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From: EnergyGuardian
Sent: Tue 3/25/2014 10:21:18 PM
Subject: Landrieu gets mixed reception from fellow Democrats on gas exports

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Energy and environment headlines for the afternoon of Tuesday, March 25, 2014

Landrieu gets mixed reception from fellow Democrats on gas exports

By Edward Felker

Senate Energy and Natural Resources Chair Mary Landrieu on Tuesday used her first hearing in the post to firmly side with advocates for exports of U.S. energy, which she said will create jobs and undermine Russian President Vladimir Putin's control of natural gas supplies to Europe.

But she also encountered Democratic resistance to unlimited exports, which senators said could undercut new manufacturing and raise prices.

Landrieu, D-La., opened the hearing on liquefied natural gas exports with an impassioned

call for the U.S. to use energy to push back against Putin and to advance national foreign policy goals.

"In America, LNG exports will not only drive continued investment in domestic production and create jobs, but they are also a powerful geopolitical tool, particularly in light of Russia's illegal aggression in the Ukraine," she said.

Landrieu said Putin is intent on using energy supplies to pressure Europe. She said his sanctions against her and others U.S. government officials last week that bar travel to Russia encourage her to push for the U.S. to become a global energy superpower.

"The last thing Putin and his cronies want is competition from the U.S.A. in the energy race," she added.

Sen. Mark Udall, D-Colo., who like Landrieu is running for re-election this year, noted that he has introduced a bill to expand automatic gas export approvals by the Energy Department to NATO countries.

A similar measure has been introduced by Sen. John Barrasso, R-Wyo., and both have offered their bills as amendments to the Ukraine aid and sanctions bill pending on the Senate floor.

"The ongoing crisis in the Ukraine which we are discussing here today, and of course around the world, and Russia's threat to use its natural gas exports as a weapon, shows why we need to responsibly develop our own natural gas reserves and expand our capacity to export this resource abroad," Udall said.

A House Energy and Commerce Committee panel heard testimony Tuesday on a similar bill by one of Udall's potential challengers, Rep. Cory Gardner, R-Colo., in anticipation of the bill being sent to the full House by Republicans leaders later this spring.

That bill would grant automatic approvals to World Trade Organization countries and approve 19 pending export applications to non-free trade agreement nations.

Raising concerns about expanded exports, however, were the former committee chairman, Sen. Ron Wyden, D-Ore., and Sens. Debbie Stabenow, D-Mich., and Tammy Baldwin, D-Wis.

Stabenow said the Energy Department should conduct another economic impact of gas exports following its approval Monday of the seventh application to send liquefied natural gas to countries that do not have a free trade agreement with the U.S.

She said Washington must also encourage U.S. manufacturers to create jobs through low natural gas prices.

"We've been talking a lot about signals today, sending signals overseas. It's also important to

send a signal to American manufacturers who are looking at bringing jobs home because of low energy prices, to make sure there's a signal for them as well," Stabenow said.

Wyden, who praised Monday's Energy Department approval of exports from the planned Jordan Cove terminal in his state, nonetheless questioned whether it would be more effective to help Europe develop its shale gas reserves compared to the years it will take to build U.S. gas liquefaction facilities.

"Wouldn't it be faster to export more of our knowledge, more quickly, to these countries, in terms of how we can help get them, help them shake free of Russian oil and gas?" Wyden said.

The prospects for either of the natural gas amendments by Udall and Barrasso being included with the Ukraine bill in the Senate looked uncertain. Majority Whip Dick Durbin, D-Ill., downplayed the likelihood they would be in the final package, and acknowledged Democratic divisions over the issue.

"I think it's a valid and important issue, but I don't think that we're prepared to vote on it. There are just too many fundamental questions about the impact on America's economy and what we're proposing," he told reporters.

Landrieu said later that she had no plans yet to take up Udall's exports bill in the committee, pending talks between them. She stressed, however, that the committee under her leadership will focus on "a true domestic energy production policy" that meets U.S. energy needs and supports its allies.

"This is important for jobs in America but it's important for America's strength and democratic expansion in the world," she told reporters.

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Upcoming Events

Houston Ship Channel reopened to limited traffic

By Juan A. Lozano and Nomaan Merchant

GALVESTON, Texas (AP) — The Coast Guard partially reopened one of the nation's busiest seaports to ship traffic Tuesday, three days after a collision between a barge and a ship spilled up to 170,000 gallons of tar-like oil into the waters south of Houston.

