Message

From: Morning Consult [reply@e.morningconsult.com]
Sent: 5/22/2017 12:16:30 PM
To: Stavnes, Sandra [Stavnes.Sandra@epa.gov]
Subject: Morning Consult Energy: Exxon, Others Sign Billions in Energy Deals With Saudi Companies

By Jack Fitzpatrick and Iulia Gheorghiu

Washington Brief

- President Donald Trump's budget proposal, expected to be released on Tuesday, will call for a 30 percent cut to the Environmental Protection Agency's budget. (CNN)
- Royal Dutch Shell CEO Ben van Beurden warned that leaving the Paris agreement could hurt businesses in the U.S., saying his Anglo-Dutch company has "a lot of business here that potentially could be at a disadvantage because of [the] implications of that decision to pull out of Paris." (Financial Times)
- A federal appeals court revived a lawsuit from a battery maker over alleged "cronyism" in a rejection of a 2009 loan application, after a lower court essentially dismissed the case by allowing the Department of Energy to reconsider the company's application. (The Hill)

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Business Brief

- U.S. and Saudi companies signed more than $50 billion in energy deals on Saturday, including a $20 billion deal between ExxonMobil and Saudi Basic Industries Corporation on a Gulf Coast chemical initiative. (Washington Examiner)

- Switzerland voted to phase out nuclear power, with 58 percent voting in favor of the move. (BBC News)

- Eight U.S. coal plants totaling 9.4 gigawatts of capacity have announced retirement plans in 2017 so far. For reference, the combined capacity exceeds Qatar's current generation capacity. (Quartz)

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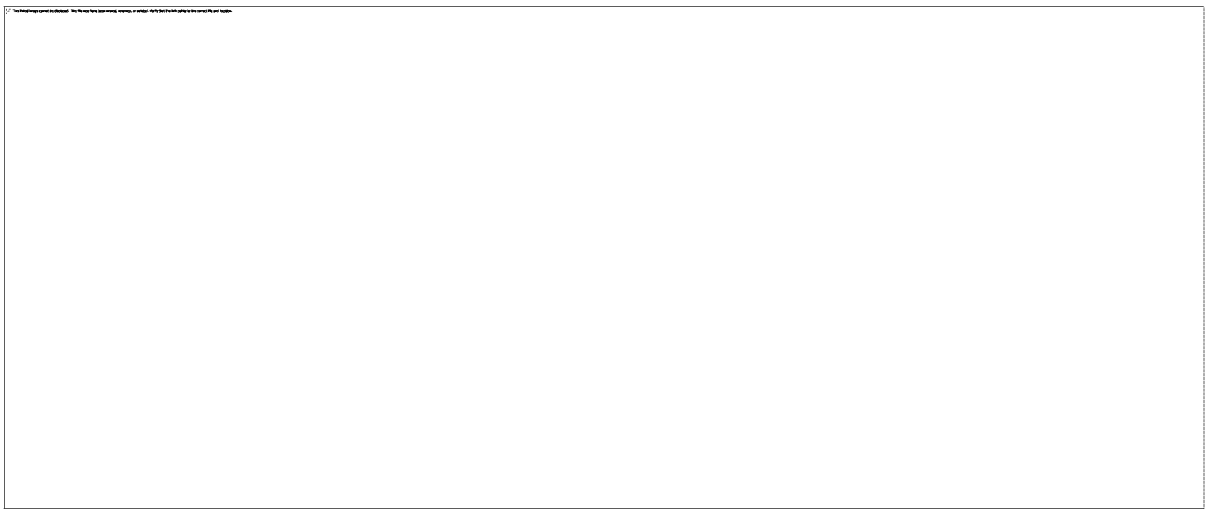
Chart Review

OPEC Reality: Saudis Delivered, Non-OPEC Didn't.
Bloomberg News



Events Calendar (All Times Local)

Monday

2017 Sustainable Brands Conference in Detroit	8 a.m.
AWEA Wind Power Conference	8 a.m.
Bipartisan Policy Center panel event on motor vehicle emission standards	10 a.m.
Aspen Institute event on economic development of rural infrastructure	11:30 a.m.
Energy Department's 2017 Renewable Natural Gas Summit	1:30 p.m.

