

To: Jackson, Ryan[jackson.ryan@epa.gov]
From: Morning Energy
Sent: Tue 9/12/2017 2:05:22 PM
Subject: POLITICO's Morning Energy: Democrats hold fire on climate amid hurricane devastation — Pruitt, Ross to meet with Trump today — Upton pushes Enbridge for immediate repairs

By Anthony Adragna | 09/12/2017 10:00 AM EDT

ALL QUIET ON THE CLIMATE FRONT: Even as the double whammy of Hurricanes Harvey and Irma offers the U.S. an up-front glimpse of the types of devastation the world faces due to a warming climate, Democrats are largely holding their fire on Republicans, Pro's Emily Holden and Elana Schor [report](#). Instead, they appear to be heeding the warnings of several of President Donald Trump's Cabinet officials that discussing climate change with large swaths of land still underwater would be insensitive. "The response to Hurricanes Harvey and Irma thus far has been more muted, likely in part because of a desire to keep the focus on immediate disaster relief," said Trevor Houser, former energy adviser to Hillary Clinton's presidential campaign.

Democrats say there will be opportunities to explore the linkage between extreme weather and manmade climate change moving forward. "We have a lot of time to make that point, and I think we also have a lot of legislative opportunities as we look at reauthorizing flood insurance and funding the disaster relief," Sen. [Sheldon Whitehouse](#), one of staunchest climate hawks, said. Environmental advocates have hit Trump's inaction on climate change online, but have shied away from criticizing Democrats. "The truth is, I'd settle for politicians not talking about climate at all, and instead actually doing something," Bill McKibben, founder of 350.org, said.

Tone shift at the White House? Tom Bossert, Trump's homeland security adviser, told reporters Monday that the cause of both devastating hurricanes is "outside of my ability to analyze" but he acknowledged a need to bolster flood and coastal defenses threatened by rising seas and powerful storms. "We continue to take seriously the climate change, not the cause of it, but the things that we observe," he said. "What President Trump remains committed to is making sure that federal dollars aren't used to build things that will be in harm's way later or that won't be hardened against the future predictable floods that we see." While those words may offer hope to some, ME would note Trump has erased climate considerations from government processes, nixed flood standards for federal projects, withdrawn the U.S. from the Paris climate change agreement, pulled back a regulation to limit carbon dioxide from power plants and halted funding to help poor nations adapt to new weather extremes.

More money needed? Asked if the administration would put more money into agencies like FEMA and EPA, Bossert expressed openness to requesting additional funds - "We'll put money in as money is needed to address the need," he said - but added "right now we have plenty of resources to get through this."

Irma could've been even worse: Even as millions lost power during Hurricane Irma, the head of the state's largest utility said outages could've been even worse if Florida Power & Light Co. had not spent \$3 billion to improve the energy grid, POLITICO Florida's Bruce Ritchie [reports](#). "With this kind of storm what I can tell you is, we would be facing a much longer restoration" without the work, FPL President and CEO Eric Silagy said Monday.

Nelson wants Perry's help: The federal government should establish a fuel reserve in Florida to help prevent the fuel shortages that occurred during the response to Irma, Sen. [Bill Nelson](#) wrote in a Monday [letter](#) to Energy Secretary Rick Perry. "A Florida gasoline supply reserve would ensure that residents and first responders have access to an emergency supply of fuel, and help prevent the shortages that may have kept some from evacuating and may hinder recovery efforts going forward," Florida's senior senator wrote. DOE created the [Northeast Gasoline Supply Reserve](#) in 2014 following similar issues during Hurricane Sandy, he noted.

Checking in on Texas: EPA reported late Monday that 35 of the 2,238 drinking water systems affected by Harvey remain shut down, while 35 of the 1,219 wastewater treatment plants in affected countries also remain inoperable. The agency further said it had "directed potential responsible parties or has independently started collecting samples at the 43 Superfund sites to further confirm any impacts from the storm" and said additional assessments continue at two sites - San Jacinto Waste Pits and U.S. Oil Recovery. In addition, Reuters [reported](#) federal officials are cleaning up spills of oil and chemicals spilled from a dozen industrial facilities in the aftermath of Harvey.

Yikes: Water testing arranged by The New York Times from two Houston neighborhoods showed alarmingly high levels of bacteria and toxins. Tests from the Briarhills Parkway in the Houston Energy Corridor showed levels of E. coli at levels four times of what's considered safe, while Clayton Homes public housing development downtown showed concentrations of E. Coli more than 135 times healthy levels, as well as elevated levels of lead, arsenic and other heavy metals. The EPA said Monday that 40 of 1,219 waste treatment plants affected by Harvey were not working.

SIREN! Trump meets this morning at 10 a.m. in the Oval Office with EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt and Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross. EPA and the White House did not respond to further requests about what they'll be chatting about.

WELCOME TO TUESDAY! I'm your host Anthony Adragna, and NRDC's Ana Unruh Cohen was the first (of many) to identify Sam Rayburn as the longest-serving House speaker. For today: Which state has had eight lawmakers go on to serve as speaker? Send your tips, energy gossip and comments to aadragna@politico.com, or follow us on Twitter [@AnthonyAdragna](#), [@Morning_Energy](#) and [@POLITICOPro](#).

EPA LAUNCHES PROBE INTO ARKEMA INCIDENT: Officials at EPA have requested information from Arkema to help them ascertain whether the chemical company properly followed Clean Air Act safety regulations before Hurricane Harvey. EPA asked in [its letter](#), obtained by ME Monday, for a response from the company within 10 calendar days of receipt. Among the information sought is what the company did before the storm to prepare for potential flooding and loss of electricity, as well as the quantities of chemicals stored on site. Several chemical containers at the Crosby, Texas, facility caught fire after the hurricane deluged it with water.