Authorities said ships were being allowed through the Houston Ship Channel after their assessment teams deemed it was clear enough for passage. About 100 ships were waiting Tuesday morning to move through the channel, which connects Southeast Texas to the Gulf of Mexico and is a key route for tourism and traffic to refineries on the Gulf Coast.

The Coast Guard began to allow more traffic after a test run of two ships — a Carnival cruise and a boat belonging to the Houston Pilots association. Officials expect it to take about three days for channel traffic to get back to normal.

"The cleanup operations progress is to the point that there is minimal danger of contamination to the commercial maritime traffic and allowing limited transit during daylight hours," said Coast Guard Capt. Brian Penoyer. "This is an important accomplishment for every person working this response."

The Coast Guard hopes to get as much oil out of the water as possible within the next 24 hours, deploying skimmers in some areas, as winds are expected to pick up Wednesday and move remaining oil toward the Texas shoreline.

A barge carrying 900,000 gallons of oil collided Saturday with a ship, causing oil to pour into the channel and leading to the closure.

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Oil slides, stays in narrow range near $100

By The Associated Press

The price of oil slipped slightly on Tuesday as the market weighed potentially weaker global economic growth against continued disruptions of Libyan crude supplies.

Benchmark oil for May delivery fell 41 cents to close at $99.19 in New York. Brent crude, used to set prices for international varieties of crude used by many U.S. refineries, rose 7 cents to close at $106.99 in London.

House moves to block Obama coal rule

By Matthew Daly

WASHINGTON (AP) — House Republicans on Tuesday approved a bill that would prevent the Obama administration from imposing a stream-protection rule for coal mining that government officials say would eliminate thousands of jobs.

U.S. and Brent crude have hovered in narrow ranges over the past week as supply and demand have balanced each other out. Global supplies have tightened somewhat as Libyan crude exports have fallen, but the world may need less oil if economic growth in China and Russia slows. Tuesday's trading patterns were sending off "signals of a balanced oil market."

The administration rule is intended to replace Bush-era regulations that set up buffer zones around waterways and were aimed chiefly at mountaintop removal mining in Appalachia. The House bill would reinstate the 2008 rule, which was thrown out earlier this year by a federal court.

The House approved the measure, 229-192. Ten Democrats joined 219 Republicans in favor of the bill.

The White House has threatened to veto the bill, saying it limits states' ability to tailor safeguards to their own needs and wastes millions of dollars adopting a rule that has been vacated by a federal court.

The House bill mirrors a measure approved in 2012 and is unlikely to be taken up in the Democratic-controlled Senate.

Even so, debate on the bill was vigorous. Republicans complained that a rule proposed by the Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement is part of what they call President Barack Obama's "war on coal." Lawmakers cited a draft report by the agency indicating that the proposed rule would cost an estimated 7,000 jobs while slashing production across the country.

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Ruling: Christie improperly cut pollution rules

By Samantha Henry

TRENTON, N.J. (AP) — The Christie administration improperly repealed regulations aimed at reducing pollution from power plants, a New Jersey appeals court ruled Tuesday.

The appeal stems from a 2012 lawsuit by environmental groups challenging the way the state withdrew from the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, a measure aimed at reducing carbon dioxide pollution by setting limits on emissions by power plants that burn fossil fuels.

Republican Gov. Chris Christie withdrew from the initiative in 2011, calling it failed public policy that was a burden to taxpayers.

New Jersey's appellate division ruled Tuesday that the Christie administration didn't follow provisions required in the repeal process. The suit did not challenge the legality of New Jersey's withdrawal from the initiative, but argued that the administration had circumvented procedure — including a requirement to hold public hearings — and instead engaged in improper rulemaking by posting the withdrawal notice on the DEP's website.

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US agencies seek to clarify wetlands protections

By John Flesher

TRAVERSE CITY, Mich. (AP) — Federal agencies Tuesday asserted regulatory authority over many of the nation's streams and wetlands in an effort to clarify which are shielded from development under the Clean Water Act, an issue that remains in dispute even after two U.S. Supreme Court rulings.
The law gives the government jurisdiction over U.S. waters, but legal challenges have raised questions about whether its protections extend to small waterways that might flow intermittently. Some are tributaries of larger rivers or lakes, which can be affected by pollution miles upstream.

