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Daily Environment Report

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Leading the News

Energy

U.S. Energy Agency Back in Business as Senate Confirms Nominees

The main U.S. energy regulator can get back to the business of approving multibillion-dollar natural gas pipelines after the Senate moved to fill two of four vacancies at the long-crippled agency.

Hazardous Waste

Gold King Critic Pruitt to Visit Colorado Mine Spill Site

EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt will visit Aug. 4 the site where the Gold King Mine spill in Colorado occurred two years ago.

Special Report

Oil & Gas

Methane Hot Spot in West Troubles Regulators and Industry

The Four Corners area of northwestern New Mexico and southwestern Colorado has been described as an especially prominent hot spot for methane leaking and venting—and illustrates why the Obama administration issued tougher federal regulations in 2016 to govern oil and gas operations on federal and Indian lands.

News

Air Pollution

EPA May Still Punt Decisions on Ozone Pollution Standards

The EPA could still postpone making some decisions on which regions fail to meet federal air pollution standards for ozone, even after it abruptly dropped plans to delay all of those determinations for a year.

Biodiversity

China Seen by Wildlife Group as Making Progress on Ivory Ban

China is on track to fulfill a pledge to close its domestic ivory markets by the end of 2017, an international nongovernmental group is expected to say in a forthcoming report.

Chemicals

Chemical Makers Told to Act Now, Duck Regulatory Hassles Later

Chemical manufacturers should have access to the EPA's electronic reporting system now to avoid headaches in six months as the deadline approaches to notify the agency about chemicals they have made or imported during the past 10 years.

Congress

Senate Panel Approves Energy, Interior Nominations

The Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee on Aug. 3 approved by voice vote the nominations of Mark Menezes and Paul Dabbar to be Energy Department undersecretaries and Susan Combs to be an Interior Department assistant secretary.

Energy

Brouillette Heads to Energy Department Following Heller Sign-Off

The Energy Department is set to add a deputy for Secretary Rick Perry following the Senate's confirmation of Dan Brouillette Aug. 3.

Energy

Germany Giving Gigafactory a Home in Latest Challenge to Tesla

German executives are preparing to announce a new home for a lithium-ion battery plant designed to rival the output at Tesla Inc.'s Gigafactory.

Energy

Nuclear Plant's Shutdown Quashes Tax Credit Need, Graham Says

An early extension of a high-profile nuclear tax credit is no longer needed following the shutdown of a nuclear plant's construction in South Carolina, Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.) told Bloomberg BNA Aug. 3.

Energy

Portland City Council Votes to Appeal Fossil Fuel Terminal Ban

Portland, Ore., wants to see its ban on new fossil fuel terminals reinstated. The city council voted unanimously to appeal a decision striking the ordinance as unconstitutional.

Energy

U.K. Policy Change Seen Too Frequent for Smooth Energy Shift

The U.K.'s energy policies are confusing markets and limiting investment needed to spur a transition away from fossil fuels, according to a pro-business environmental group.

Enforcement

Justice Department Environment Pick a Step Closer to New Role

The Senate Judiciary Committee approved Jeffrey Bossert Clark to lead the Justice Department's environment division Aug. 3 over objections by Democrats that Clark doesn't

accept the scientific consensus on climate change.

Liabe Parties

Pasadena Liable for Water Treatment Site Contamination

Pasadena, Calif. is liable under the Superfund law for contamination at a site where it formerly operated a wastewater treatment plant, the Southern District of Texas ruled (USOR Site PRP Grp. v. A&M Contractors, Inc., 2017 BL 269165, S.D. Tex., No. 14-CV-2441, 8/2/17).

Motor Vehicles

Electric-Car Revolution Shakes Up Biggest Metals Markets

The revolution in electric vehicles set to upturn industries from energy to infrastructure also is creating winners and losers within the world's biggest metals markets.

PFOA

Saint-Gobain Water Contamination Claims Dodge Dismissal

Saint-Gobain Performance Plastics Corp. and Honeywell International Inc. must face pollution claims by residents of Hoosick Falls, N.Y., who say a toxic chemical from a factory tainted their water, the Northern District of New York ruled Aug. 2 (Benoit v. Saint-Gobain Performance Plastics Corp., 2017 BL 268907, N.D.N.Y., No.16-cv-00930, 8/2/17).

Pesticides

Senator Holds EPA Pesticide Fees Bill Over Dow Spat

Sen. Tom Udall (D-N.M.) has frozen a bill that would keep the EPA's Office of Pesticide Programs running, in a bid to reverse recent decisions the agency made on pesticides.

Pipeline Safety

Pipeline Agency's Corrosion Monitor Outdated: Congress' Watchdog

The Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Agency has been using an outdated, incomplete model to determine how often it should inspect pipelines for corrosion, Congress' investigative arm said in a report Aug. 3.

Renewable Energy

Arsenal Soccer Club Tackles Climate Change With Clean Energy

Arsenal Football Club plans to power its stadium with renewable energy produced from wasted food and solar panels in a bid to reduce greenhouse gas pollution.

Renewable Energy

Invenergy Issues Green Bond to Finance Wind Park in Uruguay

Invenergy Wind LLC, a Chicago-based energy company, issued a \$137 million green bond to finance a wind park in Uruguay.

Renewable Energy

Turkey Awards First Wind-Power Contract to Siemens Gamesa

A consortium led by Siemens Gamesa Renewable Energy SA won the right to build 1 gigawatt of wind power in Turkey, outbidding competitors from China to the U.S. in the country's first wind auction.

Vehicle Fuels

Trump's EPA Said to Reject Icahn-Backed Biofuel Program Change

The Trump administration is set to deal a blow to billionaire investor and presidential adviser Carl Icahn by rejecting his bid to relieve refiners of a burden to satisfy U.S. biofuel mandates, according to people briefed on the move.

Practitioner Insights

General Policy

Practitioner Insights: Environmental Rights Amendment Revival

By Joseph Otis Minott and Paul Cohen: The Pennsylvania Supreme Court's decision in June in *Pennsylvania Environmental Defense Foundation v. Commonwealth* already has proved to be a game-changer. PEDF has accelerated the revival of Pennsylvania's Environmental Rights Amendment that began in 2013, altering the course of statewide environmental litigation and reshaping policy at all levels of Pennsylvania government. Those impacts will likely deepen—and may ripple ...

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