To: Hestmark, Martin[Hestmark.Martin@epa.gov]
From: Morning Consult
Sent: Fri 4/29/2016 11:52:22 AM
Subject: Morning Consult Energy, Presented by the American Coalition for Clean Coal Electricity: Permanently Reauthorization of LCWF May Require Some Coaxing; Coal Country Sees More Loss

By Asha Glover

Today's Washington Brief

- Rep. Rob Bishop (R-Utah) doesn't want to permanently reauthorize the Land and Water Conservation Fund, which could be a problem as the Senate's bipartisan energy bill includes a provision to do just that. The Senate's bill, which allocates $900 million a year for the fund, has to get House support before heading to the White House. (Morning Consult)

- In a 52-43 vote, the Senate blocked a second motion to file cloture on Sen. Lamar Alexander's (R-Tenn.) substitute amendment for the $37.5 billion fiscal 2017 energy and water appropriations bill Thursday. Republicans also filed a motion to reconsider the vote when the Senate returns from recess. (Washington Examiner)

- Senate leaders snapped at each other on the floor over a disagreement on an amendment filed by Sen. Tom Cotton (R-Ark.) to ban the Obama administration from buying heavy water from Iran that has stalled the chamber's progress on its energy and water appropriations bill. Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) told Democrats to do their job, while Minority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.) said if Republicans continued to insist on the amendment, Democrats will continue to block the bill from moving forward. (The Hill)

Today's Business Brief

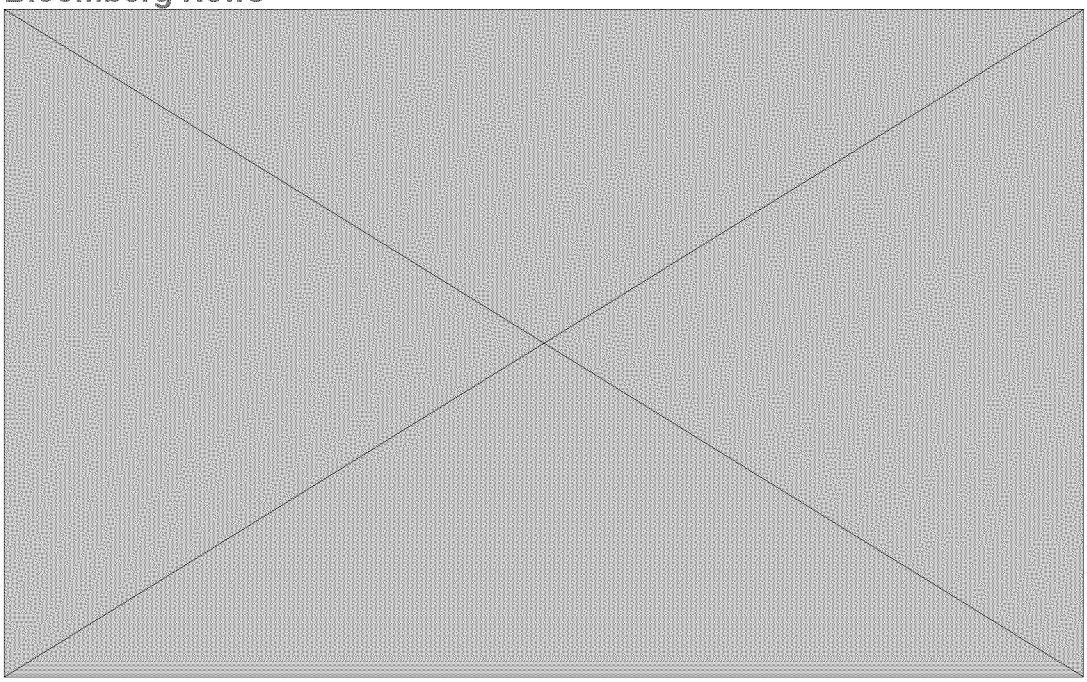
- Continuing a recent wave of layoffs at coal companies, Alpha Natural Resources laid off 37 employees at two of its Wyoming coal mines. The cuts account for 7 percent of Alpha's Wyoming workforce. (Casper Star-Tribune)

- The California assembly approved strict rules preventing companies from injecting new gas into old wells until experts have decided operations are safe, in a move spurred by the monthslong Aliso Canyon gas leak. The bill establishes specific tests that must take place before work can move forward. (Los Angeles Times)

- ConocoPhillips cut its capital spending plans to $5.7 billion and reported a $1.47 billion loss for the first quarter on Thursday as the oil glut continues. The Houston energy company had previously lowered its 2016 spending budget to a February estimate of $6.4 billion. (The Wall Street Journal)