Some landowners and developers contend the government has gone too far, regulating isolated ponds or marshes with no direct connection to navigable waterways. Their lawsuits led to rulings by the high court in 2001 and 2006 that limited regulators' reach but left many questions unanswered. The latter case, involving two development projects in Michigan, was decided on a 5-4 vote and produced five separate opinions with no clear majority among the justices.
"That confusion is not good for anybody," Environmental Protection Agency chief Gina McCarthy said. "It's cost us time and money, and increases risks to our health and our economy."

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A message from America's Natural Gas Alliance

Delivering more with natural gas. With their growing fleet of natural gas vehicles, UPS is reducing emissions in communities they serve. Think about it.

Learn more at www.thinkaboutit.org.

Officials report progress in Ohio oil leak cleanup

By Lisa Cornwell

CINCINNATI (AP) — Cleanup crews expect to spend about another week vacuuming oil from the ground and water where thousands of gallons of crude leaked from a pipeline into a southwest Ohio nature preserve, officials said Tuesday.

Workers have also been excavating soil near the break since the leak was noticed last week in the Oak Glen Nature Preserve west of Cincinnati. Federal officials estimate more than 20,000 gallons — about 500 barrels — spilled into an intermittent stream and an acre-sized marshy area that forms a pond in wet weather.

The next phase will focus on removing any residual oil in the soil under and around the creek and pond, plus long-term monitoring of soil, water and air quality in the 374-acre preserve, said Capt. Steve Conn, of the Colerain Township Fire Department.

"Probably less than 10 percent of the preserve has been impacted," Conn said.

A spokesman for Sunoco Logistics, the primary owner of the pipeline that was repaired and reopened Sunday, said Tuesday, that there is no exact timetable for completion of the next phase, but it could take months.

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Chemical disposal temporarily halted at WVa fill

By John Raby

CHARLESTON, W.Va. (AP) — A judge has barred West Virginia environmental regulators from allowing the disposal of wastewater from the site of a Charleston chemical spill at a Putnam County landfill.

Kanawha County Circuit Judge Paul Zakaib issued a temporarily ban late Monday against the state Department of Environmental Protection.

The city of Hurricane and the Putnam County Commission want to eliminate the dumping of the wastewater at the Disposal Services landfill in Hurricane. The material contains traces of the crude MCHM that spilled Jan. 9 at Freedom Industries, contaminating 300,000 people's drinking water for days.

Zakaib has scheduled a hearing for Friday afternoon at which he'll consider granting

the plaintiffs' requests.

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Oversight chair questions safety at WIPP nuke dump

By The Associated Press

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. (AP) — The recent truck fire and radiation release from the government's troubled nuclear waste dump in southeastern New Mexico were "near misses" at a facility whose workers proved unprepared to respond to the emergencies, the head of an independent oversight agency said.

Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board Chairman Peter Winokur also said the Feb. 5 underground truck fire at the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant was preventable, and that the initial response to a radiation release that contaminated 17 workers nine days later was unsatisfactory.

"As a result, the internal contamination level of workers, although minor, was nevertheless greater than necessary," Winokur wrote Friday in response to a query from New Mexico Sens. Tom Udall and Martin Heinrich. "The local WIPP Emergency Operations Center was ineffective, and the DOE (Department of Energy) emergency center at headquarters in Washington, D.C., was never notified, as would have been appropriate."

Winokur's letter was the second critical assessment of the plant's operations, safety procedures and emergency response to the back-to-back incidents. A series of shortcomings were cited two weeks ago by a team that investigated the truck fire. Officials have yet to get underground to figure out what caused the radiation release.es.

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Obama expresses concern Russia moving on Ukraine

By Jim Kuhnhenn

THE HAGUE, Netherlands (AP) — With no sign of Russia abandoning the Crimean Peninsula, President Barack Obama said Tuesday he's concerned that Moscow will move deeper into Ukraine and warned Russian President Vladimir Putin that

the international community is prepared to impose punishing sanctions against his country's economy.

