wrote.

GREENS CHALLENGE NEVADA LEASE SALES: The Sierra Club and the Center for Biological Diversity filed a lawsuit Monday challenging BLM's June sale of oil and gas leases in northern Nevada. The lawsuit argues the government failed to consider the possible consequences of drilling in the area, ranging from contamination of desert water sources to increased greenhouse gas emissions. The June 13 sale [brought in](#) just \$38,560 from three parcels covering approximately 5,760 acres out of more than 95,000 acres offered.

NO MASS EXODUS AMONG THE FEDS: Just more than two percent of federal employees have left their positions since Trump became president, more than during presidents George W. Bush and Barack Obama's opening months but less dramatic than the mass departures feared, BuzzFeed [reports](#). Among the highest departure rates were the departments of Energy (2.7 percent) and Interior (2.5 percent).

REPORT: ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT FOR SOLAR DIVERSITY: A [report](#) out Monday from the Solar Foundation finds women represent just 28 percent of employees in the 260,000 person strong solar industry and people of color are a tiny share of the workforce. African-Americans hold just 7 percent of solar jobs, while Hispanic or Latino employees are 17 percent of the workforce and Asians are 9 percent. The study concludes "women and people of color face significant hurdles to achieving equal pay and positions in the solar industry."

MOVERS, SHAKERS: Adam Kolton has been named executive director of the Alaska Wilderness League, effective Oct. 10. He'll join from the National Wildlife Federation where he's currently vice president of federal advocacy.

SPOTTED: Gina McCarthy, sporting a rolling backpack, at the Dirty Habit bar near the EPA. She was drinking red wine and laughing jovially on Monday evening, per our tipster.

QUICK HITS

- Floridians battered by Irma maintain climate change is no 'big deal'. [The Guardian](#).
- Trump administration halts pollution controls at Utah coal plants. [AP](#).
- Suppliers warn EPA against regulatory rollback. [Automotive News](#).
- Three Top Names Emerge As Likely Head Of Western EPA Office. [Western Wire](#).
- Gasoline prices at pump are heading lower even as Florida struggles with supplies. [CNBC](#).

— State better off without Enbridge oil pipeline, Dayton agency says. [Minnesota Public Radio](#).

HAPPENING TODAY

9:00 a.m. — "[The New Geopolitics of Natural Gas](#)," Atlantic Council, 1030 15th Street NW, 12th Floor

10:00 a.m. — House Natural Resources Federal Lands Subcommittee holds [legislative hearing](#) on SHARE Act, 1334 Longworth

POSTPONED — "[Powering America: Defining Reliability in a Transforming Electricity Industry](#)," House Energy and Commerce Energy Subcommittee, Rayburn 2123

POSTPONED — "[Resiliency: The Electric Grid's Only Hope](#)," House Science, Space and Technology Committee, 2318 Rayburn

10:00 a.m. — The Center for Climate and Energy Solutions releases a new brief and hosts a webinar featuring business leaders on how and why companies are putting an internal price on carbon emissions, contact: press@c2es.org

2:30 p.m. — "[Reauthorization of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act: Oversight of Fisheries Management Successes and Challenges](#)," Senate Commerce Oceans, Atmosphere, Fisheries, and Coast Guard Subcommittee, Russell 253

3:00 p.m. — "[Fostering Innovation: Contributions of the Department of Energy's National Laboratories](#)," Senate Energy and Natural Resources Energy Subcommittee, Dirksen 366

4:00 p.m. — Full committee marks up various bills, House Natural Resources Committee, 1334 Longworth

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<https://www.politicopro.com/tipsheets/morning-energy/2017/09/democrats-hold-fire-on-climate-amid-hurricane-devastation-024541>

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Democrats mum on climate as storm damage climbs [Back](#)

By Emily Holden and Elana Schor | 09/12/2017 05:05 AM EDT

Hurricanes Harvey and Irma have handed Democrats their most potent opportunity in half a decade to hammer Republicans on climate change — with the massive storms giving tens of millions of Americans an up-front glimpse of the types of devastation the world faces if the warming planet spawns a surge in extreme weather.

But instead, they're mostly keeping quiet.

Aside from a handful of outliers like Hawaiian Sen. [Brian Schatz](#), leading Democratic politicians have been slow to use the double whammy from the tropics to denounce President Donald Trump, who has dismissed climate change as a "hoax."

