Message

From: Alpern, Michael [Alpern.Michael@epa.gov]
Sent: 2/13/2020 12:44:50 AM
To: Munoz, Charles [munoz.charles@epa.gov]; Hage, Christopher [hage.christopher@epa.gov]; Jordan, Deborah [Jordan.Deborah@epa.gov]
CC: Glenn, William [Glenn.William@epa.gov]
Subject: Add'l new articles on Busterud appt

New articles on John have been published in the AP and E&E News:

Former PG&E attorney to head EPA West Coast office

By **ASSOCIATED PRESS** |
PUBLISHED: February 12, 2020 at 8:51 am | UPDATED: February 12, 2020 at 8:55 am

The Environmental Protection Agency has named a former attorney for the nation's largest utility to head its West Coast office, replacing the regional director ousted from the post last week.

John Busterud, who worked for Pacific Gas and Electric for three decades, will manage more than 600 staff employees and oversee environmental protection efforts across EPA's Region 9, which includes 50 million people living in California, Nevada, Arizona, Hawaii, the Pacific Islands and tribal lands, KQED reported Tuesday.

Mike Stoker, the EPA's regional director since 2018, said he got a call last week from senior agency officials in Washington, D.C., telling him to resign.

The change in leadership comes amid conflict between California and the federal government over environmental policy.

Among the disagreements are the Trump administration's policies aimed at expanding domestic oil and gas production, and its rollback of environmental regulations. California, a state with robust environmental enforcement, is seeking to transition away from fossil fuels.

Busterud's experience includes serving as a board member for the California Council for Environmental and Economic Balance, a group that represents the natural gas industry, among other types of business.

At PG&E, Busterud directed the department of the environment and real estate. He worked on issues related to air and water quality, endangered species, toxic waste and environmental policy, according to an EPA press release.
Busterud retired from the company's law department in 2016 after serving 30 years with the utility.

Busterud said in a statement that it is an "honor and privilege" to take the position with the EPA, and that he looks forward to working with EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler. "We are committed to building on the agency's legacy of success by providing clean and safe air, water and land for all Americans," Busterud said.

Ex-PG&E lawyer to take helm of Region 9

Kevin Bogardus, E&E News reporter Greenwire: Tuesday, February 11, 2020

EPA's Region 9 headquarters in San Francisco. Brian Song/©2019 Google

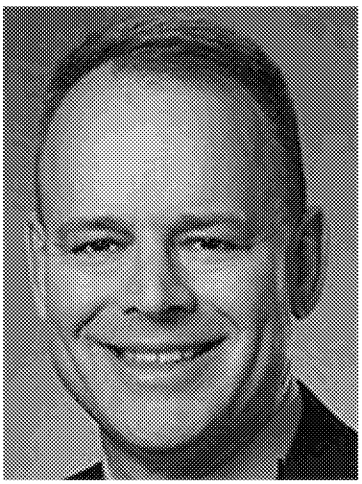
John Busterud, once a top attorney for California utility giant Pacific Gas and Electric Co., will now lead EPA's Pacific Southwest branch.

EPA announced today that Busterud has been appointed Region 9 administrator. His hire comes during a tumultuous time for the regional office, which oversees EPA operations in Arizona, California, Hawaii, Nevada and the Pacific Islands as well as 148 tribes. The agency suddenly fired the prior regional administrator, Mike Stoker, from the post last week.

EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler said in a statement that Busterud's "extensive background in energy and environmental issues makes him a great choice to lead Region 9."

Busterud called it "an honor and privilege" to serve as head of EPA's Region 9 office.

"I look forward to working with Administrator Wheeler, the administration, our dedicated professional staff, and our partners and stakeholders to protect human health and the environment in the Pacific Southwest," he said.



John Busterud. Busterud/Linkedin

Wheeler told EPA employees in an **internal email** obtained by E&E News that Busterud will start in the San Francisco office Feb. 18.

In addition, Deborah Jordan, who had been acting regional administrator in the wake of Stoker's firing, will return to her prior post of deputy regional administrator in the Pacific Southwest branch.

"As we welcome John to Region 9, please join me in thanking Deborah Jordan who graciously stepped up to serve as the Acting Regional Administrator during this transition," Wheeler said in the email sent today.

Busterud worked at PG&E from 1985 to 2016, including as a senior director and managing counsel.

At the utility, he helped oversee "a broad practice including air and water quality, hazardous materials compliance and remediation, endangered species, and legislative and environmental policy matters," according to Wheeler's email. Busterud also served on EPA's Clean Air Act Advisory Committee from 2012 to 2017 while at PG&E.

