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Bloomberg Environment

ENVIRONMENT & ENERGY REPORT

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Highlights

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LEADING THE NEWS

Senate Panel Approves Four Energy Department Nominees

By Rebecca Kern

The Energy Department is one step closer to having four remaining nominees confirmed who didn't make it through the last Congress.

EPA Says Ethylene Oxide Emissions Spike at Sterigenics Facility

By Stephen Joyce

Ethylene oxide emissions at some monitoring sites near a Sterigenics U.S. LLC facility in Willowbrook, Ill. spiked to their highest levels in nearly a year in February.

Interior to Drop Protections for Gray Wolf (1)

By Tripp Baltz

The Fish and Wildlife Service will remove protections for the gray wolf in the lower 48 states and return management of the species to states and tribes.

Trump Said to Again Seek Deep Cuts in Renewable Energy Funding

By Ari Natter

The Trump administration is again seeking severe cuts to the U.S. Energy Department division charged with renewable energy and energy efficiency research, according to a department official familiar with the plan.

CAPITOL HILL

Congress Joins Fight Between Air Force and New Mexico

By David Schultz

Congress is getting involved in an ongoing dispute between the U.S. Air Force and the state of New Mexico over who should pay to clean up water contaminated with toxic nonstick chemicals.

House Oversight Plans Probe of Trump Environmental Policies

By Dean Scott

House Oversight and Reform Committee Democrats are gearing up to investigate Trump environment and climate policies in the months ahead, the panel's chairman said March 6.

Sen. Manchin Supports Hardrock Mining Reform

By Stephen Lee

The Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee's top Democrat said he was opposed to a 147-year old mining law that a coalition of environmentalists are now trying to overhaul.

Democrats Assail Interior Official Over Failure to Testify

By Stephen Lee (Bloomberg Environment) and Jennifer A. Dlouhy (Bloomberg)

Democratic and Republican lawmakers butted heads March 6 over the failure of Scott Angelle, director of the Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement, to appear before a House panel to answer questions about the Trump administration's enforcement of offshore drilling policies.

Fight Heats Up Over New Yucca Mountain Waste Bill

By Tiffany Stecker

A top House Energy and Commerce Republican is reaching across the aisle on legislation to resurrect plans for storing nuclear waste at Nevada's Yucca Mountain.

POLLUTION

House Moves Toward Big Expansion of Wastewater Grants (1)

By David Schultz

A bill that would more than double the size of an EPA wastewater grant program has bipartisan support in the House and received ample praise at a March 7 congressional hearing.

Nuclear Waste Project Cost Extra $7M, Ran Over Schedule

By Sylvia Carignan

Efforts to replace an aging, failing radioactive waste treatment facility at the Los Alamos National Laboratory suffered from months of setbacks and ill-chosen contractors, according to an inspector general report.

Freeport-McMoRan Avoids Federal Suit for Zinc Smelter Pollution

By Bernie Pazanowski

Freeport-McMoRan Copper & Gold Inc. won't face a federal suit for damages associated with its zinc smelter in Blackwell, Okla., a federal district court said.

CHEMICALS

EPA Chemicals Office Delays Draft Risk Reviews to End of Summer

By Pat Rizzuto

The EPA won't release nine draft chemical risk evaluations that were originally slated for 2018 until the end of the summer, Cathy Fehrenbacher, acting director of risk assessment in the EPA's chemicals office said.

Chemical Makers Need to Better Explain Trade Secrets to EPA

By Pat Rizzuto

Chemical manufacturers need to better justify their requests to keep information secret in EPA submissions, attorneys told Bloomberg Environment March 7.

ENERGY AND CLIMATE

Trump Delays on Appliance Efficiency Hurt Companies, Consumers

By Rebecca Kern

Work on energy efficiency standards for appliances has virtually ground to a halt during the Trump administration, leaving manufacturers and consumers in the lurch.

Utilities, Unions Say Energy Sector Needs Better Skills Training

By Tyrone Richardson

Academia and industry should join forces to provide skills training needed to help reverse workplace shortages in the U.S. energy market, advocates for the utility sector and organized labor told a House appropriations panel.

No 'Serious Effort' on Appliance Efficiency Rules, Rep. Pallone Says

By Rebecca Kern

Rep. Frank Pallone (D-N.J.) said the Energy Department is not acting quickly enough to catch up on 16 missed statutory deadlines for appliance energy efficiency standards.

Natural Gas Has a Demand Problem Amid Battle for Home Hookups

By Naureen S. Malik, Jim Efstathiou Jr. and Vanessa Dezem

One of the biggest threats facing the natural gas industry is in the home.