Obama stood fast on his insistence that Crimea remains a part of Ukraine, even as the fledgling Ukrainian government in Kiev ordered its troops to pull back from the disputed territory. He dismissed Russia as a "regional power" that was acting from a position of weakness.

"We're not recognizing what is happening in Crimea," Obama said at his first news conference since Russia annexed Crimea after a referendum 10 days ago. Obama rejected "the notion that a referendum sloppily organized over the course of two weeks" would "somehow be a valid process."

Obama said that while Russia's military controls Crimea, its acquisition of the Black Sea peninsula is "not a done deal" without international recognition. But he also said, "It would be dishonest to suggest there is a simple solution to what has already taken place in Crimea."

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Obama hails 'fundamental shift' on nuke security

By Mike Corder

THE HAGUE, Netherlands (AP) — President Barack Obama hailed a "fundamental shift" in international efforts to fight nuclear terrorism as 35 countries pledged Tuesday to turn guidelines on nuclear security into national laws.

At the close of a two-day summit, the group also agreed to open up their security procedures to independent review, a further step toward creating an international legal framework to thwart nuclear terrorism.

The move is a joint initiative sponsored by host country the Netherlands, along with past summit hosts the United States and South Korea.

"I believe this is essential to the security of the entire world," Obama said at a press conference wrapping up the summit.

He added that more still needs to be done: "Given the catastrophic consequences of even a single attack, we cannot be complacent."

All 53 countries that participated in the Nuclear Security Summit in The Hague agreed Tuesday to keep looking for ways to ensure that nuclear material doesn't fall

into the hands of terrorists.

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McCrory counsel: Cooper has politicized coal ash

By Michael Biesecker and Mitch Weiss

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (AP) — Gov. Pat McCrory's top lawyer says his administration was forced to hire an outside attorney to deal with a federal investigation into its regulation of Duke Energy's coal ash dumps because the state's attorney general is politicizing the issue.

N.C. Attorney General Roy Cooper is expected to seek the 2016 Democratic nomination to run against McCrory, a pro-business Republican who worked at Duke for more than 28 years.

McCrory Chief Legal Counsel Bob Stephens said Cooper has complicated the legal issues surrounding Duke's massive coal ash spill in Eden by using the disaster to raise money for his campaign, according to a series of letters released to The Associated Press. The correspondence is the latest evidence of increasing tensions between the Republican governor and Democratic attorney general.

At issue was whether Cooper's office should assist the state Department of Environment and Natural Resources as its employees respond to 20 subpoenas issued by a federal grand jury in the wake of the Feb. 2 spill, which coated 70 miles of the Dan River in toxic sludge.

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NC regulators say Duke has repaired crack in dam

By The Associated Press

RALEIGH, N.C. (AP) — North Carolina regulators say Duke Energy has repaired a crack in a dam at a coal ash pit near the Cape Fear River.

The state Department of Environment and Natural Resources said Monday that Duke had finished the work.

The agency last week approved Duke's plan to repair a large crack that had opened in an earthen dam that holds back millions of tons of coal ash.

Duke says no water was flowing through the dam.

The structure is at the Cape Fear River plant, where North Carolina regulators said Duke illegally pumped 61 million gallons of contaminated water from a coal ash pit.

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James River Coal stock price prompts Nasdaq notice

By The Associated Press

RICHMOND, Va. (AP) — James River Coal Co. says its stock price and a late securities filing has prompted notice from Nasdaq that the company isn't in compliance with the stock market's rules.

The Richmond, Va.-based company said Monday it received notice from Nasdaq that it's not in compliance because its stock has closed below $1 per share for 30 business days.

James River says it has until Sept. 15 to regain compliance or its stock will be subject to delisting.

Nasdaq also told the company it wasn't in compliance because it didn't file its annual report on time.

James River says it couldn't file the report because of its previously announced exploration of strategic options.

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Murray Energy sues EPA, alleges law noncompliance

By Pam Ramsey

CHARLESTON, W.Va. (AP) — An Ohio-based coal operator is suing the head of the Environmental Protection Agency, claiming that the agency has failed to comply with the Clean Air Act's requirement to evaluate the potential impact of its

regulatory actions on employment.

"The Administrator has no discretion to avoid or limit its obligation to continuously evaluate the employment impacts of EPA's administration and enforcement of the Clean Air Act," Murray Energy's lawsuit states.