Today's Chart Review

Oil's Slump-to-Jump at 5-Month High Outpacing Forecasts
Bloomberg News



Mark Your Calendars (All Times Eastern)

Friday

House Energy and Commerce subcommittee holds a hearing on nuclear power	**9:30 a.m.**
EESI holds a lunch briefing on sustainable energy	**12 p.m.**
WCEE holds a luncheon on the Paris Agreement	**12 p.m.**

General

Conservation Fund a 'Non-Starter' for House Energy Negotiator
Jack Fitzpatrick, Morning Consult

Rep. Rob Bishop (R-Utah) is digging in his heels against permanently reauthorizing the Land and Water Conservation Fund, posing a major hurdle as lawmakers look to reconcile differences between two energy bills that have passed the House and Senate. The Senate's energy bill, which passed last week with bipartisan support, includes a measure to permanently reauthorize the conservation fund at up to $900 million a year, using revenue from offshore drilling royalties.

Cotton Won't Back Off Iran Amendment
Kyle Feldscher, Washington Examiner

Senate Democrats again blocked a $37.5 billion energy and water funding bill from advancing Thursday over an Iran-related amendment. However, Republican leadership isn't backing down from the fight, scheduling another vote when the upper chamber returns from recess. And the Republican senator whose amendment Democrats call a "poison pill" is refusing to back down from his proposal.

Reid, McConnell Trade Fire Over Stalled Energy Bill
Jordain Carney, The Hill

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) ripped into Democrats Thursday for blocking an energy bill, telling them: "Do your job." "They couldn't wait a single week before throwing an obstructionist wrench into the appropriations process they claim to want," he said Thursday. "I hope they're not dusting off the old filibuster summer playbook, especially in light of the letter they just sent to me about win-win opportunities and restoring regular order."

Stabenow Wants Senate Recess Canceled
Kyle Feldscher, Washington Examiner

Michigan Sen. Debbie Stabenow urged the Senate not to take its scheduled recess next week to stay in the Capitol and pass funding for Flint, Mich. The city of 100,000 people in eastern Michigan has been affected by a drinking water crisis for more than two years due to lead contamination brought on by a switch in water sources.

Conservative Groups Claim Responsibility for State Budget Restrictions
Elizabeth Harball, E&E

The American Energy Alliance, a prominent conservative energy group, said yesterday it is backing a push in state legislatures across the United States to bar funding for work on the Obama administration's Clean Power Plan. This effort has already proved successful in several states this spring, including Virginia, Wyoming and Colorado, where lawmakers passed budget bills restricting money for state agencies to plan for the federal climate change regulation. Similar budget language is currently being floated in at least four other states, including Minnesota and Missouri.

GOP Hits EPA Over 'Bias' Against Alaska Mine
Timothy Cama, The Hill

House Republicans on Wednesday continued their years-long drive to demonstrate that Obama administration officials are biased against a massive proposed mine in Alaska. Using a deposition from an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) employee involved in the effort to stop the Pebble Mine near Bristol Bay in southwest Alaska, the House Science, Space, and Technology Committee tried to paint a picture of an agency that decided long ago how to act and will consider no other options.

Dem Blasts Republicans Over EPA Mine Decision
John Siciliano, Washington Examiner

House Republicans are overblowing the Environmental Protection Agency's decision to deny a mine permit in Alaska to demonstrate a political motive where none exists, a top Democrat said Thursday, invoking the Flint, Mich., water crisis to make her point.

Oil & Natural Gas

Assembly Approves Moratorium on Injecting Gas into Aliso Canyon Wells
Patrick McGreevy, Los Angeles Times

Amid concern over the months-long leaking of natural gas in Aliso Canyon near Los Angeles, the Assembly on Thursday formally approved strict rules preventing injection of new gas into old wells until experts determine the operations are safe. Assembly members approved a bill that sets specific tests that must be conducted before such work can be undertaken.

ConocoPhillips Further Reduces Spending Plans, Swings to Big Loss
Tess Stynes and Erin Ailworth, The Wall Street Journal

ConocoPhillips further reduced its capital spending plans for 2016 and reported a $1.47 billion first-quarter loss on Thursday as low commodities prices continue to take

a toll on the energy sector. The Houston company cut its 2016 capital spending budget to $5.7 billion from February's lowered estimate of $6.4 billion.

Stanford Board Votes Not to Divest From Fossil Fuels Despite Protests
Sam Levin, The Guardian

Stanford University's board of trustees has voted not to divest from fossil fuels in a move that has drawn widespread criticisms from students and environmental groups as other colleges across the US have pledged to end oil and gas investments in response to campus protests. The decision at Stanford, a prestigious university that has advertised itself as a "leader in combating climate change", comes after years of protests at the northern California campus, including a high-profile sit-in last year during which students demanded that the school "completely divest" its $22.2bn endowment from the fossil fuel industry.