PG&E attracted scrutiny for shutting off power last year to prevent wildfires in California. Wheeler instead questioned whether state regulators were to blame for the power outages (*Greenwire*, Oct. 22, 2019).
Busterud is a retired Army colonel and had several active duty deployments, including Operation Iraqi Freedom. He discussed a deployment in Africa and a memento he kept in his office — a rungu stick, or "warrior club" — with PG&E's **external news website** in 2013.

"You'll see that our command put our command coin on the rungu stick, as well as our name and the time we deployed. I had a great experience when I was working in Kenya to actually meet Maasai warriors who were working in the community and discuss their proud tribal past and how they still are a very special part of Kenyan society," Busterud said.

He has been a board member for the California Council for Environmental and Economic Balance, vice chairman of the California Veterans Board, and chairman of the Foundation for Relief and Reconciliation in the Middle East.

Busterud earned his Bachelor of Arts degree from Union College, got his law degree from the University of California Hastings College of the Law and graduated from the Army's Command and General Staff College.

He also comes from a family with Republican environmental ties. His father, John A. Busterud, was a former GOP California assemblyman who served as chairman of the White House Council on Environmental Quality under President Ford.

His predecessor, Stoker, was terminated abruptly last week by EPA. Stoker claimed his firing was personal after he clashed with leadership in EPA headquarters, but the agency claimed he had neglected his duties and traveled too much (***Greenwire***, Feb. 7).
EPA had defended Stoker's frequent travel in the past. In addition, the agency changed Stoker's "duty station," essentially his workplace, to Los Angeles, which was closer to his Santa Barbara County home, according to **records** obtained by E&E News under the Freedom of Information Act.

EPA spokesman Michael Abboud said Busterud's duty station will be the EPA Region 9 office in San Francisco. That is the branch's main office, where roughly 90% of Region 9 employees work.

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From: Alpern, Michael
Sent: Tuesday, February 11, 2020 5:58 PM
To: Munoz, Charles <munoz.charles@epa.gov>; Hage, Christopher <hage.christopher@epa.gov>; Jordan, Deborah <Jordan.Deborah@epa.gov>
Cc: Glenn, William <glenn.william@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: First articles on Busterud appt: Bloomberg, SF Chron, InsideEPA

LA Times has also run a piece - https://www.latimes.com/politics/story/2020-02-11/pg-e-executive-named-new-regional-epa-chief-in-california

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From: Alpern, Michael
Sent: Tuesday, February 11, 2020 3:29 PM
To: Munoz, Charles <munoz.charles@epa.gov>; Hage, Christopher <hage.christopher@epa.gov>; Jordan, Deborah <Jordan.Deborah@epa.gov>
Cc: Glenn, William <glenn.william@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: First articles on Busterud appt: Bloomberg, SF Chron, InsideEPA

FYI, updated SF Chron article includes quotes from former RA Jared and mentions that John's wife works in R9: https://www.sfchronicle.com/environment/article/EPA-names-former-PG-E-attorney-to-head-West-Coast-15047582.php#

From: Alpern, Michael
Sent: Tuesday, February 11, 2020 11:13 AM
To: Munoz, Charles <munoz.charles@epa.gov>; Hage, Christopher <hage.christopher@epa.gov>; Jordan, Deborah <Jordan.Deborah@epa.gov>
Cc: Glenn, William <glenn.william@epa.gov>
Subject: First articles on Busterud appt: Bloomberg, SF Chron, InsideEPA

FYI

Bloomberg, Former PG&E Lawyer Takes Reins of EPA's California Region

- John Busterud, former PG&E top lawyer, becomes Region 9 chief
- Busterud takes over from Michael Stoker, who was fired unexpectedly

The EPA announced Tuesday that longtime corporate oil and gas attorney John W. Busterud has been named the chief of the agency's large West Coast region.

Busterud, the former senior director and managing counsel of PG&E Corp.'s environment and real estate law department from 1985 to 2016, will now oversee the Environmental Protection Agency's efforts in California, Arizona, Nevada, Hawaii, the Pacific Islands, and 148 federally recognized tribes.

He also takes the reins shortly after the dramatic departure of former Region 9 chief Michael Stoker, who was fired unexpectedly on Feb. 5.

The EPA later accused Stoker of incompetence and abuse of travel privileges. Stoker called the agency's allegations "100% untrue." Stoker also said it's "more likely than not" that he will file a libel lawsuit against the agency.

Former Industry Representative

Busterud served as an industry representative on the EPA's Clean Air Act Advisory Committee from 2012 to 2017, but has been retired since February, according to his LinkedIn profile.

He has also served as a board member for the California Council for Environmental and Economic Balance. A military veteran, Busterud has served as vice chair of the California Veterans Board and chair of the Foundation for Relief and Reconciliation in the Middle East.

