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Leading the News

Asbestos

EPA Sets Out Parameters for Studying Asbestos Risk

The EPA took an early step June 22 to lay out how it plans to evaluate the risk of asbestos, publishing an initial document on how it will review information on the substance.

Chemicals

EPA Details New Oversight of Chemicals in Three Final Rules

The Environmental Protection Agency released June 22 final rules establishing its first-ever, comprehensive regulatory strategy to evaluate—and regulate, if needed—chemicals in commerce.

Risk Assessment

EPA Examining Worker Exposures to Solvents, Liver Damage

The EPA will review whether five commonly used solvents may damage liver or kidney function or cause other harms in exposed workers, the general public or people living near sites where the chemicals are made or disposed, according to risk scoping documents the agency released June 22.

Risk Assessment

EPA to Refine Initial Analysis of Pigment, Other Chemicals

Lenox Corp., Tiffany & Co., 3M, BASF Corp. and Procter & Gamble Corp. are among the companies that eventually could be affected by the risk analysis plans that the EPA released June 22 for four chemicals.

News

Air Pollution

Cement Plants to Get Extension for Alternate Emissions Tests

Cement manufacturers should be authorized to continue using alternative methods to comply with federal hydrochloric acid emissions limits due to a shortage of materials used to calibrate required monitoring systems, according to the EPA.

Air Pollution

EU Panel Backs U.N. Ozone, Air Pollution Agreements

The European Parliament's environment committee June 22 waved through draft European Union decisions to ratify international agreements on ozone-depleting substances and transboundary air pollution.

Asbestos

Foster Wheeler Appeal Upends Asbestos Case Transfer

A federal district court in Maryland denied Foster Wheeler LLC its right to a federal forum when it transferred a worker's asbestos exposure case to state court, the Fourth Circuit ruled June 22 (*Sawyer v. Foster Wheeler LLC*, 4th Cir., No. 16-1530, 6/22/17).

Climate Regulation

Carbon Caps for Refineries Delayed in San Francisco

A plan to cap greenhouse gas emissions at San Francisco Bay Area oil refineries is on hold, at least until September.

Contribution

Too Early to Call Two-Smelter Superfund Case, Court Says

More fact-finding is necessary to determine whether TCI Pacific Communications Inc. must pay Cyprus Amax Minerals Co. to clean up toxic waste from two smelters, the Northern District of Oklahoma ruled June 20 (*Cyprus Amax Minerals Co. v. TCI Pac. Commc'ns, Inc.*, 2017 BL 210907, N.D. Okla., No. 11-cv-0252, 6/20/17).

Energy

Bills to Streamline Pipeline Approval Process Move in House

A House subcommittee advanced a bill that would formalize the way the federal government approves cross-border energy pipelines, a response to the at-times chaotic approval process for the Keystone XL pipeline.

Energy

Electric Grid Resiliency Proposed Cuts Spark Bipartisan Concern

An Energy Department proposal to slash electric grid resiliency funding drew bipartisan concern from lawmakers June 22, but Energy Secretary Rick Perry said he doesn't share their concerns.

Energy

Interior's Zinke Defends Plans to Enhance Oil and Gas Leasing

The Interior Department wants to streamline the permitting of oil and gas leasing and deal with energy companies as partners, not adversaries, Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke told lawmakers June 22.

Energy

Mexico Oil Development Shelved; Indigenous Group Triumphs

Indigenous outcry against Mexico's oil development plans in the birthplace of the Zapatista movement has claimed its first victory.

Energy

NRC Quorum Nearly Assured as Svinicki Clears Cloture Vote

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission is nearly assured of having a quorum to make formal decisions as the Senate voted June 22 to advance Kristine Svinicki's nomination to a third term at the agency.

Enforcement

Ex-Alabama Official Admits to Bribery in Superfund Case

A former Alabama state representative admitted to accepting donations to his nonprofit foundation in exchange for helping a company avoid environmental contamination cleanup costs, according to a plea agreement announced June 22.

Insurance

Senate Banking Leaders Discussing Bipartisan Flood Reauthorization

Leaders on the Senate Banking Committee are negotiating their own bill to reauthorize the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), a committee aide told Bloomberg BNA June 22.