St. Clairsville, Ohio-based Murray Energy and several subsidiaries filed the lawsuit against EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy on Monday in U.S. District Court in Wheeling. The companies employ a total of more than 7,200 workers in West Virginia, Ohio, Kentucky, Illinois, Pennsylvania and Utah.

The lawsuit alleges that the EPA's regulatory actions have pressured industries that traditionally burn coal, including electric utilities, to reduce their consumption. It claims that proposed regulations developed by the agency to curtail the release of greenhouse gases would discourage building new coal-fired power plants.

The EPA said it a statement that it will review the complaint when the agency receives it.

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New England seeking to tap Canadian hydropower

By David Sharp and Wilson Ring

PORTLAND, Maine (AP) — A 300-mile power cable line would be buried on land and run underwater from Maine to Boston in a proposal to tap Canada's hydropower for power-hungry southern New England.

The so-called "Green Line" is one of several proposals across Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont aimed at fulfilling a goal by New England governors to tap up to 3,600 megawatts of renewable energy, lower electricity costs and offset losses as aging power plants go offline. It is expected to cost more than $1 billion.

"Our projects are in response to a really unusual moment in time, the six governors of New England coming together and indicating that they want to support bringing additional electrical infrastructure into New England for the sake of bringing clean energy into New England," Ed Krapels of Anbaric, one of the Green Line partners, told The Associated Press.

After a bitter winter that saw big spikes in natural gas prices, the six states have come together to ensure a more reliable — and greener — power supply that can help stabilize prices in the region.

"It's pretty huge," Chris Recchia, the commissioner of the Vermont Department of Public Service, said of the states working so closely together. "To my knowledge it hasn't been done before."

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BP assesses refinery oil spill in Lake Michigan

By The Associated Press

WHITING, Indiana (AP) — BP says it is assessing how much crude oil entered Lake Michigan following a malfunction at its northwestern Indiana refinery.

BP spokesman Scott Dean says crews have placed booms across a cove at the company's Whiting refinery where workers discovered the oil spill Monday afternoon.

Dean says BP believes the oil released during an oil refining malfunction has been confined to that cove.

He says the oil entered the refinery's cooling water system, which discharges into the lake about 20 miles southeast of downtown Chicago.

Indiana Department of Environmental Management spokesman Dan Goldblatt says an agency staffer reported seeing a large sheen on the lake about 2 a.m. Tuesday. Dean says that sheen was in the cove and was no longer visible several hours later.

Parnell signs order establishing advisory board for LNG project

By The Associated Press

UNEAU, Alaska (AP) — Gov. Sean Parnell has signed an administrative order creating a municipal advisory board to weigh in on issues related to the liquefied natural gas project.

Mayors sought assurances they would have a voice on terms affecting local communities, including proposed payments in lieu of taxes. They also expressed concern about ensuring existing oil and gas properties, such as the trans-Alaska pipeline system, from which communities derive taxes currently, are not affected.

The board Parnell is establishing would include three state commissioners or their

designees, representatives of six boroughs or municipalities expected to be impacted, two public members outside those boroughs and a member of an organization representing municipal interests.

The board, among other things, is to make recommendations to minimize financial impact during construction to communities near the project.

NY asks Global for more info about Hudson River plans

By The Associated Press

ALBANY, N.Y. (AP) — State regulators are seeking more information from a Massachusetts company that plans to expand its Hudson River facilities routing rail shipments of North Dakota crude oil to coastal refineries.

The Department of Environmental Conservation sent letters to Global Partners, based in Waltham, Mass., on Monday. The agency requested more information about emergency response plans, community impact, overall operations and other aspects of a rail terminal planned in New Windsor, just north of West Point.

The agency also said it's extending the deadline for public comments on Global's Albany expansion plans from April 2 to June 2. It said the action was part of DEC's review of whether Global has taken measures to minimize damage to the environment in case of an accident.

A Global spokesman did not initially return a call seeking comment.

Casselton chief says force's response saved lives

By Henry C. Jackson

WASHINGTON (AP) — The fire chief of an eastern North Dakota town says "about everything went right" with his force's response to a fiery train derailment because they had properly planned for disasters.

Casselton Fire Chief Tim McLean says the Dec. 30 derailment could have been a deadly incident and credits training and federal financial support. He spoke to a Senate subcommittee on Tuesday at the invitation of Sen. Heidi Heitkamp.

