

To: Jackson, Ryan[jackson.ryan@epa.gov]
From: POLITICO Pro Energy
Sent: Fri 8/11/2017 9:43:02 AM
Subject: Morning Energy: EPA to assess climate report — EPA to include 2021 auto emissions 2022-25 in model year review — Methane stay rejected again

By Esther Whieldon | 08/11/2017 05:41 AM EDT

With help from Emily Holden and Alex Guillén

EPA TO GRADE THE CLIMATE REPORT: Scott Pruitt says EPA will review the upcoming federal climate change research report compiled by 13 agencies "and evaluate the merits and demerits and the methodology and accuracy of the report." [Emily Holden reports](#) that the EPA chief told a [Texas radio show](#) on Thursday the scientific section of the upcoming National Climate Assessment "ought to be subjected to peer-reviewed, objective-reviewed methodology and evaluation. Science should not be politicized. Science is not something that should be just thrown about to try to dictate policy in Washington, D.C."

Pruitt also dismissed the discussions in Washington about carbon emissions and the links to climate change as "political," but said his planned debate over climate science was good for the country. Asked by the radio show host why there's a "preoccupation with CO2" in Washington, Pruitt said because it "serves political ends."

"Frankly, the last several years the past administration used the CO2 issue as a wedge issue, and that's why we talked about it this much," he said. "Why aren't we celebrating what we're achieving with respect to CO2 ... why do we continue to engage in this political football?"

A [draft](#) of the science assessment Pruitt was referring to was cited this week by The New York Times, which said some of the report's authors were worried the Trump administration would suppress its findings. That draft brought together peer-reviewed work of dozens of scientists within the federal government and concluded it is "extremely likely" human activity is the main cause of global warming since the mid-20th century, and it projects more intense heat waves, extreme droughts and severe flooding.

Pruitt's comments came just as the [National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration](#) issued a separate report Thursday confirming that 2016 was the warmest year on record, surpassing the records set in each of the two previous years.

EPA TO INCLUDE 2021 AUTO EMISSIONS IN 2022-25 MODEL YEAR REVIEW: EPA will expand its review of 2022-2025 model year vehicle greenhouse gas emissions standards to include 2021 model year standards, Alex Guillén [reports](#). The move mirrors a reconsideration of that year's fuel economy standards by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, which must set its Corporate Average Fuel Economy standards in blocks of up to five years, meaning it is only just starting to write rules for 2022-2025. EPA announced earlier this year that it will reopen the midterm review of the 2022-2025 standards after the Obama administration, in its final days in office, certified those standards as achievable. EPA has until April 1, 2018, to decide whether to weaken or keep the Obama administration levels. Any change to EPA's

standards would require a formal rulemaking.

METHANE STAY REJECTED AGAIN: The full D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals on Thursday shot down renewed attempts to revive EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt's 90-day stay of the methane rule for new oil and gas wells, [Alex reports](#). A three-judge panel last month said Pruitt's stay was unlawful and the full court later reinstated the rule. With a vote of 8-3 Thursday, the court denied requests by industry groups and Republican state officials for a full court review of the decision. The court has effectively squashed hopes of further appeals since seeking Supreme Court review would take more time than would have been left on the stay, which would have expired Aug. 31. However, Pruitt is likely to have a longer-term stay in place soon.

TRUMP SCOFFS AT CLIMATE CHANGE: President Donald Trump on Thursday responded to questions about the nation's nuclear posture toward North Korea by somewhat strangely reiterating his disagreement with the past administration on climate change. Speaking at his New Jersey golf course, Trump told reporters that "Nuclear to me, number one, I would like to 'de-nuke' the world. I know that President Obama said global warming is the biggest threat. I totally disagree...I'd like to de-nuke the world. I would like Russia, the United States and China and Pakistan and many other countries that have nuclear weapons get rid of them. But until such time that they do, we will be the most powerful nuclear nation on earth, by far."