Pesticides

Bid Fails to Derail EU Controls on Bee-Harming Pesticides

The European Parliament's environment committee June 22 overwhelmingly rejected a bid by a small group of lawmakers to derail a European Union plan to impose tighter controls on three neonicotinoid pesticides.

Pesticides

Nonprofits Sue to Release EPA-Dow Pesticide Communications

Two nonprofits are suing the EPA for failing to release documents related to the agency's March decision not to ban a controversial pesticide.

Pipeline Safety

Dakota Access Builder \$4.2b Ohio Pipeline Sparks Concerns

Energy Transfer Partners LP is making a mess of its biggest project since the Dakota Access pipeline.

REACH

EU REACH Project Finds Companies Handling Banned Substances

A small number of companies in the European Union are flouting rules on substances phased out from use in the bloc under the REACH regulation, the European Chemicals Agency said June 22.

Radioactive Materials

Tokyo Electric Faces Fukushima Radiation Claims in U.S.

Tokyo Electric Power is subject to suit in the U.S. by servicemen alleging radiation exposure while assisting in the cleanup after a 2011 earthquake and tsunami hit Japan, the Ninth Circuit ruled (*Cooper v. Tokyo Elec. Power Co.*, 9th Cir., 15-56424, 6/22/17).

Radioactive Waste

Texas Company's Nuclear Storage Application in Flux

The status of Waste Control Specialists' application with federal regulators for an interim high-level nuclear waste storage site in West Texas remained in flux after a federal judge blocked the company's sale to a competitor.

Renewable Energy

Trump Says 'Solar Wall' on Mexican Border Would Pay for Itself

U.S. President Donald Trump said he's proposed building a "solar wall" on the Mexican border that would pay for itself by generating electricity.

Solid Waste

India Calls for Buffer Zones Around Landfills

India is calling on landfill operators and waste-handling plants to create buffer zones around their businesses to protect nearby residents.

Superfund

EPA to Spend \$9.4M to Take Lead-Tainted Soil From N.J. Town

It will cost an estimated \$9.4 million to remove and replace lead-contaminated soil from a residential development in West Deptford, N.J., built on top of a dump for crushed battery casings, the EPA said.

Superfund

EPA's Superfund Reform Ideas Echo Industry Wish List

Companies, consultants, and industry associations involved with Superfund sites are calling for a swifter, leaner cleanup program, and the EPA is listening.

Sustainability

Green Bond Mania Fans Demand to Prove Planet-Saving Promises

The green-bond market has boomed on the allure of investments that help the environment. Now, the industry is trying to show that the reality matches these ambitions.

Sustainability

U.N. Criticizes Efforts to Amend Brazil's Constitution on Land Rights

The United Nations has taken the unusual step of objecting to an effort to amend Brazil's constitution that it claims would endanger the rights of indigenous people and give lawmakers too much power to reclassify land that is now federally protected.

Vehicle Fuels

Trump Pledges Support for 'Under Siege' Ethanol Amid EPA Delays

President Donald Trump reiterated his support for the U.S. ethanol industry in a June 21 speech, even as his administration stokes uncertainty by considering last-minute changes to the way it mandates domestic consumption.

Water Resources

Bill Streamlining Federal Water Storage Permitting Passes House

Legislation providing a one-stop shop for water districts to build new water storage projects on land in the West managed by the Interior and Agriculture departments passed the House on a 233-180 vote along mostly partisan lines.

Water Resources

California Water Agency May Recover Infrastructure Use Costs

Southern California's largest water wholesaler gained ground in a legal dispute over its rate structure with the San Diego County Water Authority.

Practitioner Insights

Chemicals

Practitioner Insights: Prioritizing Health Was Intent of New Chemicals Reforms

One year ago, Congress did what many thought was impossible: it passed and the president signed into law the most sweeping environmental reform legislation in 25 years and the first significant update of the Toxic Substances Control Act in 40 years. The Frank R. Lautenberg Chemical Safety for the 21st Century Act was written first and foremost to protect public health and safety by ensuring that the Environmental Protection Agency had the resources and the explicit direction to determine the ...

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