Tuesday

AWEA Wind Power Conference	7:30 a.m.
2017 Sustainable Brands Conference in Detroit	8 a.m.
Marine Protected Areas Federal Advisory Committee meeting in Annapolis, Md.	9 a.m.
House Science, Space & Technology hearing on the states' role in EPA rulemaking	10 a.m.
House Natural Resources Federal Lands Subcommittee Legislative hearing	10 a.m.
House Energy & Commerce Subcommittee hearing on industry disrupters	10 a.m.
Center for Strategic and National Studies event on global oil and gas markets	10 a.m.
U.S. Energy Association event on new coal markets	10 a.m.
Environmental and Energy Study Institute event on use of biogas and renewable gas	11:30 a.m.
House Natural Resources Subcommittee hearing on the the Cobell Land Consolidation Program	2 p.m.
Senate Environment and Public Works Subcommittee hearing on clean air and nuclear safety	2:30 p.m.

Pew Charitable Trusts event on building resilient infrastructure for severe weather	3 p.m.

Wednesday

2017 Sustainable Brands Conference in Detroit	8 a.m.
WIRES University event on electric transmission infrastructure policy and economics	8:15 a.m.
AWEA Wind Power Conference	9 a.m.
Marine Protected Areas Federal Advisory Committee meeting in Annapolis	9 a.m.
House Natural Resources subcommittee oversight hearing on the effectiveness of federal natural resource laws	9 a.m.
House Budget Committee hearing with OMB Director Mick Mulvaney on the president's budget	9:30 a.m.
House Appropriations subcommittee hearing on the Agriculture Department's budget	10 a.m.
House Science, Space, and Technology Subcommittee hearing on cost of research	10 a.m.
Energy & Environment Symposium featuring EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt, hosted by Faeger Baker Daniels	10:30 a.m.
House Appropriations Oversight hearing on management of energy, health, and education programs on Native Lands	2 p.m.
Brookings Institute event on China-U.S. climate action and cooperation	6:30 p.m.

Thursday

2017 Sustainable Brands Conference in Detroit	8 a.m.
AWEA Wind Power Conference	8 a.m.

House Appropriations Subcommittee hearing on the U.S. Forest Service budget	9:30 a.m.
Senate Budget Committee hearing with OMB Director Mick Mulvaney on the president's budget	9:45 a.m.
Senate Energy and Commerce Committee nomination hearing for Energy Department FERC Commissioners	10 a.m.
172nd Meeting of the OPEC Conference	10 a.m.
U.S. Energy Association's Carbon Sequestration Leadership Forum	1 p.m.
Atlantic Council discussion on negotiations for Gazprom's latest pipeline	1 p.m.

Friday

No events scheduled

General

President's fiscal 2018 budget would slash EPA spending by 30%
Miranda Green and Rene Marsh, CNN

President Donald Trump's fiscal 2018 budget request would slash EPA spending by almost a third, according to a copy of the President's proposal obtained by CNN. The budget blueprint, which the White House plans to submit to Congress next week, would cut the EPA's total budget by more than 30% and its operational budget by 35% compared to current funding levels.

Court revives case alleging energy loan 'cronyism'
Timothy Cama, The Hill

A federal appeals court Friday revived a lawsuit from a battery maker who accused the Department of Energy (DOE) of "cronyism" in a loan decision. The Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit ordered that a lower court reconsider Limnia Inc.'s lawsuit against the DOE, saying that the lower court should not have effectively dismissed the case by allowing the DOE to reconsider the company's application.

Dems prod Perry over freezing small business funds
John Siciliano, Washington Examiner

Top Democrats took a jab at Energy Secretary Rick Perry Friday for slowing the flow of federal research dollars to small businesses. Sens. Maria Cantwell, D-Wash., and Jeanne Shaheen, D-N.H., sent a letter to Perry raising concerns about notices the agency sent to small businesses last month that were awarded grants to not expect the funding. The senators are the top Democrats on the Energy and Natural Resources and Small Business and Entrepreneurship committees, respectively.

