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[US Department of the Interior News Briefing](#)



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DOI In The News

Trump's Monument Plan Remains "Shrouded In Secrecy."

[The Hill](#) (8/26, Cama) reports that the Trump Administration's plans to possibly shrink some national monuments "remain shrouded in secrecy." Zinke "was expected to reveal his proposals publicly Thursday as well. But he did not, instead releasing a two-page summary of the process behind his considerations and telling the Associated Press that he's recommending reductions in the size of an unspecified 'handful' of national monuments." The Hill says that withholding the recommendations "spurred a new flurry of condemnation from Trump's opponents and charges that the administration is not living up to its promises of transparency in the monument review process."

The [Telluride \(CO\) Daily Planet](#) (8/25) reported that "almost immediately" after Zinke's announcement, "the Center for Western Priorities, a Denver-based land conservancy organization, shot back in a news release: 'More than 2.7 million Americans told Secretary Zinke what they think – the least he can do is return the favor. This secrecy shows the Trump Administration knows their attack on national monuments is wildly popular.'"

Copper Industry, Environmentalists Battle Over Arizona Monuments. The [AP](#) (8/27) reports Arizona's copper industry, environmentalists, and recreation groups "are fighting over the future of three national monuments in the state." As the Interior Department "reviews the size of 21 national monuments across the country, the multinational mining company Asarco is asking that more than 11,000 acres be pulled from the 129,000-acre Ironwood Forest National Monument northwest of Tucson so it can mine more copper there, next to the company's Silver Bell copper mine, the Arizona Daily Star reports." The state mining industry "also is trying to shrink two other Arizona national monuments that were named by President Bill Clinton: the Sonoran Desert National Monument lying north of Ironwood in Pinal County and the Vermilion Cliffs National Monument in Coconino County." Rep. Raúl Grijalva (AZ-D) "said the Trump administration will be sued if it decides to shrink Ironwood and other monuments."

WPost: Trump, Zinke Threaten Irreplaceable National Monuments. In an editorial, the [Washington Post](#) (8/27) writes that Interior Secretary Zinke's approach to addressing which national monuments deserve protection – by identifying and separating areas that have significant objects – rejects the approach of previous administrations which aimed to preserve "spectacular, irreplaceable and integrated natural landscapes, not just one butte or cliff dwelling at a time." The Post argues that President Trump and Secretary Zinke should not remove national monument protection from the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument and Bears Ears National Monument – both of which the Post describes as "unique and irreplaceable."

LA Times: Trump Should Zinke Monument Plan In Recycling Bin. The [Los Angeles Times](#) (8/25, Board) editorializes that there's "obviously reason to be concerned" about Zinke's secret proposals, which "were made in response to Trump's order in April for a sweeping review of more than two dozen national monuments that were created or expanded under the Antiquities Act of 1906." The Times said Zinke's two-page report summary, "which the administration did release Thursday, makes it clear that his recommendations are based on second-guessing the decisions of prior administrations that he accuses of overstepping their authority to set aside land for special protections." The Times urges the president to make the report public, "and then, assuming it cuts back protections for important, sensitive, majestic, historic, one-of-a-kind areas of vast open space, throw it in the recycling bin."

Association Heads Applaud Monument Review. Conservation Policy at Boone and Crockett

Club Co-Chairman Paul Phillips, National Wild Turkey Federation CEO Rebecca A. Humphries, and Wild Sheep Foundation CEO Gray Thornton wrote for [The Hill](#) (8/26, Phillips, Humphries, Thornton, Contributors) reports in its "Pundits Blog" blog that while sportsmen have serious concern over regarding the federal government's review, and those concerns "are legitimate in a broad sense, there needs to be some education on why these reviews actually could be better for the natural resources, wildlife and the public who enjoy them." The authors wrote that the Department of the Interior's review "brings forward vital issues of assuring the future of federal public lands and improving their ecological, economic and recreational value." They said they "applaud the review of these and other monuments and urge the Department of Interior to use its results to strengthen the legacy of federal public lands in the United States."

