To: Mylott, Richard[Mylott.Richard@epa.gov]
From: Morning Consult
Sent: Fri 9/9/2016 12:18:15 PM
Subject: Morning Consult Energy: House Committee Advances Bill to Work Around Coal Moratorium; Ethanol Credit Rise Hits Refiner's Finances

By Asha Glover

Today's Washington Brief

- The House Natural Resources Committee voted to exempt certain leases from the Obama administration's moratorium of coal leasing on federal land. In a 22-13 vote, the committee approved a bill that would allow leases to advance if a company submitted an application prior to the halt. (The Hill)

- The wide-ranging energy bill could have a difficult time in the conference committee to reconcile differences between the House and Senate versions of the legislation. Key issues some members want to see resolved include investment in energy infrastructure and measures to address the California drought and wildfire management. (Morning Consult)

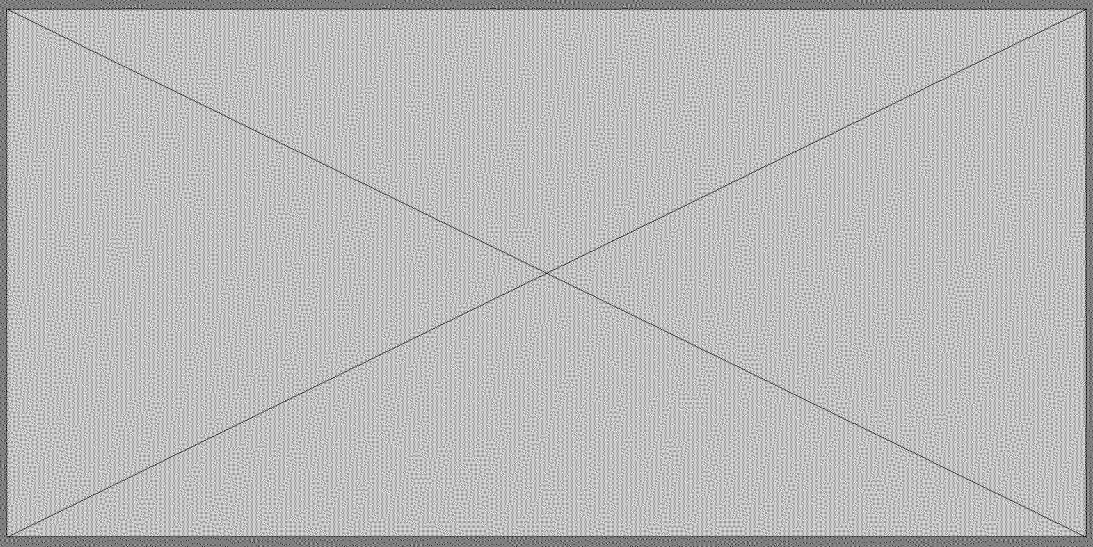
- Sen. John Barrasso (R-Wyo.) told Democrats that it was a bipartisan effort to get both the House and Senate to pass wide-ranging energy legislation, and that Democrats need to compromise in order to get something to the president's desk. Democrats could protest measures in the House bill and may try to get a better bill out of the next Congress. (Washington Examiner)

Today's Business Brief

- Philadelphia Energy Solutions said it is going to cut its workforce, freeze company pension contributions, cut health care benefits and delay projects as the company tries to reduce spending. The cuts come as ethanol credits rise and fuel prices stay low. (Bloomberg News)

- It is unclear how the Clean Power Plan's requirements would interact with the current state of the electrical grid, particularly if the new rules tilt the

Today's Chart Review



Mark Your Calendars (All Times Eastern)

Friday

No events scheduled

General

A handful of lawmakers are determined to pass the first wide-ranging energy bill in nearly a decade, but other members tempered expectations Thursday at the opening meeting of the conference committee to reconcile the House and Senate versions. Major sticking points on the legislation include funding for infrastructure, drought and wildfire language, and the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

A Republican senator on Thursday sent a message to any Democrats thinking about running the clock on efforts to pass the first comprehensive energy reform bill in nine years: Compromise now or miss out on a deal. Sen. John Barrasso, R-Wyo., said in his opening remarks at the first conference committee that it took a lot of bipartisan work for the Senate and House to pass comprehensive energy reform bills to even get to conference.