MINE PRUITT VISITED FURLOUGHS WORKERS: Consol Energy's Bailey Mine

complex, which EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt visited back in April as one of the first stops on his "Back to Basics" campaign, furloughed more than 300 workers Monday after Pennsylvania's Department of Environmental Protection failed to approve a permit modification in time, the Observer-Reporter reports. A company spokesman said it was the first time in the site's history that state environmental regulators failed to approve a permit in a "timely manner" to maintain operations.

THEY'RE BACCCCCCK: House lawmakers return for a day and a half of work, with a slate of 6:30 p.m. votes expected to include the Interior and EPA section of eight-title, spending package H.R. 3354 (115) under consideration.

SPORTSMEN'S PACKAGE PUSH BEGINS AGAIN: The House Natural Resources Federal Lands subpanel today considers a broad sportsmen's package, H.R. 3668 (115). It contains a controversial provision that would make it easier to obtain gun silencers, bars EPA from ever regulating lead ammunition under the Toxic Substances Control Act, and reauthorizes the North American Wetlands Conservation Act for five years at \$50 million per year. The subpanel cancelled the initial hearing on the bill following the June congressional baseball shooting, which the measure's sponsor, Jeff Duncan (R-S.C.), witnessed.

If you go: The session kicks off at 10 a.m. in Longworth 1334. Ranking member Raul Grijalva and Rep. Mike Thompson will discuss the gun silencer provision during a press availability following the hearing.

Other hearings shelved: After Hurricane Irma delayed the House's return, the Energy and Commerce Energy Subcommittee canceled what was to have been a blockbuster hearing on the grid's reliability. Witnesses would have included FERC Chairman Neil Chatterjee (in what would have been his first appearance since confirmation), as well as Gerry Cauley, president of the North American Electric Reliability Corporation, and a DOE official. In addition, the House Science Committee postponed a full committee hearing on the electric grid's resilience that had also been slated for 10 a.m.

SENATE ENERGY LOOKS AT LABS: Senators on the Energy and Natural Resources Energy Subcommittee take a look at the contributions of DOE's national laboratories at a hearing beginning at 3 p.m. Sens. Cory Gardner and Joe Manchin deliver opening remarks, followed by testimony from representatives of West Virginia University, Argonne National Laboratory, Duke Energy and National Renewable Energy Laboratory. More here.

MAIL CALL! UPTON PUSHES ENBRIDGE FOR REPAIRS: Rep. Fred Upton, chairman of the Energy and Commerce Energy Subcommittee, sent a letter Monday urging Enbridge to "conduct repairs immediately" on its Line 5 pipeline after revelations of gaps in the line's protective coating. "The more recent disclosure of a loss of protective coating and the likelihood that human error was a factor raises serious concerns about Enbridge's compliance with federal pipeline safety laws," Upton wrote. "Rest assured I will remain hyper-vigilant and expect prompt response to my request."

MORE VOICES WEIGH IN ON SOLAR TARIFF CASE: Six right-leaning policy groups

will urge the International Trade Commission not to back a bid from solar manufacturers Suniva and SolarWorld USA to impose tariffs on imported solar products in [a letter](#) today, Pro Trade's Megan Cassella [reports](#). The groups fear an affirmative ITC decision would double the cost of solar products in the U.S. and leave the country vulnerable to retaliation and challenges at the WTO. "Similar to steel in 2002, solar tariffs today would amount to nothing more than a crony capitalist giveaway to failing companies," they wrote.

GREENS CHALLENGE NEVADA LEASE SALES: The Sierra Club and the Center for Biological Diversity filed a lawsuit Monday challenging BLM's June sale of oil and gas leases in northern Nevada. The lawsuit argues the government failed to consider the possible consequences of drilling in the area, ranging from contamination of desert water sources to increased greenhouse gas emissions. The June 13 sale [brought in](#) just \$38,560 from three parcels covering approximately 5,760 acres out of more than 95,000 acres offered.

NO MASS EXODUS AMONG THE FEDS: Just more than two percent of federal employees have left their positions since Trump became president, more than during presidents George W. Bush and Barack Obama's opening months but less dramatic than the mass departures feared, BuzzFeed [reports](#). Among the highest departure rates were the departments of Energy (2.7 percent) and Interior (2.5 percent).

REPORT: ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT FOR SOLAR DIVERSITY: A [report](#) out Monday from the Solar Foundation finds women represent just 28 percent of employees in the 260,000 person strong solar industry and people of color are a tiny share of the workforce. African-Americans hold just 7 percent of solar jobs, while Hispanic or Latino employees are 17 percent of the workforce and Asians are 9 percent. The study concludes "women and people of color face significant hurdles to achieving equal pay and positions in the solar industry."

MOVERS, SHAKERS: Adam Kolton has been named executive director of the Alaska Wilderness League, effective Oct. 10. He'll join from the National Wildlife Federation where he's currently vice president of federal advocacy.

SPOTTED: Gina McCarthy, sporting a rolling backpack, at the Dirty Habit bar near the EPA. She was drinking red wine and laughing jovially on Monday evening, per our tipster.

QUICK HITS

- Floridians battered by Irma maintain climate change is no 'big deal'. [The Guardian](#).
- Trump administration halts pollution controls at Utah coal plants. [AP](#).
- Suppliers warn EPA against regulatory rollback. [Automotive News](#).
- Three Top Names Emerge As Likely Head Of Western EPA Office. [Western Wire](#).
- Gasoline prices at pump are heading lower even as Florida struggles with supplies. [CNBC](#).

- State better off without Enbridge oil pipeline, Dayton agency says. [Minnesota Public Radio](#).

THAT'S ALL FOR ME!

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