

**To:** Jackson, Ryan[jackson.ryan@epa.gov]  
**From:** Bloomberg BNA Environment & Energy  
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**Subject:** First Move: Tax Time Arrives • House to Move on Wildfires • Colorado Mine's Concerns

What you need to know to start your day.

## Tax Time Arrives • House to Move on Wildfires • Colorado Mine's Concerns

By [Chuck McCutcheon](#)

House Republicans are rolling out a gigantic tax bill today. And the bill faces a couple of gigantic challenges.

One is the bill must gain reasonably broad GOP support. Another is it has a speed-of-light—by legislative standards—time frame devised with the goal of delivering a resounding Christmas present for President Trump and its backers in Congress.

It's possible that U.S. oil explorers could be big winners, and see a multibillion-dollar benefit from a move to slash the U.S. corporate tax rate. Domestic energy producers paid the second-highest effective tax rate of any business sector in 2014, at 37 percent.

Tax credits for wind and solar energy also have been discussed. Congress voted to extend credits for both under a 2015 deal, but EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt is calling for those credits to end early, saying wind and solar should “stand on their own” and compete against coal and other fossil fuels.

Supporters of the wind and solar credits have made their pitch to preserve those, as well as renew similar tax credits for other cleaner energy sources, including geothermal and fuel cells.

Texas Republican Kevin Brady, who heads the tax-writing panel, could tinker with the legislation before all his committee members get together next month to start the markup process.

**The House is expected** to consider a bill today in response to recent devastating wildfires.

A flag hangs in front of a fire-destroyed home in Santa Rosa, Calif.  
Photo by Justin Sullivan/Getty Images

Arkansas Republican Bruce Westerman's measure seeks to reduce the risk of

wildfires by giving the U.S. Forest Service various ways to fund fire suppression while giving loggers access to thin overgrown forests. It's a reworked version of legislation that passed the House in 2015 with the backing of 20 Democrats before failing to make it out of the Senate.

The White House late yesterday said it has concerns about the bill's proposed changes to the Stafford Act disaster relief law. Those called-for changes, it said, "would force competition for funding between wildfires on federal land and other disasters already covered by the Stafford Act, including hurricanes."

**Big mining companies** such as Peabody Energy and Alpha Natural Resources are watching what happens at Arch Coal's West Elk Mine in Colorado.

The mine is emitting volatile organic compounds—compounds that easily become vapors or gases—at levels that violate Colorado's air quality standards, Tripp Baltz reports. Environmentalists say the state is dragging its heels on enforcement because of industry-induced pressure. State officials deny that, citing in part how hard it is to estimate emissions.

The unfolding debate could have an impact on Clean Air Act permitting requirements at other underground coal mines nationwide with large methane emissions.

### Other Stories We're Covering

- **Scientists who get EPA grants** can no longer serve on an agency's scientific advisory panel. Sylvia Carignan takes a look at what that means.
- Refrigeration industry trade companies and officials are pushing for the Trump administration to keep intact at least one Obama-era climate policy: a deal to phase down refrigerant chemicals that are potent greenhouse gases. Abby Smith is following.
- A week after vowing that he's getting tough on corporate polluters, Pruitt says Exxon Mobil will pay more than \$300 million to resolve air pollution violations tied to eight chemical plants in Texas and Louisiana.
- Turning California's giant San Pedro Bay Port Complex into a zero-emissions operation will cost \$14 billion under a plan that harbor commissioners will consider Thursday. Carolyn Whetzel is covering.
- The EPA's Pesticide Program Dialogue Committee, a panel of environmentalists, trade group representatives, and state officials, will meet today and Thursday to discuss top issues the agency's pesticides program faces. Tiffany Stecker is covering.

### Quote of the Day

"This is like your best friend drove a truck through your house."

—Former FERC chairman Pat Wood III, a Texan, lamenting Energy Secretary Rick

Perry's proposal to help the coal and nuclear industries after having cheered Perry's backing of renewables when he was Texas governor.

### Today's Events

- **10 a.m. • Nominations** • Senate commerce and science panel considers nominations for NASA administrator and assistant commerce secretary for environmental observation and prediction.
- **12:30 p.m. • Energy Efficiency** • Johns Hopkins University sponsors talk on how energy efficiency can be financed in emerging markets.
- **3 p.m. • Latin America** • Wilson Center offers webcasted event on developing low-carbon economies in Latin America.
- **6 p.m. • Climate** • Columbia University's Center on Global Energy Policy holds webcasted discussion on Bonn climate talks featuring a Paris Agreement negotiations co-chair.

### Around the Web

- A Belgian beech tree is tweeting information from attached sensors about its health, something scientists hope can help with climate protection.
- A conceptual artist is turning water bottles from Flint, Mich., into raincoats and swimwear.
- Alaska oil and gas regulators have issued an emergency order to review of North Slope wells after a spill was connected to thawing permafrost, subsidence and a cracked casing.

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