IN THE STATES

California to Survey Airports, Landfills, Wells for Contaminants

By Emily C. Dooley

California is launching a plan this month to require testing of drinking water wells, landfill facilities, and airport sites for so-called "forever chemicals" in an attempt to map out exposure to the contaminants.

N.J. Sues Exxon Mobil in Renewed Drive to Recoup Pollution Costs

By John Herzfeld

New Jersey sued Exxon Mobil Corp. March 7 in a bid to recover damages from hazardous chemicals seeping into groundwater and other natural resources at a 12-acre industrial site.

Exxon Mobil Settles Claims Related to 2013 Texas Refinery Fire

By Vishal Persaud

Exxon Mobil Corp. resolved Clean Air claims from the Department of Justice and the Environmental Protection Agency related to the 2013 fire at the company's oil refinery in Beaumont, Texas, that killed two employees and injured 10 others, according to a statement.

Keystone XL Inching Ahead Has One State Bracing for Protests

By Rachel Adams-Heard

As TransCanada Corp.'s contentious Keystone XL crude oil pipeline inches along, South Dakota is bracing for a fight.

Bankrupt PG&E Wants to Pay $235 Million in Bonuses This Year

By Mark Chediak and Steven Church

PG&E Corp. is asking a bankruptcy judge for permission to award as much as $235 million in performance bonuses to thousands of its workers after canceling similar incentive payments last year.

Defense Department, Navy to Pay $64M to Clean Up Virginia Site

By Peter Hayes

The Department of Defense and the U.S. Navy will pay $64 million to address contamination at the Atlantic Wood Industries Superfund Site in Portsmouth, Va., under a consent decree filed March 7 in the Eastern District of Virginia.

SPX Corp. Can't Shake Neighbors' PCB Contamination Claims

By Peter Hayes

SPX Corp. will face reinstated hazardous waste claims by a couple who allege the company spread contamination to their property during the demolition of a transformer manufacturing plant, the Seventh Circuit ruled.

Use of Sanborn Maps Allegedly Infringes Library's Copyrights (1)

By Blake Brittain

An environmental risk assessment company infringes copyrights by copying historical Sanborn Maps, a new complaint in the Southern District of New York alleges.

AROUND THE GLOBE

Ontario, Saskatchewan Spar with Mining Companies Over Metals

By James Munson

Canadian mining companies are questioning their own trade association's support for a national plan to boost mineral production, Ontario and Saskatchewan officials said March 6.

Earthquake Prompts Alberta to Shut Down Fracking Well

By James Munson

Alberta shut down an oil and gas well after a recent earthquake was linked to fracking operations there, provincial authorities said March 6.

Big Projects Must Offset Emissions, Australian State EPA Says (1)

By Murray Griffin (Bloomberg Environment) and Dan Murtaugh (Bloomberg)

Companies in Western Australia face tough new requirements to offset their greenhouse gas emissions, and the state's EPA says they are necessary because federal policy is too weak.

Honey Hunters Partly Blamed for Fires in Kenya National Parks

By Wachira Kigotho

Devastating wildfires propelled by strong winds have destroyed more than 80,000 hectares (200,000 acres) of forest and wildlife habitat in Mount Kenya National Park and Reserve, a UNESCO World Heritage site in sub-Saharan Africa.

EU Takes Italy to Court Over Air Pollution Infractions (1)

By Janna Brancolini

Italy is the latest country to be referred to the European Court of Justice for failing to protect citizens from harmful levels of nitrogen dioxide.

Glyphosate Ruling in EU Court Confirms Public's 'Right to Know'

By Stephen Gardner

The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) was wrong to cite commercial confidentiality when refusing access to studies on the possible toxic and

carcinogenic effects of a common herbicide, the EU Court of Justice ruled in twin March 7 judgments.

Finland's Decade-Delayed Atomic Reactor Gets Operating Permit

By Kati Pohjanpalo and Leo Laikola

Finland's fifth commercial nuclear reactor, delayed for more than a decade, has received an operating license from the government.

Environment Disclosure Financial Service Rules Backed in EU

By Joe Kirwin

European banks, asset managers, pensions funds and insurance companies will be required to disclose precise details on how investment decisions affect the environment.

Kids Face Phthalate Risk Despite Toy Ban, Danish Council Says

By Marcus Hoy

Existing and planned rules that ban hormone-disrupting chemicals in children's toys may not be enough to prevent harmful exposures, according to Denmark's state-funded Ecological Council.

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Environment

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