Welcome to Friday! I'm your guest host, Esther Whieldon, congratulating Dwight Miller of Parametrix Inc., who was the first to answer that Lavinia "Vinnie" Ream was the first female artist commissioned by the government to sculpt a statue. Ream was hired as a teenager in 1866 to sculpt the standing statue of President Abraham Lincoln, which resides in the Capitol building's rotunda. Ream, who is buried in Arlington Cemetery, also has another claim to fame: She may have [convinced](#) Sen. Edmond G. Ross, who boarded at her house, to cast the vote that saved President Andrew Johnson from being removed from office. Today's trivia question returns to Arlington Cemetery where yours truly spent many college summer days giving tours on TourMobile buses: Name the Pulitzer Prize-winning female journalist who covered World War II and the Korean and Vietnam wars and is buried in Arlington Cemetery. Send us your guesses, tips, energy gossip and comments at ewhieldon@politico.com and aadragna@politico.com and follow us on Twitter [@esternow](https://twitter.com/esternow), [@aadragna](https://twitter.com/aadragna), [@bjlefebvre](https://twitter.com/bjlefebvre), [@Morning_Energy](https://twitter.com/Morning_Energy), and [@POLITICOPro](https://twitter.com/POLITICOPro).

JUDGE SENDS MURRAY-OLIVER CAT FIGHT BACK TO STATE COURT: Coal magnate Bob Murray's lawsuit against comedian John Oliver has been sent out of federal court and [back down to a state court](#). There was some debate about whether the lawsuit over Oliver's June TV segment about Murray and his coal companies was a dispute between parties from different states, but it turns out both Murray's companies and HBO and its affiliates are all incorporated in Delaware, which means technically there is no interstate battle. However, the case will not be heard in the First State; instead, it will move forward in the Circuit Court of Marshall County, W. Va., where some of Murray's coal interests are located.

REPORT PROBES IMPACT OF SHALE BOOM ON EDUCATION: Economic research organization Resources for the Future is out with a new [report](#) that concludes that the oil and gas boom in recent years has had mixed results, but has generally not hurt student learning. Based on

existing literature and interviews with teachers and others across six oil and gas producing states — Pennsylvania, Ohio, West Virginia, North Dakota, Montana and Colorado — the paper found the impacts of the boom had different effects in each region. For example, student enrollment was statistically higher in boom districts in North Dakota, but Marcellus Shale districts saw a decline in student enrollment compared to neighboring areas.

NORTHERN PASS LINE ONE STEP CLOSER TO GREEN LIGHT: DOE issued its final environmental impact statement Thursday for Eversource's 192-mile-long high-voltage transmission line that would deliver more than 1,000 megawatts of hydropower from Canada to New England. The move queues up the agency to potentially issue a presidential permit for the project later this year, although Northern Pass is still awaiting approvals from the Forest Service and Army Corps of Engineers. The project's route through New Hampshire calls for adding another 52 miles of underground line to the original proposal to reduce the chances of it spoiling the view along the Appalachian Trail. That change that will add about \$1.41 billion to the project's cost. Eversource aims to bring the project online in 2020.

COMPANY PROPOSES SOLAR PROJECT ON BLM LAND: Utility-scale developer SolarReserve has filed for a right-of-way grant with the Bureau of Land Management for its proposed 1,600 megawatt Sandstone Solar Energy project in Nevada, the company said in a notice to Nevada utility regulators. The company, which declined to provide a copy of its BLM filing, ultimately aims to use about 20,000 acres for eight solar towers in Nye county and hopes to finish the project by 2022. Sandstone project's is not inside any of the solar energy zones BLM created several years ago in the state, according to a company spokeswoman. The Sandstone project appears to be among the first proposed following the rule BLM issued last year that allows the agency to seek competitive bids for leases.

EPA STAFFER AMONG CYBER EXPERTS LEAVING GOVERNMENT: Sean Kelley, EPA's chief information security officer, is one of four senior cybersecurity officials that are leaving U.S. government posts, according to BuzzFeed. The article says the exodus of top leaders raises concerns they could be leaving agencies more vulnerable to cyber attacks. Kelley is taking a job in the private sector after working at EPA for just a few months.

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Pruitt: EPA will review climate findings in scientific report [Back](#)

By Emily Holden | 08/10/2017 09:35 PM EDT

EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt told hosts of a [Texas radio show](#) on Thursday his agency will review an upcoming federal climate change research report compiled by 13 agencies "and evaluate the merits and demerits and the methodology and accuracy of the report."

Pruitt also dismissed the discussions in Washington about carbon emissions and the links to climate change, saying they were "political."

