Message

From: Morning Consult [energy@e.morningconsult.com]
Sent: 1/18/2017 1:08:02 PM
To: Stavnes, Sandra [Stavnes.Sandra@epa.gov]
Subject: Morning Consult Energy: Zinke Says Climate Change Isn't a Hoax, but Questions Solutions

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ENERGY

By Jack Fitzpatrick

Washington Brief

- Rep. Ryan Zinke (R-Mont.) said climate change is not a hoax, though he hedged on how much influence humans have on it, during the hearing over his selection to lead the Department of the Interior. (Washington Examiner)
- The Obama administration announced it will send $500 million to the international Green Climate Fund to help address climate change. (The Wall Street Journal)
- Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) announced he will introduce a bill that would permanently guarantee health care coverage for retired coal miners and their dependents, while another bipartisan group of senators has called for both a health care and pension fix. (The Hill)

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Business Brief

- ExxonMobil Corp. agreed to buy companies with drilling rights on 250,000 acres in the Permian Basin in Texas and New Mexico in a deal worth $5.6 billion in Exxon shares and up to $1 billion more in cash. (Financial Times)

- Energy Transfer Partners asked a federal judge to block the Army Corps of Engineers from launching a full environmental impact statement on the Dakota Access pipeline. (The Associated Press)

- Saudi Aramco CEO Amin Nasser said his company is investing $25 trillion over the next 25 years to build its oil and gas production capacity to meet future growth. (Reuters)

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Chart Review

Exxon and Noble Stoke Permian Passions
Bloomberg Gadfly

(Almost) Peak Oil

Noble is paying close to Clayton Williams's all-time high, when oil was trading at more than $100 per barrel

Source: Bloomberg

Events Calendar (All Times Local)

Wednesday

Confirmation hearing for Pruitt to lead the EPA	10 a.m.
CSIS discussion on African natural gas	10 a.m.

Thursday

Confirmation hearing for Perry to lead the Energy Dept.	10 a.m.

Friday

Inauguration Day

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General

Trump's Interior pick promises local cooperation, park maintenance
Timothy Cama, The Hill

Rep. Ryan Zinke, President-elect Donald Trump's choice to lead the Interior Department, on Tuesday called public lands "America's treasure" and promised changes like better cooperation with local communities near federal lands. Zinke's opening speech at his confirmation hearing before the Senate Energy and Natural

Resources Committee focused on his credentials as a committed conservationist, while largely avoiding controversial issues like how much fossil fuel extraction should happen on federal land.

'Oops' question one of many likely to dog Perry's confirmation
Hannah Northey, E&E Daily

Does former Texas Gov. Rick Perry (R) still want to dismantle the Department of Energy, the sprawling federal entity he's slated to lead if confirmed by the Senate? While the bulk of the panel's 12 Republicans have signaled support for Perry, who failed to win the White House in the past two presidential elections, a number of the committee's 10 Democrats have questions about worker protection and Perry's qualifications to oversee the nation's nuclear arsenal and the world's largest environmental cleanup program.

Why the EPA nominee could be a political wrecking ball
Zack Colman, Christian Science Monitor

When new presidents come to the White House, the pendulum of federal environmental action tends to swing, and under Donald Trump it may take an unusually wide shift - seen especially in passing responsibility to the states. State empowerment stands out like no other theme as a guiding light for Scott Pruitt, who faces a confirmation hearing today as President-elect Trump's nominee to head the Environmental Protection Agency.

Havens Slip in Tussle of Politics Versus Inflation
Samuel Potter and Natasha Doff, Bloomberg News

The rally in haven assets paused, with the yen and precious metals declining as investors weighed the prospect of rising inflation against political uncertainty in the run-up to Donald Trump's inauguration as president. Emerging-market stocks gained.

Oil and Natural Gas

ExxonMobil buys drilling rights in big bet on US shale
Ed Crooks, Financial Times

ExxonMobil has placed a big bet on US shale oil, agreeing a deal worth up to $6.6bn to buy companies with drilling rights on about 250,000 acres in the Permian Basin region of Texas and New Mexico. The deal, which is worth $5.6bn in Exxon shares

plus up to $1bn more in cash, is the company's largest since the $41bn acquisition of XTO Energy, agreed in 2009.

Russian state bank helped partial privatisation of Rosneft
Max Seddon et al., Financial Times

Glencore and Qatar's sovereign wealth fund acquired a stake in Russian oil group Rosneft last month with significant help from sanctioned state bank VTB, according to documents. VTB provided QHG Shares Ltd, a joint venture used by Glencore and QIA to buy the 19.5 per cent stake, with financing of almost $11.8 billion in December, according to documents filed with regulators in Singapore.

Saudi Aramco to continue building oil, gas capacity to meet demand: CEO
Dmitry Zhdannikov, Reuters

Saudi Aramco Chief Executive Amin Nasser said the state oil giant was working on building its oil and gas production capacity to meet future demand growth. "What we are doing at Saudi Aramco is building our capacity in oil, we are the most reliable oil producer, we have a maximum sustained capacity of 12 million barrels per day (bpd). The kingdom has a capacity of 12.5 million bpd," Nasser said on Tuesday.