Mayors Push Obama to Write Methane Regulations
Devin Henry, The Hill

A group of American mayors are asking the Obama administration to issue strong rules on methane leaks and emissions at oil and gas drilling sites. The mayors said methane represents a climate change crisis given its potency as a greenhouse gas pollutant. They also called it a public health issue, nothing its impact on air pollution around drilling sites and natural gas storage wells.

Activists, Steyer Blast Stanford for Rejecting Divestment
Debra Kahn and Benjamin Hulac, E&E

Stanford University has announced it will retain its holdings in fossil fuel companies, dismaying student activists and one of its most prolific donors. The move sparked protests on campus yesterday and an angry statement from billionaire climate activist Tom Steyer, a Stanford alumnus who serves on the school's board of trustees and donates heavily to the institution.

Oil Prices Hit New 2016 Highs Despite Lingering Excess
Libby George and Karolin Schaps, Reuters

Brent crude reached fresh 2016 highs on Friday and was poised for its biggest monthly gain in seven years as a weak dollar and falling U.S. production tempered concerns about a lingering excess of physical oil. A looming rise in Middle East output capped gains, but investor sentiment held the optimism that has helped lift oil futures nearly 80 percent higher than January lows.

U.S. Refiners' Years-Long Windfall From Cheap Crude Ends in First Quarter
Kristen Hays, Reuters

U.S. refiners' years-long boom from cheap and plentiful crude ground to a halt in the

first quarter as swelling oil inventories and weak demand pushed revenues to their lowest in years and punished profits, results showed on Thursday. PBF Energy Inc and CVR Energy reported quarterly losses of $66.5 million and $68 million, respectively, while Marathon Petroleum Corp eked out a $1 million profit after reporting earnings of almost $900 million a year earlier.

Utilities & Infrastructure

Investor Network Says Utilities Should Face Climate Change Stress Tests
Nina Chestney, Reuters

Electric utilities should undergo stress tests to show how their business models are in line with limiting global warming, a global network of investors said on Friday. In a guide published on Friday, a network of more than 270 institutional investors with assets worth more than 20 trillion euros ($23 trillion) said they were concerned that utilities' strategies are not consistent with a global target to limit the planet's average temperature rise, compared with pre-industrial times, to below 2 degrees Celsius (3.6 Fahrenheit).

The Train Goes Up, the Train Goes Down: A Simple New Way to Store Energy
David Roberts, Vox

The energy world is full of complicated technologies and regulations, usually expressed in a thicket of off-putting acronyms. It's enough to make your brain hurt. So today, let's look at something simple. It's a new technology for storing energy, an important part of enabling more wind and solar power on the grid.

Renewables

Report: Wind Industry Had Strong First Quarter of 2016
Asha Glover, Morning Consult

The U.S. wind power industry saw major gains during the first quarter of 2016, according to a report released Thursday by the American Wind Energy Association. The wind industry had its strongest first quarter for installations since 2012, adding 520 megawatts of electric generating capacity between January and March, according to the AWEA's U.S. Wind Industry First Quarter 2016 Market Report.

U.S. Official: Proposed Wind Farm Off Long Beach a Top Priority

Mark Harrington, Newsday

The top U.S. official for offshore energy declared Thursday that a proposed wind farm off Long Beach is her office's "top priority."

Coal

Alpha Natural Resources Lays Off 37 Miners
Benjamin Storrow, Casper Star-Tribune

Alpha Natural Resources laid off 37 employees at its two Wyoming coal mines, the company said Wednesday. The reduction, which accounts for 7 percent of Alpha's Wyoming workforce, is the latest in a series of layoffs at Powder River Basin mines.

US Power Sector Coal Demand 'Fell in Nearly Every State'
Energy Live News

The use of thermal coal for electricity generation in the US power sector has fallen "in nearly every state" since 2007. That's from 1,045 million short tons (MMst) in 2007 to an estimated 739MMst last year – a 29% fall, according to the Energy Information Administration (EIA).

Nuclear

Feds Ding Kasich's Comissioners on Coal-Nuclear Plant Scheme
John Siciliano, Washington Examiner

Federal regulators flatly rejected an Ohio utility plan to subsidize the cost of running the state's aging coal and nuclear fleet on the back of ratepayers. The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission issued its decision late Wednesday on the plan approved by state regulators appointed by Republican Gov. John Kasich, who continues to compete for the GOP presidential nomination.