How Rollbacks at Scott Pruitt's E.P.A. Are a Boon to Oil and Gas
Hiroko Tabuchi and Eric Lipton, The New York Times

In a gas field here in Wyoming's struggling energy corridor, nearly 2,000 miles from Washington, the Trump administration's regulatory reversal is crowning an early champion. Devon Energy, which runs the windswept site, had been prepared to install a sophisticated system to detect and reduce leaks of dangerous gases.

Fiat Chrysler to Modify 100,000 Vehicles After Accusations of Emissions Cheating
Jack Ewing, The New York Times

Fiat Chrysler said on Friday that it would modify around 100,000 diesel vehicles to try to reach a settlement with United States regulators, as separate academic studies provided mounting evidence that the carmaker had installed software meant to evade emissions standards. The move came a day after the company said it was in talks to resolve a Justice Department investigation.

Oil rises on expectations of extended, possibly deeper, output cut
Stephen Eisenhammer, Reuters

Oil rose on Monday, bolstered by confidence that top exporters will this week agree to extend supply curbs, with suggestions that the cuts could even be deepened. Brent crude was up 50 cents at $54.11 a barrel at 0836 GMT, with U.S. light crude also up 50 cents at $50.83.

Oil and Natural Gas

Exxon and others sign over $50 billion in Saudi deals on sidelines of Trump's trip
John Siciliano, Washington Examiner

U.S. and Saudi firms signed over $50 billion in energy investment deals on Saturday, including a major agreement between Exxon Mobil and Saudi heavy industries. The agreement between Exxon and Saudi Basic Industries Corporation will help build a $20 billion chemical complex that the Trump administration had touted earlier this year as a boon to job growth on the American Gulf Coast.

OPEC Reality: Saudis Delivered, Non-OPEC Didn't.
Brian Wingfield et al., Bloomberg News

The Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries will meet in Vienna this week to decide whether to extend the ???rst oil production curbs in eight years in order to eliminate a glut. The group will evaluate data, described below, that highlights two key details: First, Saudi Arabia is shouldering much of the burden.

BP and Glencore warned over bullish fossil fuel forecasts
Pilita Clark, Financial Times

BP and Glencore are exposed to investor lawsuits by making "bullish" forecasts about the world's future hunger for fossil fuels, a prominent environmental law firm has warned. In a sign of the rising financial pressure environmental campaigners are applying to big energy companies, ClientEarth, a London legal firm, has written to BP claiming the company's forecasts for global oil demand are at odds with independent analyses and some industry rivals.

Saudi Arabia and Russia Are at Odds on Almost Everything, Except Oil
Javier Blas and Jack Farchy, Bloomberg News

Saudi Arabia and Russia are at odds on pretty much everything: the war in Syria, policies on Iran, ties with Washington. But when it comes to propping up global oil prices, they've never been more aligned. Just look at how the world's two biggest oil

producers united this month to tell markets they want to maintain output curbs for an extra nine months.

Utilities and Infrastructure

Duke Energy files lawsuit against environmentalists over NC coal power plant
Abbie Bennett, News & Observer

North Carolina-based Duke Energy sued an environmental group last week, asking a federal judge to rule that one of the company's coal-fired power plants is not polluting the groundwater in Person County, N.C. The Roanoke River Basin Association accused Duke Energy last month of breaking the law by not disposing of its coal ash properly, and it's polluting water near the Mayo power plant in Person County.

Renewables

US solar power groups await ITC ruling on higher tariffs
Ed Crooks, Financial Times

US solar power businesses are braced for an imminent decision from the country's International Trade Commission on whether to start a process that could lead to a sharp contraction in the market and thousands of job losses. The ITC is considering a call from Suniva, a bankrupt Chinese-owned manufacturer of solar cells and panels in the US, for higher tariffs on imported products to stop low-priced foreign competition.