An oil train collided with a grain car outside of Casselton on Dec. 30 sparking

explosions and a smoke plume that hung over the town of about 2,400 residents. There were no injuries, but about 1,400 people voluntarily evacuated.

Many have since expressed concerns about shipping oil by rail and what would happen if an accident occurred in a more populated area.

Italy's Eni optimistic about Libyan gas supplies

By Colleen Barry

MILAN (AP) — The CEO of Italian energy company Eni says he's optimistic that Italy has a secure gas supply from Libya in case imports from Russia are hurt by sanctions. But the amounts, analysts warn, are dwarfed by the size of Russian supplies.

Italy and other European countries are assessing their energy supplies amid concerns that imports from Russia might be pinched in the case sanctions between Moscow and Western powers are escalated. For Italy, Libya has been a key source of gas, but the country's production has not recovered fully since its civil war in 2011 due to continuing security issues.

Amid the uncertainty, Paolo Scaroni went to Libya last weekend to assess the situation.

"I wanted to assure myself of the security of the alternative supplies for our country in case the situation worsens" with Russia, Scaroni told Corriere della Sera newspaper in an interview published Tuesday.

Scaroni said interim Libyan prime minister, Abdullah al-Thinni, the former defense minister, "made a good impression," and praised him for his handling of internal regional disputes as well as a recent attempt by rebels to illegally sell oil to North Korea.

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Forest fire blacks out downtown Caracas

By The Associated Press

CARACAS, Venezuela (AP) — CARACAS, Venezuela - A forest fire cut electricity to most of Venezuela's capital and officials were still struggling to restore power to some areas Tuesday, 14

hours after the lights went out.

The blackout paralyzed subway stations, forced workplaces to close and snarled traffic. Downtown, workers killed time in front of their office buildings while they waited for power to return even as officials' midday deadline to solve the problem passed.

The blackout started late Monday night after a fire destroyed transmission lines, according to Electricity Minister Jesse Chacon. Officials believe the fire was set intentionally, in part because it began at 10 p.m., not in the heat of the afternoon like most wildfires.

The fire was still raging Tuesday in the dry brush of Waraira Repano National Park, which is a half-hour drive north of downtown Caracas.

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Iran plans new oil terminal to bypass Hormuz

By The Associated Press

TEHRAN, Iran (AP) — A senior official says Iran is planning to build a new oil terminal beyond the strategic Strait of Hormuz.

Akbar Torkan, a senior trade official, is quoted by the semiofficial ISNA news agency as saying Tuesday that the new terminal will be at Bandar Jask port on the Oman Sea. Iran's sole major crude export terminal is at Khark Island in the Persian Gulf.

Torkan didn't elaborate, but bypassing Hormuz would be seen as protecting exports from instability in the Gulf.

Iranian officials in the past had threatened to close Hormuz at the mouth of the Gulf, the passageway through which a fifth of the world's oil flows, if its interests are seriously threatened or it is unable to export oil.

They have not reiterated any threats since 2012.

Fishermen sue over ship channel collision

Commercial and sport fishermen have filed a class action suit against the companies -- Kirby Inland Marine LP and Cleopatra Shipping Agency Ltd. -- involved in Saturday's collision that shut the Houston Ship Channel and spilled about 168,000

gallons of oil into Galveston Bay, Bloomberg reports.

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Forces in eastern Libya demand govt. withdraw oil port threat

Militiamen looking for autonomy in eastern Libya won't enter into talks to settle the conflict in the country unless the Tripoli government withdraws its threat to attack oil ports, Bloomberg reports.

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CN to replace the DOT-111s it uses for refueling

In the wake of deadly oil train derailments, the Canadian National Railway Co. said it plans to spend more than $6 million U.S. on replacing the 183 aging DOT-111 cars the company uses to move diesel fuel for its own locomotives, The Wall Street Journal reports.

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Scientists in Hawaii seeing higher concentrations of CO_2

Scientists at the Mauna Loa observatory report seeing carbon dioxide concentrations above 400 parts per million two months earlier this year than they did last year, and expect a full month of such high levels in 2014, which has never been recorded before, E&E reports.