That's a contrast from past storms like 2012's Hurricane Sandy, when Democratic New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo called the disaster a sign that "climate change is a reality." Even then-New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg, an independent, [cited the storm](#) and climate change at the time among his reasons for endorsing Barack Obama's reelection as president.

This time, Democrats appear to be heeding the warnings of Trump appointees like EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt, who said last week that it's "very, very insensitive to the people in Florida" to talk about climate change now.

The wariness of appearing to seize on a disaster is "part of" the party's calculus behind keeping the climate politics to a minimum after the hurricanes, said the top Democrat on the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, [Tom Carper](#) of Delaware.

"When we've done a good deal more work in terms of cleanup and getting folks' lives back to normal, I hope we do a deep dive into whether or not the warming in the Gulf of Mexico is really what's causing this," Carper added in an interview, vowing that a broader climate conversation is "coming soon."

Sen. [Sheldon Whitehouse](#) (D-R.I.), a climate hawk known for delivering more than 100 floor speeches on the issue, said he doesn't view the immediate aftermath of Harvey and Irma as heightening the sense of urgency to talk about global warming.

"We have a lot of time to make that point, and I think we also have a lot of legislative opportunities as we look at reauthorizing flood insurance and funding the disaster relief," Whitehouse said in a brief interview.

Sen. [Chris Van Hollen](#) (D-Md.) late Friday noted climate change's impact on extreme weather, citing the hurricanes as he unveiled a bill with Schatz and Sen. [Cory Booker](#) (D-N.J.) that would block Trump's cancellation of an order requiring federally funded infrastructure to take global warming into account. But Van Hollen underscored that the bill was already in the works before Harvey and Irma made their devastating landfalls.

"We actually feel like we have not been talking about these bills during this period of time" while Gulf Coast residents recover, Van Hollen told POLITICO, adding that his proposal is "designed to focus on how we rebuild. The idea is, when we invest federal dollars in infrastructure, we want it to be safe. So this is going to be a constructive part of the rebuilding conversation."

Trevor Houser, a former energy adviser to Hillary Clinton's presidential campaign, said

Democrats indeed may see dangers in latching onto the climate issue so soon after the twin disasters.

"The response to Hurricanes Harvey and Irma thus far has been more muted, likely in part because of a desire to keep the focus on immediate disaster relief," said Houser, who is now at the think tank Rhodium Group.

It's not a good idea to try to land a "punch to the gut of climate change deniers" while first responders are still "pulling bodies out of the water," said Jeff Schlegelmilch, deputy director of the National Center for Disaster Preparedness at Columbia University's Earth Institute.

But green groups haven't hesitated to take aim at Trump online, with the Natural Resources Defense Council criticizing his recent move to rescind climate standards for federal infrastructure and the League of Conservation Voters praising Miami's Republican Mayor Tomás Regalado for saying it is time to talk about climate change.

Bill McKibben, founder of the outspoken climate activist group 350.org, shied away from disparaging Democrats, though.

"The truth is, I'd settle for politicians not talking about climate at all, and instead actually doing something," he said via email. "We've reached the point where they expect a gold star for announcing they believe in science — that's not enough."

Climate advocates argue that now — when the issue is blaring from every TV screen — is the best time to call attention to scientists' abundant warnings that rising global temperatures may worsen extreme weather such as hurricanes, droughts or the wildfires now raging in California. Images of Irma's flooding are still topping national news coverage, and the air of crisis may continue next week depending on where Hurricane Jose decides to land.

In contrast, Republicans who deny that humans are causing rising temperatures have mostly put their public focus on responding to the immediate danger of the storms. While acknowledging the historic nature of the flooding in Houston and the record-breaking intensity of Hurricane Irma, the Trump administration has brushed off questions about climate change, focusing instead on the immediate recovery needs in Texas, Florida and hard-hit Caribbean territories like Puerto Rico.

Tom Bossert, Trump's homeland security adviser, told reporters during a White House briefing Monday that it was too early to say whether climate change worsened the hurricanes, but he acknowledged a need to bolster flood and coastal defenses threatened by rising seas and powerful storms.

"We continue to take seriously the climate change, not the cause of it, but the things that we observe," he said. "What President Trump remains committed to is making sure that federal dollars aren't used to build things that will be in harm's way later or that won't be hardened against the future predictable floods that we see."

Other administration officials have dodged climate change questions.