Climate

EPA Ozone Rule Looms Large in Swing State
Timothy Cama, The Hill

The Denver area is playing a starring role in the national fight over President Obama's new ozone pollution rule, with potential implications for a crucial Senate race. The energy industry and other opponents of the ozone rule argue that the Mile High City will suffer serve economic damage from the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) regulation, which is meant to reduce smog.

Buffett as Climate Oracle? Great, If He'd Take Job: Scientist
Joe Ryan, Bloomberg News

Warren Buffett would be a convincing advocate for doing more to combat global warming, according to a leading climate scientist. Convincing the billionaire to take up the cause may be more difficult. James Hansen, a former NASA scientist who first brought climate change to the attention of Congress in the 1980s, said during a conference call Thursday that enacting carbon taxes to make fossil fuels as expensive as possible is a key way to cut greenhouse gases.

These Republican Lawmakers Are Turning To Climate Action To Help Keep Their Seats
Natasha Geiling, Climate Progress

For most Senate Republicans, climate change is an anathema: 70 percent of Republicans in the Senate deny the scientific consensus that climate change is happening and humans are the main cause. But a growing number of liberal and moderate Republican voters are concerned about climate change and want their elected officials to reflect that concern.

The U.S. Oil and Gas Boom is Having Global Atmospheric Consequences, Scientists Suggest
Chelsea Harvey, The Washington Post

Scientists say they have made a startling discovery about the link between domestic oil and gas development and the world's levels of atmospheric ethane — a carbon compound that can both damage air quality and contribute to climate change. A new study in the journal Geophysical Research Letters has revealed that the Bakken Shale formation, a region of intensely increasing recent oil production centered in North Dakota and Montana, accounts for about 2 percent of the entire world's ethane output — and, in fact, may be partly responsible for reversing a decades-long decline in global ethane emissions.

A Message from the American Coalition for Clean Coal Electricity:

Thousands of American families rely on the jobs and affordable power the coal-based electricity industry provides. In fact, coal is mined in 25 states and is responsible for

more than 700,000 U.S. jobs. States that generate more than half of their electricity from coal have lower-than-average electric bills compared to the rest of the country. We need coal-based electricity to keep the lights on, energy costs low and American households strong.

Get the facts.

Opinions, Editorials & Perspectives

Dear Congress: Burning Wood is Not the Future of Energy
Editorial Board, The Washington Post

Senators patted themselves on the back last week after passing a wide-ranging energy bill, a feat that seems amazing given the partisanship on Capitol Hill and the deep divisions between the parties on fossil fuels in particular. But the hype was too good to be true: The bill has at least one glaring flaw that must be changed before President Obama considers signing it.

VW's Diesel Emission Problem Requires a Big Rig Solution
Matthew Godlewski, The Hill

In the coming weeks the U.S. Department of Justice and the Environmental Protection Agency are likely to announce a settlement with Volkswagen in the case of the automaker's emissions scandal. The resolution of this matter will include one of the largest financial penalties ever agreed to by a car manufacturer.

Expand Pipeline Capacity
Marty Durbin, The New York Times

Clean-burning natural gas is a leading factor in cutting carbon emissions to 20-year lows. Locally, New England saw significantly reduced emissions for nitrogen oxide (65 percent), sulfur dioxide (92 percent) and carbon dioxide (35 percent) between 2005 and 2014 primarily because of greater use of natural gas in the power sector.

Interior Dept. Needs to Review Onshore Oil and Gas Leasing Program
Jayni Hein and Jessica Wilkins, The Hill

As evidence mounted that the current system of leasing federal lands for coal mining was deeply flawed, the Department of the Interior took a bold step in January. The agency placed a moratorium on new federal coal leases and launched a programmatic environmental review of its coal leasing program. The federal leasing program for onshore oil and gas is plagued by similar environmental and economic questions. The

time is ripe for a review of this program as well.

A Message from the American Coalition for Clean Coal Electricity:

The U.S. currently uses about 917 million tons of coal per year. At this rate, America's coal reserves have the power to last for the next 280 years. Unlike alternate fuel sources that are hit or miss, coal-based electricity is reliable, and keeps prices lower and more affordable. That's why coal is an important part of our energy mix now—and for years to come. We can't meet U.S. energy needs without it.

Get the facts.

Research Reports, Issue Briefs & Case Studies

U.S. Wind Industry First Quarter 2016 Market Report
American Wind Energy Association

The AWEA U.S. Wind Industry First Quarter 2016 Market Report provides a snapshot view of U.S. wind industry activity and trends, including new wind capacity installed, wind projects under construction and in the advanced stages of development, along with newly signed power purchase agreements and project acquisition activity. Wind project details in the quarterly report include project owner, turbine manufacturer, project size, and power purchaser.

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