More

Trader sees 'madness' as ethanol prices near 8-year high

Monday's price near $3.44 a gallon for Chicago Argo ethanol, the highest since summer 2006 and more than a dollar a gallon increase in a month, is "just madness," commented a trader, Platts reports.

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Chesapeake Bay wind project divides Maryland Democrats

A proposal to put dozens of wind turbines in place in Maryland's Chesapeake Bay area may be backed by Democratic Gov. Martin O'Malley, but others in his party oppose the plans, concerned that the turbines may interfere with military radar systems in the area, E&E reports.

More

Citing emissions regs, Black Hills shuts coal-fired unit

Black Hills Corp. has shut down a 22-megawatt coal-fired unit at its Wyodak Neil Simpson complex, one of three older units it planned to retire this year in response to EPA emissions regulations, the Casper Star-Tribune reports.

More

Companies defend proposal for Port of Vancouver oil terminal

Dozens of people may have testified Tuesday against the proposal for an oil transfer terminal at the Port of Vancouver, but the companies behind the project say it's "unfortunate" that many are rushing to judgment "prematurely," before the review process for the plans has fully played out, The Columbian reports.

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Casper residents concerned about proposed chemical storage facility

Casper residents are expected to bring their concerns about plans for a bulk storage facility for liquid chemicals to a local planning commission hearing Wednesday, the Casper Star-

Tribune reports, noting that Thomas Petroleum LLC is seeking a permit to store up to 500,000 gallons of diesel fuel and other chemicals needed to keep drilling rigs going.

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Upcoming Events

- Mar. 25, Washington: House Appropriations Energy and Water Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee hearing on 2015 budget proposal for Energy Department science programs. DOE Acting Director of the Office of Science Patricia Dehmer to testify. 2:00 pm , Rayburn 2362B.
- Mar. 25, Washington: House Natural Resources Water and Power Subcommittee hearing, "Examining the Proposed Fiscal Year 2015 Spending, Priorities and the Missions of the Bureau of Reclamation, the Four Power Marketing Administrations and the U.S. Geological Survey's Water Program." Administration witnesses to testify. 2:00 pm , Longworth 1325.
- Mar. 25, Washington: House Energy and Commerce Energy and Power Subcommittee hearing on H.R. 6, "Domestic Prosperity and Global Freedom Act." Energy Department Deputy Assistant Secretary for Oil and Natural Gas Paula Gant to testify. 1:30 pm , Rayburn 2123.
- Mar. 25, Washington: House Appropriations Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Subcommittee hearing on 2015 Interior Department budget proposal. Secretary Sally Jewell to testify. 1:30 pm , Rayburn 2359.
- Mar. 25, Washington: Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee hearing, "Importing Energy, Exporting Jobs. Can it be Reversed?" EIA Administrator Adam Sieminski to testify. 10:00 am , Dirksen 366.
- Mar. 25, Washington: House Appropriations Energy and Water Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee

hearing on 2015 budget proposal for Energy Department offices of energy efficiency, nuclear energy, fossil energy and electricity delivery and reliability. Department witnesses to testify. 9:30 am , Rayburn 2362B.

- Mar. 26, Washington: Keystone XL pipeline advocates hold press conference to highlight national security arguments. Sen. John Hoeven, Rep. Lee Terry, TransCanada Vice President Alex Poubaix, Canadian Ambassador Gary Doer, API President Jack Gerard, others to speak. 10:30 am , Capitol.
- Mar. 26, Washington: Senate Environment and Public Works Committee hearing on EPA 2015 budget proposal. EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy to testify. 10:00 am , Dirksen 406.
- Mar. 26, Washington: House Foreign Affairs Committee hearing, "The Geopolitical Potential of the U.S. Energy Boom." Continental Resources CEO Harold Hamm among witnesses. Rescheduled from Tuesday. 10:00 am , Rayburn 2172.
- Mar. 26, Washington: House Natural Resources Committee hearing, "Collision Course: Oversight of the Obama Administration's Enforcement Approach for America's Wildlife Laws and Its Impact on Domestic Energy." U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Director Dan Ashe to testify. 10:00 am , Longworth 1324.
- Mar. 26, Washington: Senate Appropriations Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Subcommittee hearing on the Interior Department 2015 budget request. Secretary Sally Jewell to testify. 9:15 am , Dirksen 124.

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