Utilities and Infrastructure

Dakota Access company seeks to block pipeline study
Blake Nicholson, The Associated Press

The company building the Dakota Access oil pipeline wants a federal judge to block the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers from launching a full environmental study of the $3.8 billion pipeline's disputed crossing of a Missouri River reservoir in North Dakota. Texas-based Energy Transfer Partners asked U.S. District Judge James Boasberg on Tuesday to stop the Corps from publishing a notice in the Federal Register on Wednesday announcing the study.

Elliott Discloses 6.9% Stake in NRG Energy
Anne Steele, The Wall Street Journal

NRG Energy Inc.'s stock jumped Tuesday morning after Elliott Associates LP disclosed a 6.9% stake and a push to shake up the board at the power producer.

Renewables

Utility Plans Vote on New York Offshore Wind Project
The Associated Press

A New York utility is set to vote later this month on a plan to construct an offshore wind farm off eastern Long Island. The Long Island Power Authority says the 90-megawatt, 15-turbine wind farm 30 miles east of Montauk would be the largest offshore wind project built to date.

With Indian Point closing, Quebec sees an opportunity for hydropower
Marie J. French and David Giambusso, Politico

Plans to close the Indian Point nuclear power plant in four years could invigorate efforts to build what some have called an extension cord to transmit Canadian hydropower to New York City. The 333-mile high-voltage line, called the Champlain Hudson Power Express, has obtained most of the major federal and state approvals it needs for construction to begin.

Coal

Senators introduce dueling miners bills
Jordain Carney, The Hill

Senators are rolling out two competing bills to help guarantee healthcare for miners and their families after lawmakers were only able to agree to a short-term patch late last year. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) announced on Tuesday that he is filing legislation that would include a "permanent extension" for retired coal miners and their dependents.

GAO: Surface Coal Mines Face Lower Standard for Financial Assurances
Jack Fitzpatrick, Morning Consult

Surface coal mining is the only energy-related activity on federal lands where companies are allowed to promise, without a third-party guarantor, that they'll be able to cover the cost of restoring land after they are done, according to a Government Accountability Office report released Tuesday. Sen. Maria Cantwell (D-Wash.), the ranking Democrat on the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, said in a statement that the report indicates coal miners are "getting a sweet deal" compared to other sources of energy development on federal lands, including hardrock mining, oil and gas extraction, and wind and solar development.

Colstrip power plant closure could come earlier than 2022
Matthew Brown and Matt Volz, The Associated Press

A partial closure of an aging coal-fired power plant serving customers across the Pacific Northwest could come earlier than planned depending on the actions of its co-owner and Montana lawmakers, according to documents released Tuesday by Washington state regulators. The documents submitted by Puget Sound Energy detail its plan to retire two of Colstrip's four generating units.

Nuclear

12,000 pages of design may propel a nuclear energy future for Utah consumers
Amy Joi O'Donoghue, Deseret News

An application of nearly 12,000 pages detailing the design of a proposed modular nuclear power plant in southeast Idaho has been submitted to the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, completing another step in the regulatory process. The commission is expected to take several months to determine if any additional information is needed for NuScale Technology's design package - the first small modular reactor project to seek federal approval.

Climate

Obama Administration Sending $500 Million to Global Climate Change Fund
Amy Harder, The Wall Street Journal

The Obama administration announced Tuesday it is funneling $500 million to a global fund to address climate change, one of the final acts President Barack Obama is taking to preserve his environmental legacy and the U.S.'s role in an international climate agreement. Senate Democrats praised the administration's move, which was announced by the State Department.

Trump's Interior pick: Climate change is not a hoax
John Siciliano, Washington Examiner

President-elect Trump's pick to head the Interior Department told the Senate energy committee Tuesday that he does not believe climate change is a hoax. Montana

Republican Rep. Ryan Zinke made the statement while answering questions by Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt.

Antarctic ice floe crack forces UK scientists to leave
Luke Bridges, Reuters

The British Antarctic Society is recalling scientists from its Halley VI polar research base in March after a fissure developed in the ice sheet. The decision was taken after a huge crack appeared in the Brunt Ice Shelf, just 10 miles away from the Halley VI research station.

Opinions, Editorials and Perspectives

Pruitt's EPA: Hiring a Fox to Guard the Henhouse
Gene Karpinski, Morning Consult

Throughout his campaign, President-elect Donald Trump pledged to end corruption in Washington, D.C. Now, however, he has nominated Oklahoma Attorney General Scott Pruitt to be administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency.

Exxon and Noble Stoke Permian Passions
Liam Denning, Bloomberg Gadfly

In case you hadn't heard, the Permian is so hot right now. Two big deals have been announced in this shale nirvana in the past 24 hours, including one by a company you've almost certainly heard of: Exxon Mobil Corp.

Research Reports

Estimating methane emissions from biological and fossil-fuel sources in the San Francisco Bay Area
Seongjeun Jeong et al., Geophysical Research Letters

We present the first sector-specific analysis of methane (CH4) emissions from the San Francisco Bay Area (SFBA) using CH4 and volatile organic compound (VOC) measurements from six sites during September - December 2015. We apply a hierarchical Bayesian inversion to separate the biological from fossil-fuel (natural gas and petroleum) sources using the measurements of CH4 and selected VOCs, a source-specific 1 km CH4 emission model, and an atmospheric transport model.

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