National Republican Congressional Committee Chairman Greg Walden (R-Ore.) confirmed Thursday he would like to be the next chairman of the House Energy and Commerce Committee if the GOP maintains its House majority this fall. Rep. John Shimkus (R-Ill.), who has seniority on the panel over Walden, has also indicated interest in seeking the position.

Ask Matthew Traver, the mayor of this village north of Albany, his opinion of General Electric and its two closed factories that spilled PCBs into the Hudson River for decades, and his words could not be clearer. "G.E.," he said, "has done a lot of damage to this community."

Selloffs in bonds and stocks around the world deepened on signs central banks are starting to question the benefits of further monetary easing. Oil pared a weekly gain, leading commodities lower. Longer-maturity bonds bore the brunt of the losses after the European Central Bank on Thursday downplayed the need for more stimulus, sending 30-year German bund yields to the highest since June.

Oil & Natural Gas

Philadelphia Energy Solutions, operator of the largest oil refinery on the East Coast, said its finances are "significantly stressed" and it's looking to cut workers, reduce benefits and delay capital projects. Company pension contributions will be frozen, healthcare benefits will be cut and buyouts will be offered to salaried employees, Chief Executive Officer Phil Rinaldi said in an e-mail to workers Wednesday obtained by Bloomberg.

U.S. crude stocks slumped more than 14 million barrels last week in the biggest weekly drawdown since 1999 as imports to the Gulf Coast hit a record low, which analysts attributed to Tropical Storm Hermine. Crude inventories fell 14.5 million barrels for the week ended Sept. 2, compared with expectations for an increase of 225,000 barrels, the U.S. Energy Information Administration said on Thursday.

That past has now become a poignant backdrop to protests over a $3.7 billion oil pipeline project that would cross a rancher's land just north of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe's reservation and plunge under a dammed section of the Missouri River. The company building the Dakota Access pipeline across four states and 1,170 miles says it will transport oil safely and reliably.

A conflict over tribal rights in rural North Dakota has exploded into a new flashpoint for the anti-fossil fuel movement. Environmentalists, tribal rights groups and anti-pipeline activists have taken up the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe's objections to the Dakota Access Pipeline, creating a new front in the national battle over fossil fuel projects.

Natural gas prices posted their biggest daily increase since late July after government data showed a smaller than expected increase in the amount of natural gas in storage Thursday. Natural gas futures for October delivery jumped 13 cents, or 4.86% to $2.806 a million British thermal units on the New York Mercantile Exchange, reversing two straight days of losses earlier in the week.

Oil prices edged lower on Friday but were set for the first weekly gain in three weeks after jumping 4 percent a day earlier due to a surprisingly large drawdown in U.S. crude stocks. Brent and West Texas Intermediate crude futures have gained nearly 6 percent this week and are on course for their biggest weekly gain in three weeks following two consecutive weeks of declines, after major producers Saudi Arabia and Russia agreed on Monday to cooperate on stabilizing the oil market.

Utilities & Infrastructure

With all the debate about the Obama administration's Clean Power Plan, its impact on the utility industry and the U.S. power grids has not been deeply explored. "I foresee real difficulties. I can't fit them together, I don't know how that's going to work," said Linda Stuntz, a deputy secretary at the Energy Department under President George H.W. Bush.

Enterprise Products Partners L.P. confirmed that it had been looking into a merger with fellow pipeline company Williams Cos., but it said it withdrew interest after Williams didn't engage. In after-hours trading, Williams shares fell 8.5% to $28.50.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) filed for cloture Thursday on the Water Resources Development Act, and Senate Environment and

Public Works Committee Chairman Jim Inhofe (R-Okla.) called on senators to file amendments by noon on Friday. The official deadline for amendments is Monday at 3:30 p.m., but Inhofe asked that senators submit amendments to the manager's package by noon on Friday in order to speed up the process.