Pruitt told CNN that "to have any kind of focus on the cause and effect of the storm, versus helping people, or actually facing the effect of the storm, is misplaced." White House adviser Kellyanne Conway chastised CNN's Chris Cuomo for asking about the topic in the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey, saying, "We're trying to help the people whose lives are literally underwater, and you want to have a conversation about climate change." Energy Secretary Rick Perry similarly dismissed the issue, telling CBS that "everyone wants to run to the climate change debate, but that is very secondary at this particular time."

Lawmakers and the federal government will have to confront future risks as they send money for recovery, however. Congress is moving ahead with an initial \$15 billion aid package for Texas and Louisiana, and scientists say addressing the role of a changing climate is crucial to using that money effectively.

"Climate change has to be a part of the conversation ... it's inaccurate to think you could have a conversation about the changing nature of risk without talking about greenhouse gases and burning fossil fuels," said Heidi Cullen, the chief scientist at the research group Climate Central, who studies how climate change affects extreme weather as part of the international science partnership called World Weather Attribution.

Scientists say man-made greenhouse gas emissions could make hurricanes more intense. Continued sea-level rise will also make storm surges higher and more dangerous. Both could complicate emergency response planning and investments to rebuild after the storms.

Despite Bossert's comments, Trump is actively erasing climate considerations from government processes, nixing flood standards for federal projects, withdrawing the U.S. from the Paris climate change agreement, pulling back a regulation to limit carbon dioxide from power plants, and halting funding to help poor nations adapt to new weather extremes.

In previous years, climate advocates and scientists could have relied on the Obama White House to amplify their message. Now, they've got cabinet members who doubt whether human activity is causing global temperatures to increase, seas to rise and coastal communities to face more risks from storm surge and flooding.

Congressional opponents of government efforts to address climate change aren't making any linkages between the two devastating storms, either.

"It's terrible to have Category 4 in the Gulf Coast of Texas and then a Category 5 in the Atlantic, but sometimes bad things happen," Rep. Joe Barton (R-Texas) said last week. "I guess we could pass a law saying you can't have hurricanes, but I'm not sure Mother Nature would listen to us."

Attributing extreme weather events to climate change is still an evolving area of research, although it has progressed quickly over the last few years. Scientists at the Geophysical Fluid Dynamics Laboratory, which works cooperatively with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, believe that by the end of the century, global warming will mean more intense

hurricanes that bring more rain. But they say it's too early to detect whether man-made greenhouse gas emissions have changed hurricane activity so far. That's because the extreme weather events are rare and difficult to model.

Michael Wehner, a senior staff scientist in the Computational Research Division at the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, has studied how 15 hurricanes might have behaved under lower temperatures, and so far has determined that a one-degree Celsius increase — 1.8 degrees Fahrenheit — raises rainfall about 6 percent.

That would mean that Harvey, which dumped more than 50 inches of water on Houston, brought between 10 and 15 percent more rain because of climate change.

"The public should know, and policymakers should know, that any planning that you might have made based on the historical record is inadequate," Wehner said. "It's a different world. It's a warmer world, and storms behave differently."

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Center-right groups urge ITC against recommending tariffs in solar case [Back](#)

By Megan Cassella | 09/11/2017 03:53 PM EDT

The International Trade Commission should avoid recommending the use of tariffs to protect the U.S. solar industry in an ongoing trade remedy case, a coalition of right-leaning policy groups will say this week as a swirling debate over a pending ITC ruling has divided domestic industry.

The heads of six groups, including the R Street Institute, the American Legislative Exchange Council and the National Taxpayers Union, warned in a [letter](#) that will be sent to the ITC on Tuesday that an affirmative decision would double the cost of solar products in the country and leave the U.S. vulnerable to retaliation and challenges at the World Trade Organization.

If the ITC finds evidence that domestic industry has been hurt by imports, it should tailor its recommended relief to exempt imports from countries that the U.S. has free trade agreements with, the letter says.

The groups also leaned on recent history to bolster their argument, noting that the statute under which the case was filed, known as Section 201, is an "extreme remedy with a troubling recent history." Former President George W. Bush levied import restrictions similar to what Suniva and SolarWorld Americas are asking for in this case to protect the domestic steel industry in 2002, but those were ultimately withdrawn after the European Union challenged them at the WTO.

"Similar to steel in 2002, solar tariffs today would amount to nothing more than a crony capitalist giveaway to failing companies," the groups wrote in the letter, a copy of which was obtained by

POLITICO. "They would be paid for by crippling an otherwise growing domestic solar industry (one whose preferential federal tax treatment has been correspondingly phasing down) and higher prices for energy consumers."

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