"As EPA celebrates its 50th anniversary, we are committed to building on the agency's legacy of success by providing clean and safe air, water, and land for all Americans," Busterud said in an EPA statement.

California and its regulators have engaged with the Trump administration in a series of high-profile clashes over regulations. Last October, hundreds of former EPA employees asked Congress to investigate whether the agency was cracking down on California because the state isn't supporting President Donald Trump's political agenda.

Busterud's appointment was made public on Tuesday, but the statement was dated Feb. 6.

To contact the reporter on this story: Stephen Lee in Washington at stephenlee@bloombergenvironment.com

Ewire: EPA taps Busterud to be new Region 9 chief

February 11, 2020

EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler is appointing John Busterud, a former attorney with the utility Pacific Gas & Electric Co. (PG&E), to lead the agency's Region 9 that covers California and several other Southwestern states.
The Feb. 11 announcement comes just days after the agency dismissed former Region 9 chief Mike Stoker, who says he frequently clashed with headquarters officials on policy and non-policy matters, charging that the agency's decision-making was too centralized.
According to an EPA press release, Busterud was the senior director and managing counsel of PG&E's environment, real estate and law department from 1985-2016. He "managed a broad practice including air and water quality, hazardous materials compliance and remediation, endangered species, and legislative and environmental policy matters."
He also served as an industry representative on EPA's Clean Air Act Advisory Committee from 2012-2017.
In addition, Busterud has served as a board member of the industry group California Council for Environmental and Economic Balance.
His appointment as Region 9 administrator – a position that does not require Senate confirmation – comes as his former employer is facing significant criticism from California policymakers over its role in causing a series of catastrophic wildfires in 2017 and 2018, and its subsequent intentional power shutoffs affecting millions of customers in order to prevent additional fires.
Gov. Gavin Newsom (D) and leading state lawmakers have threatened to take control over the utility if it does not overhaul its board of directors and if they find its reorganization plan to exit bankruptcy proceedings inadequate.
Even so, one official with the Natural Resources Defense Council praised PG&E's Jan. 31 reorganization plan for including strong clean energy and zero-carbon aspirations.
"As the largest utility in California (and one of the largest combined natural gas and electric companies in the nation), PG&E's clean energy programs and investments have a significant role to play in California's climate future," argued NRDC's Ralph Cavanagh. The utility's reorganization plan "indicates that, despite its recent financial challenges, the utility is ready to reestablish its leadership in securing a cleaner future for California and the nation."
In addition to California, Region 9 also covers Nevada, Arizona, Hawaii, the Pacific Islands and 148 Native American tribes.

SF Chronicle - EPA names former PG&E attorney to head West Coast office

Kurtis Alexander and Peter Fimrite Feb. 11, 2020 Updated: Feb. 11, 2020 9:55 a.m.
The Environmental Protection Agency on Tuesday named John W. Busterud, a former PG&E attorney, to head its West Coast office, replacing Mike Stoker who was ousted from the post last week.

Busterud, a resident of Marin County, will oversee the agency's Region 9, and will be charged with heading up federal health and environmental regulation in California, Arizona, Nevada, Hawaii, the Pacific Islands and much of the West's Indian tribal lands.

Under President Trump, the Region 9 office has been in an unusually antagonistic position with California, recently taking issue with water pollution in San Francisco that ithe president blamed on homeless people. Former employees of the agency and some members of Congress have asked for a federal investigation into whether the scrutiny is political.

Busterud comes to the position with more than 30 years of experience as an energy and environmental attorney. Much of his career was spent at Pacific, Gas and Electric, where he started in 1985 and left the job of managing attorney in 2016. In that role, he oversaw the utility's legal and policy matters regarding hazardous materials cleanup, water quality and endangered species.

Busterud also served as the industry representative to the EPA's Clean Air Act Advisory Committee from 2012 to 2017.

He received his Bachelor of Arts degree from Union College, N,Y, and his law degree from the UCHastings College of the Law. He is also a graduate of the U.S. Army's Command and General Staff College.

"John Busterud's extensive background in energy and environmental issues makes him a great choice to lead Region 9," EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler said in a statement. "I look forward to working with him to advance the agency's mission of protecting human health and the environment for all in the Pacific Southwest."

Stoker, who was appointed regional administrator nearly two years ago, was fired Feb. 5. In a recent interview with the Chronicle, he said he was given no reason for his dismissal, but suspected it was because of his friendly relationships with some Democrats and a personality clash with a top EPA executive in Washington.

Stoker had been criticized by some for allegedly abusing his travel privileges and trying to manage the San Francisco office from Los Angeles. Environmental groups denounced him as a stooge of the Trump administration who did little to advance a cleaner, safer environment