Renewables

Belmont is studying an intriguing solution for what to do with all these dangerous dead trees - namely, burn them for energy. In a recent study in Energy Policy, Belmont and colleague Emily Beagle do the math on whether it would make sense to use the timber in existing coal plants, which can be "co-fired" with wood.

The Environmental Protection Agency needs to explain why it didn't compile years of reports detailing the challenges facing its renewable fuel program and ethanol mandate, said Rep. James Sensenbrenner, a vocal critic of the program. The Wisconsin Republican, who serves on the House Science, Space and Technology Committee's oversight panel, sent a letter to EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy Thursday, asking her to detail the reasons why the agency did not fulfill the requirement to conduct the studies and deliver them to Congress.

Coal

A House committee on Thursday voted to exempt some leases from the White House's moratorium on leasing federal land for coal mining. The Natural Resources Committee voted 22-13 to pass the bill from Rep. Ryan Zinke (R-Mont.) to permit leases to go forward if a company had

submitted an application for the mine before the moratorium took effect earlier this year.

Thousands of coal miners and their allies rallied outside the Capitol on Thursday in support of a bill to rescue their union's troubled pension fund. United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) President Cecil Roberts spoke passionately and at length to members of his union, their families and labor-movement allies.

Nuclear

TVA isn't getting out of the nuclear business entirely. In fact, its Watts Bar 2 nuclear reactor is finishing its final round of testing before becoming the nation's first nuclear reactor to start up in two decades.

Climate

California will tighten controls on greenhouse gas emissions from vehicles, factories and public utilities under a pair of bills signed on Thursday by Democratic Governor Jerry Brown. The measures in the most populous U.S. state would extend by 10 years California's main greenhouse gas reduction program and beef up oversight of the state agency charged with implementing it.

The United States needs to put a price on carbon dioxide and other pollutants and overhaul energy policies to help avoid catastrophic climate

change and other public health calamities, according to a report released today by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine. The multiyear analysis concludes that policies must change for nearly every energy technology, from nuclear power to solar photovoltaics.

Environmentalists sued the Obama administration on Thursday seeking new federal water-quality standards designed to protect marine life against the corrosive effects of carbon emissions absorbed into the ocean from the burning of fossil fuels. The lawsuit, brought by the Arizona-based Center for the Biological Diversity, accused the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency of failing to take action as required under the Clean Water Act to stem the rising threat of ocean acidification.

What Mr. Obama has seen instead are the charts and graphs of a warming planet. "And they're terrifying," he said in a recent interview in Honolulu.

A U.S. government weather forecaster said Thursday La Nina conditions were no longer likely to develop during the Northern Hemisphere fall and winter 2016/17, saying neutral conditions were more likely. The Climate Prediction Center (CPC), an agency of the National Weather Service, said in a monthly forecast there was a 55 to 60 percent chance of El Nino-Southern Oscillation (ENSO) neutral conditions, meaning La Nina was no longer favored to occur.

Some of Hawaii's most iconic birds are experiencing dangerous declines - and a combination of mosquitoes and climate change seems to be the culprit. A study published Wednesday in the journal Science Advances suggests that mosquito-borne diseases, including avian malaria, have helped cause rapid declines in nearly all the native bird species on the Hawaiian island of Kaua'i.

Opinions, Editorials & Perspectives

As a proud Alaska Native and an aspiring engineer at the University of Alaska Anchorage, I'm enthused about Alaska's future, and my role in it. I'm also convinced that Alaska's economic sustainability and America's energy security are inextricably bound to the continuation of safe, responsible oil and natural gas development.

Corporations have become increasingly vulnerable to reputational damage inflicted by powerful environmental organizations that misrepresent business activities and intimidate customers. Companies also find themselves subject to shakedowns over alleged environmental damage.

Research Reports, Issue Briefs & Case Studies

Solar energy technology has the power to dramatically change the face of modern electricity generation. From rooftop, to community, to utility-scale projects, consumers across the country are realizing the awesome potential that solar brings to them in the form of clean, affordable, and reliable energy. To ensure that solar energy technology thrives, and that consumers are able to access it, federal, state, county, and even local governments have created incentives that make solar technology make sense.

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