"Frankly this report ought to be subjected to peer-reviewed, objective-reviewed methodology and evaluation. Science should not be politicized. Science is not something that should be just thrown about to try to dictate policy in Washington, D.C. It ought to be objectively measured. We ought to be able to inform our citizens about what we know and what we do not know," Pruitt said in the interview.

Pruitt was referring to a portion of the National Climate Assessment, a comprehensive climate report issued by the federal government every four years. His comments came just as the [National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration](#) issued a separate report Thursday confirming that 2016 was the warmest year on record, surpassing the records set in each of the two previous years.

Pruitt [plans](#) to launch his own debate of climate science, which both his detractors and supporters have said would be an unnecessarily politicized exercise.

The EPA chief said Wednesday that "this debate, this discussion, I think it's good and healthy for this country."

The Trump administration is required by law to issue the National Climate Assessment and its Climate Science Special Report next year.

The [draft](#) of the science assessment cited this week by The New York Times consolidated the peer-reviewed work of dozens of scientists within the federal government. It establishes that it is "extremely likely" human activity is the main cause of global warming since the mid-20th century. It projects more intense heat waves, extreme droughts and severe flooding, ranking effects based on a range of confidence levels.

Staff from EPA and other agencies have previously approved the report, but Pruitt and the White House have one last opportunity to make changes.

Asked by the radio show host why there's a "preoccupation with CO2" in Washington, Pruitt said because it "serves political ends."

"Frankly, the last several years the past administration used the CO2 issue as a wedge issue, and that's why we talked about it this much," he said. "Why aren't we celebrating what we're achieving with respect to CO2 ... why do we continue to engage in this political football?"

"Let's just focus on getting the job done through innovation and technology instead of trying to create wedge issues," he said.

Pruitt also weighed in on the New York Times story about the draft report, which said scientists were worried the Trump administration might interfere with its publication. Report authors told POLITICO they've yet to see any sign that might happen, although Trump's stance that climate change is a "hoax" had raised concerns.

"The New York Times out there saying they had to release this report because it's going to be suppressed is just simply legendary. It's just made up news trying to create a distraction from the real work that's being done in Washington, D.C.," he said.

Pruitt praised news stories that were critical of The New York Times for saying it had obtained an unreleased version, even though the report had been available on one website. The New York Times subsequently corrected the statement that the report had not been previously available and published a more recent draft that it obtained.

Alex Guillén contributed to this report.

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2016 confirmed as planet's hottest year [Back](#)

By Emily Holden | 08/10/2017 01:02 PM EDT

Last year was Earth's warmest on record, according to an international climate report issued Thursday by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration that documents other record-breaking global warming trends of 2016.

The report is the most comprehensive assessment of the effects of climate change released by the Trump administration, and it could make it easier to refute efforts from the president and his Cabinet members to publicly discount climate science as they have frequently done in the past. However, the annual report does not detail the link between climate change and human activities such as burning coal or gasoline. Those conclusions are drawn in a separate draft portion of the National Climate Assessment highlighted by The New York Times earlier this week.

The "State of the Climate" publication, which confirms findings released before President Donald Trump was sworn in, outlines the observed outcomes of swiftly rising temperatures. They include the highest sea levels ever recorded, extremes in rain cycles and declines in global ice and snow cover. The nearly 500 authors convened by NOAA explain the effects that are due both to long-term global warming and shorter-term weather events like El Niño.

Last year was the third in a row to break global temperature records, the report found. It includes science from nearly 60 countries and will appear in the Bulletin of the American Meteorological Society and on NOAA social media feeds.

"This is basically like an annual physical of the climate system," said report co-editor Deke Arndt, NOAA's climate monitoring chief.

It "compiles the facts the data the observations from around the climate system and puts it in an annual manuscript," he said.

Trump has referred to climate change as a "hoax," and his environment and energy secretaries have plans to host a public debate of the science that have generated outcry among some climate scientists who say the human-caused climate change is definitely happening. EPA chief Scott Pruitt said his review could happen as soon as this fall.

"The American people deserve an honest, open, transparent discussion about this supposed threat to this country," Pruitt said on a North Dakota radio show Wednesday.

NOAA and NASA in January combined their data to announce 2016 was the hottest year so far, but the new report backs that finding up with science from around the world. NOAA, which is under the Commerce Department, stands out among other federal agencies. NOAA earlier this year released its annual Greenhouse Gas Index. The EPA, on the other hand, has removed climate change information from its website.