Wind Project in Wyoming Envisions Coal Miners as Trainees
Diane Cardwell, The New York Times

Goldwind Americas, an arm of a leading wind-turbine manufacturer based in China, has been expanding its business in the United States. It has been careful to seek out local, American workers for permanent jobs on the wind farms it supplies.

Coal

In 2017 alone, enough US coal plants to power Qatar have announced closures
Akshat Rathi, Quartz

"Stay strong, Gillette," reads a sign in Gillette, Wyoming. The small city of 30,000 people calls itself the energy capital of the nation.

Northern Wyoming coal company faces hearing over first proposed coal mine in decades
Heather Richards, Casper Star Tribune

A five-day hearing begins Monday to decide whether a controversial new coal mine will be able to move forward in Sheridan County. Ramaco Resources would open the first coal mine in decades in Wyoming, at a time when most expect the coal industry to contract, not expand.

Nuclear

Switzerland votes to phase out nuclear power
BBC News

Switzerland has voted to phase out nuclear power in favour of renewable energy. More than 58% backed the move towards greener power sources in a referendum on Sunday.

Kate Brown and Jay Inslee ask President Trump for more Hanford cleanup money
Hillary Borrud, The Oregonian

Governors Kate Brown and Jay Inslee are asking President Donald Trump for more money to clean up the Hanford nuclear site in Washington, after a tunnel where nuclear was stored collapsed earlier this month. In a letter to President Donald Trump and federal energy and budget officials, the Oregon and Washington governors said the incident was "an urgent reminder of the challenges in cleaning up the Hanford site that require a rededication of attention and resources in order to ensure progress moving forward."

Westinghouse to lock out 172 union members at New Hampshire plant
Bill Berkrot, Reuters

Westinghouse Electric Co, a unit of Japan's Toshiba Corp (6502.T), said on Sunday it issued a lockout notice to 172 union members at its nuclear components manufacturing plant in Newington, New Hampshire, declaring that the sides had reached a stalemate in contract negotiations. Westinghouse, which has been operating under bankruptcy protection, began formal negotiations with the International Brotherhood of Boilermakers, Iron Shipbuilders, Blacksmiths, Forgers and Helpers in April.

Climate

US warned on dangers of abandoning Paris climate accord
Barney Jopson and Demetri Sevastopulo, Financial Times

Ben van Beurden, chief executive of Royal Dutch Shell, has warned that Donald Trump will put American companies at a disadvantage and weaken the US's global standing if he pulls out of the Paris climate deal. Mr van Beurden broke ranks with chief executives who have been reluctant to challenge the US president publicly by declaring that Mr Trump's pledge to abandon the Paris accord would be self-defeating.

Don't panic, humanity's 'doomsday' seed vault is probably still safe
Amy B Wang, The Washington Post

On Friday, a slew of alarming headlines emerged regarding the Svalbard Global Seed Vault. Water had apparently breached this "fail-safe" trove of the planet's seeds that is supposed to protect earth's food supply in the event of a "doomsday" scenario.

How the GOP is slowly going green
Amy Harder, Axios

Conservatives are slowly coming around on climate change. Over the past few years, more than a half-dozen organizations have popped up pushing conservative climate-change and clean-energy policies, and the percentage of congressional Republicans going on the record acknowledging climate is a problem has gone from zero to 8%, as judged by a House caucus on the issue.

Opinions, Editorials and Perspectives

OPEC Needs Shock and Awe to Drain the Glut
Julian Lee, Boomberg Gadfly

Enough of this drip-feed of trying to slowly whittle away oil inventories. If OPEC wants to bring down excess stockpiles, it needs to find its courage when it meets on Thursday, dust off its old playbook and make a big cut as it did in the past.

Research Reports

Solar thermochemical splitting of water to generate hydrogen
C. N. R. Rao and Sunita Deya, Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences

The impact of global climate change as well as the likely shortage of fossil fuels demand harvesting of energy using renewable sources. Although solar energy captured by the Earth in an hour is expected to satisfy the energy demand of the world for a year, the high energy density and nonpolluting end product renders hydrogen a viable alternative to fossil fuels.

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