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Daily Environment Report

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Leading the News

Chemicals

Bathtub Refinishers' Deaths Renew Debate: Label Products or Ban?

Federal and state agencies have attributed the deaths of at least 17 bathtub refinishers since 2000 to the workers' exposure to the paint stripper methylene chloride, prompting government actions.

Enforcement

Advocate for Clients Such as BP to Lead Environment at Justice

President Donald Trump's choice to lead the environment section at the Justice Department is a Washington litigator known for his advocacy on behalf of clients such as BP PLC in the Deepwater Horizon oil spill and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce in opposing EPA climate regulations.

Enforcement

Justice Memo Leaves Environmental Settlement Projects In Peril

A June 7 Justice Department policy memo that prohibits including payments for third-party, not-for-profit groups in settlements could limit the inclusion of certain environmental projects, reversing a decades-long practice, attorneys told Bloomberg BNA.

News

Agriculture

Environmental Group Pushes Back on Calls to Expand Farm Program

A new report from the Washington-based Environmental Working Group takes aim at a USDA program that pays farmers annually to remove sensitive land from production.

Air Pollution

Peru Loosens Air Pollution Rules After Miners Complain

Peru's Environment Ministry modified the country's air quality standards, increasing permissible levels for sulfur dioxide emissions.

Budget

Senators Troubled by Proposed Cuts to Forest Service Budget

U.S. Forest Service Chief Tom Tidwell is pinning some of his budget hopes on the prospect of a wide-ranging federal infrastructure spending plan that could address many issues—including some shortfalls in the Trump administration's budget request for his agency.

Chemicals

Butter Flavoring, Solvent Hazards Mulled in Draft Reports

A butter-flavoring agent blamed for causing lung disease in workers and a solvent are summarized in draft technical reports the National Toxicology Program released for public comment and peer review.

Climate Change

How Australia Survived a Climate Policy Reversal

Australian businesses and organizations say they know firsthand the damage that can be done if a national government retreats from climate commitments—and they have some suggestions for U.S. companies on how to respond.

Climate Change

If Trump Gets His Way, World May Not Know If U.S. Emissions Rise

President Donald Trump's critics argue that pulling the U.S. out of the Paris climate accord will lead to an increase in greenhouse gas emissions.

Coal Mining

Lawmakers, Regulators Stress Urgency to Renew Mine Cleanup Fee

Congress is already behind schedule in renewing a fee on coal companies that's essential for cleaning up the \$10.5 billion worth of abandoned mines across the country, lawmakers and state regulators said June 7.

Coal-Fired Power Plants

Utilities Seek Ohio Subsidies Even as Coal Falls From Power Mix

American Electric Power and other electricity companies want Ohio ratepayers to prop up two of their aging coal-fired power plants until 2040 despite AEP's predictions that coal will drop in its mix for electricity generation.

Compliance Programs

VW U.S. Court Monitor to Triple Staff to Halt Rerun of Scandal

Volkswagen AG's U.S. court-appointed monitor might roughly triple the number of experts supervising the German car manufacturer to 60 staffers as investigations into its diesel-emissions scandal weigh on the company almost two years after the cheating emerged.

Congress

House Panel Approves Energy Bills as Pallone Urges Climate Action

A House panel unanimously approved a slew of energy bills June 7, including a measure to increase workforce education and training for energy and manufacturing-related fields.

Drinking Water

Cancer Study Finds No Link to PFOA Exposure in N.Y. Town

A study of Hoosick Falls, N.Y. residents by the New York State Health Department found no statistically significant incidents of cancers normally associated with exposure to perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA).

Endangered Species

Interior to Review Sage Grouse Policy, Consider Changes

The federal government will review conservation plans for the greater sage grouse to determine how it can work more closely with states and use more flexibility and innovation to protect the bird in 11 Western states, Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke said June 7.

Energy

Dark Clouds Hang Over Nuclear Town Torpedoed by Green Energy

In an eerily quiet nuclear reactor hall in southern Sweden, new copper and steel machinery stretching 50 meters and weighing hundreds of tons is just sitting idle.

Energy

Key Shale-Boom Booster Threatened by Trump's Spending-Cut Plans

An agency instrumental to America's surge in energy production would lose half its funding in President Donald Trump's proposed federal budget.

Energy

Top German Court Blocks Nuclear Fuel Tax

Germany's Constitutional Court said June 7 the federal government overstepped its powers when introducing the national nuclear-fuel tax in 2011.

Enforcement

U.S. Ends Bank Penalty Practice Called 'Slush Fund' by GOP

The U.S. Justice Department is ending an Obama-era practice of allocating some Wall Street settlement money to advocacy groups that Republican lawmakers claimed were backing liberal causes.

Price Fixing

Epic Gas Trading Cartel Case Nears Fork in the Road

Natural gas companies including Xcel Energy Inc., CMS Energy Corp., and Dynegy Inc. may be headed to trial over allegations of fixing prices in the early 2000s, bringing to a close a massive 14-year effort to resolve discovery and other pretrial disputes (In re Western States Wholesale Nat. Gas Antitrust Litig. (Learjet, Inc. v. ONEOK Inc.), D. Nev., No. 2:03-cv-01431-RCJ-PAL Case No. 2:06-cv-00233-RCJ-PAL Case No. 2:07-cv-00987-RCJ-PAL, 6/5/17).

Radioactive Waste

Private Storage is Fastest Nuclear Waste Option: Sen. Alexander

The quickest—and possibly least expensive—solution for storing the country's used nuclear fuel would be at privately run interim storage facilities, the Republican heading the Senate panel on the Energy Department's budget says.

Regulatory Policy

Committee Looks Favorably on Rao as Regulatory Chief

A Senate committee asked technical, friendly questions of Neomi Rao, who is being considered as administrator of the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, which reviews all significant federal regulations.

Toxic Substances

Australia Could Overhaul Chemical Assessments, Ban Animal Tests

Six bills introduced to Australia's Parliament would recast the country's assessment regime for industrial chemicals and ban animal testing for cosmetics.

Vehicle Fuels

Electric Car Market Goes Zero to 2 Million in Five Years

The number of electric vehicles on the road rocketed to 2 million in 2016 after being virtually non-existent just five years ago, according to the International Energy Agency.

Podcast & Webinar

Chemicals

Webinar: Reviewing New Chemicals Under Amended TSCA

Bergeson & Campbell, P.C. and Bloomberg BNA present a free webinar Monday, June 12, "Reviewing New Chemicals Under Amended TSCA: Impact on Innovation." Speakers include Lynn Bergeson, managing partner of Bergeson & Campbell; Richard Engler, senior chemist at Bergeson & Campbell; Charlie Auer, senior regulatory and policy adviser at Bergeson & Campbell; Jeffery Morris, director of the Office of Pollution Prevention and Toxics at the EPA; Beth Bosley, president of ...

EPA

PODCAST: What Happens When Empty Desks Run the Government

President Donald Trump blamed Democrats June 5 for "taking forever" to approve his administration's appointees in a tweet, saying that "They are nothing but OBSTRUCTIONISTS!" But, Trump hasn't moved the quickest of the last few presidents on vetting and getting appointees through the confirmation process—in fact, he is the slowest of the last four presidents, according to data collected by the Partnership for Public Service. Of the 559 key positions ...

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