NOAA said last year's heat record is "from the combined influence of long-term global warming and a strong El Niño early in the year."

"Several markers such as land and ocean temperatures, sea level and greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere broke records set just one year prior," NOAA said.

Ardnt explained that NOAA doesn't specify what warming is from climate change and what is from weather events.

"The long-term climate change is like riding up an escalator over time, and things like El Niño and La Niña are like jumping up and down on that escalator," Arndt said.

The Times reported that some scientists are worried the Trump administration could suppress or interfere with climate science reports like the National Climate Assessment, which is required by law to be issued next year. Authors of the subsection of that report, however, said they've seen

no sign that might happen. Arndt, who has been working on the NOAA annual report for eight years, said it includes the "same general material," and underwent the "same general process."

Brenda Ekwurzel, the director of climate science for the Union of Concerned Scientists who was not involved with the report, said it is "almost at the level of the daily weather report you get." NOAA releases monthly data, too.

"This is typical, and it's ironic that people make a big ado about the big reports that kind of tie it all together," she said.

Ekwurzel said the government has a responsibility to inform people of the risks of man-made climate change.

Among its findings:

— Greenhouse gas concentrations are higher than ever recorded. Between 2015 and 2016, carbon dioxide concentrations saw their biggest annual increase in the 58 years on record, reaching peaks not seen in the last 800,000 years of ice core measurements.

— Global surface temperatures are the highest on record.

— Sea levels are the highest they've ever been since recordkeeping began. Global seas are about 3.25 inches higher than the 1993 average when satellite recording began. 2016 marks the sixth year that sea levels have risen.

— Precipitation cycles are becoming more extreme.

— The Arctic is warming faster than the rest of the world.

— Antarctic sea ice levels are lower than ever recorded.

— Alpine glaciers have declined for 37 consecutive years. Glaciers shrunk an average of 2.8 feet.

— There were more tropical cyclones, with 93 storms in 2016, compared to an average of 82 between 1981 and 2010.

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EPA will review 2021 auto emissions rule alongside later years [Back](#)

By Alex Guillén | 08/10/2017 04:43 PM EDT

EPA will expand its review of 2022-2025 model year vehicle greenhouse gas emissions standards to include 2021 model year standards, the agency announced today.

The development mirrors a reconsideration of that year's fuel economy standards by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. NHTSA must set its Corporate Average Fuel Economy standards in blocks of up to five years, meaning it is only just starting to write rules for 2022-2025, and the agency said last month that it will also review its rule for 2021.

Because NHTSA is reviewing its own 2021 standard, EPA will do the same, according to a pre-publication notice signed today by EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt and Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao. It asks for input on the "availability and effectiveness of technology," costs and impacts on consumers, auto manufacturers and automobile safety, among other things.

EPA announced earlier this year that it will reopen the midterm review of the 2022-2025 standards after the Obama administration, in its final days in office, certified those standards as achievable. EPA has until April 1, 2018, to decide whether to weaken or keep those standards.

Any change to EPA's standards, either for 2021 or for the midterm review period of 2022-2025, would require a formal rulemaking process and would be open to legal challenges.

WHAT'S NEXT: The agencies will take public comments for 45 days once the notice is published in the Federal Register.

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Court rejects effort to revive Pruitt's methane rule stay [Back](#)

By Alex Guillén | 08/10/2017 05:05 PM EDT

The full D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals today by a vote of 8-3 rejected attempts to revive EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt's 90-day stay of the methane rule for new oil and gas wells.

A three-judge panel last month said Pruitt's stay was unlawful, and the full court later reinstated the methane rule. Today, it said it will not grant the en banc appeal requests made by industry groups and Republican state officials. The Trump administration itself did not seek an appeal.

The rejection effectively ends any further appeal efforts; seeking Supreme Court review would take more time than would be left on the stay, which would have expired Aug. 31. However, Pruitt is likely to have a longer-term stay in place soon.

Three of the circuit's 11 active judges voted to hear the appeal: Karen LeCraft Henderson, Janice Rogers Brown and Brett Kavanaugh. All three are Republican appointees.

WHAT'S NEXT: The public comment period on Pruitt's proposed stay that would last through 2019 closed on Wednesday. That longer-term stay could be in place in a matter of weeks.

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