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Subject: First Move: Energy Primaries • 'Secret Science' • Fire Retardant Explained

What you need to know to start your day.

Bloomberg Environment

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Energy Primaries • 'Secret Science' • Fire Retardant Explained

By Chuck McCutcheon

Energy-producing giants Alaska and Wyoming hold primaries today, with large fields of candidates for governor in both states.

In Alaska, incumbent Gov. Bill Walker, an independent, is seeking re-election. His recent restructuring of the Permanent Fund—the annual payout that Alaskans get from the state's oil wealth—dramatically reduced the budget deficit and restored the state's credit rating, he says.

Seven Republicans are seeking the state chief executive's job, with ex-Lt. Gov. Mead Treadwell—a former chairman of the U.S. Arctic Research Commission—and former state Sen. Mike Dunleavy seen as the leading candidates. Both have spoken out against future cutting of Permanent Fund dividends, and each has promised to promote new oil exploration.

Former U.S. Sen. Mark Begich is running in the Democratic primary for governor, vowing to market Alaska as "a global leader" in addressing climate change.

In Wyoming, six Republicans are running to replace term-limited GOP Gov. Matt Mead. Several—including businessman Sam Galeotos, state Treasurer Mark Gordon, and natural-resources lawyer Harriet Hageman—have drawn oil and gas industry support.

One of the GOP candidates, party megadonor Foster Friess, has come out against transferring federal public lands to the state—a hot-button issue in the rural West. He argues it will be easier for special interests to lobby the state to turn public-access lands into privately controlled ones.

Wyoming's lone House member, GOP Rep. Liz Cheney, faces two primary challengers but is strongly favored. Likewise, Republican Sen. John Barrasso, who heads the Senate's environment committee, has five token opponents. Bloomberg Government's Greg Giroux is monitoring.

SECRET SCIENCE: The EPA's controversial plan to limit the types of science it uses to back up regulations has won plaudits from industry and states—but even some of them say the idea needs work.

Then-EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt unveiled the proposal in April to bar the use of scientific research including data that isn't or can't be made public. Pruitt called it an effort to remove "secret science" from the agency's decison-making.

The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, which backs the proposal's intention, says the EPA should create a work group or review panel of experts to help develop crucial details about the plan. Two steel associations supporting the proposal also are calling for the EPA's rulemaking process to be "vetted through a rigorous analytical process."

Sylvia Carignan has more details in a story out today.

OTHER STORIES WE'RE COVERING

- EPA Acting Administrator Andrew Wheeler at 10 a.m. holds a press briefing to unveil the administration's replacement for the Clean Power Plan. Abby Smith and Bloomberg News are tracking.
- CVS's infamously long receipts have been the butt of jokes, but the pharmacy giant also is being held up as a poster child for an issue

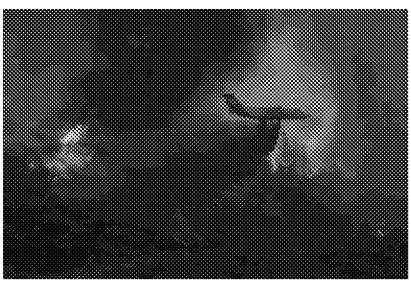
spanning the entire retail sector: toxic chemicals used on cash-register paper, Adam Allington says in a story out today.

- The Senate's energy committee explores the energy efficiency of blockchain and similar technologies and the cybersecurity possibilities for energy industry applications. Rebecca Kern is covering.
- Heavy hitters in the air pollution and climate change fields meet in Baltimore for an Air & Waste Management Association conference. Steven Winberg, assistant secretary of fossil fuel programs at the Energy Department, and Mandy Gunasekara, a top official at the EPA's air office (and one of the Trump administration's first appointees to the agency early last year), are expected to speak. David Schultz is tracking.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"Unless Andrew Wheeler significantly changes the way EPA has been doing business in this administration, he can expect more of the same from the courts."
—Georgetown law professor Lisa Heinzerling, a former Obama-era EPA official, assessing the agency's three recent legal losses.

ALL ABOUT: FIRE RETARDANT



A firefighting plane drops retardant at the Holy Fire near Lake Elsinore, Calif., on Aug. 7.
Photographer: David McNew/AFP/Getty Images

Soot and ash aren't the only things California's wildfires are leaving behind—the red fire retardant dropped from planes is coating homes and cars.

The retardant affects a wildfire's progress by coating vegetation and lowering the temperature of plants that could become fuel, reducing the fire's intensity and speed. The color makes the retardant more visible to firefighters.

A widely used retardant, known by the brand name Phos-Chek, washes off vehicles and isn't known to cause long-term health effects, according to the manufacturer, Perimeter Solutions of St. Louis. The ingredients can irritate eyes and skin and be fatal to some aquatic life. The EPA has rated the retardant

"practically non-toxic" for humans and other mammals.

The main ingredient in one of Phos-Chek's retardants, diammonium phosphate, is also the world's most widely used phosphorus fertilizer, according to potash and fertilizer producer Mosaic Co.

The U.S. Forest Service maps out environmentally sensitive areas—including waterways, reservoirs, and endangered species habitats—that firefighters must avoid when dropping fire retardant from aircraft. Certain concentrations of ammonia can create algae blooms and disfigure or kill fish, according to a 2011 Forest Service report. —*Sylvia Carignan*

AROUND THE WEB

- Flushing old contact lenses in the toilet, or down the sink, could add to the growing problem of microplastic pollution.
- Bitcoin's annual carbon footprint is equal to that of Ireland's.
- Texas' environmental commission names ex-commissioner Toby Baker as executive director and former EPA Region 6 official Emily Lindley as a commissioner.

TODAY'S EVENTS

- **All Day • Nuclear** • The Nuclear Energy Institute opens its Regulatory Affairs Forum in Bethesda, Md. Nuclear industry representatives will discuss federal regulation and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's "transformation" efforts. NRC officials will speak, but NEI spokesman John Keeley told Bloomberg Environment that the forum is closed to reporters.
- **9:30 a.m. • Pentagon** • Senate Armed Services Committee holds hearing on several Pentagon nominees, including Alex Beehler to be assistant secretary of the Army for energy, installations, and environment.
- **2:30 p.m. • Cyber** • Senate Judiciary Committee's crime and terrorism panel holds hearing on cyber threats to infrastructure.

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