Editorial: National Monuments Survive Trump Administration Review. The [Las Vegas Review-Journal](#) (8/27) editorializes that "members of the environmental lobby should be ecstatic that the Interior Department's review of 27 national monuments resulted in minimal changes. But in today's world of all-or-nothing politics, they're instead speed-dialing their attorneys and wringing their hands because a handful of these nature reserves may still be partially downsized."

Editorial: Secretary Zinke's Decision Could Balance Monument Designation. The [Deseret \(UT\) News](#) (8/26) editorializes that Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke "apparently is recommending two national monuments in Utah be reduced in size to more precisely conform to the spirit and letter of the 1906 Antiquities Act, which grants presidents the power to declare monuments." The article added, "We hope the Trump administration will take its stated intentions seriously and provide a credible review of these monuments before making a final decision."

Gov. Brian Sandoval Talks Climate Change, National Monuments. The [Reno \(NV\) Gazette-Journal](#) (8/25) provided a video of Republican Gov. Brian Sandoval of Nevada discussing "GOP policy on climate change and the review of national monuments by Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke and President Donald Trump."

Monuments Review Spurs Call To Overhaul Antiquities Act. [Roll Call](#) (8/25) reported the Interior Department's "conclusion of a contentious review of national monuments might give Congress some impetus to revisit the Antiquities Act of 1906, which presidents of both parties have used to designate monuments through executive action." House Natural Resources Chairman Rob Bishop on Thursday "called for Congress to overhaul the Antiquities Act to place 'reasonable limits' on the way presidents use the statute." Bishop's statements "came shortly before the Interior Department submitted recommendations to the White House after an executive-ordered review of monument designations made over the last two decades."

Mojave Desert Land Trust Response To Department Of The Interior Withholding Recommendations For California Desert National Monuments. The [Highland \(CA\) Community News](#) (8/25) reported the Mojave Desert Land Trust responded to the Interior Department's review by saying, "The Department of the Interior claimed they wanted to involve the public in the review process, and yet they are cutting the public out of the final recommendations," commented Danielle Segura, Executive Director, MDLT. She added, "The 2.7 million people who submitted comments to Secretary Zinke deserve to know the recommendations. And the Mojave Desert community deserves to know whether Secretary Zinke listened to us when we said our desert monuments deserve full protection."

Additional coverage of Zinke's monument plan is provided by the [Washington Times](#) (8/25, Chumley), [USA Today](#) (8/25), the [Circleville \(OH\) Herald](#) (8/25), the [Billings \(MT\) Gazette](#) (8/27), [KNPR-FM](#) Las Vegas (5/10), the [Fairbanks \(AK\) News-Miner](#) (8/27), and [NPR](#) (8/25).

Oregon Girds For Lawsuit If Trump Shrinks National Monument.

The [Washington Times](#) (8/25, Selsky) reported Oregon's attorney general "said Friday she is ready to take legal action if the Trump administration tries to shrink a national monument in this Pacific Northwest state. Oregon Gov. Kate Brown and other political leaders were seeking a copy of a draft report Friday on 27 national monuments that Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke gave to President Donald Trump this week, the governor's press secretary, Bryan Hockaday, said in a telephone interview. So far, no copy has been made available, he said."

The [Oregonian](#) (8/25) reported Oregon Gov. Kate Brown "asked the state attorney general to be prepared to go to court if the Trump administration tries to shrink a national monument in this Pacific Northwest state. Brown and other political leaders awaited word Friday on whether the Trump administration will reduce the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument, or leave the 112,000-acre (45,730-hectare) monument along the border with California alone."

[KOBI-TV](#) Medford, OR (8/25) reported that Oregon Governor Kate Brown "is calling on the White House to preserve the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument." The Governor "released a

statement late Thursday after reports Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke has recommended President Trump reduce the size of the monument covering parts of southern Oregon and northern California." She said, "I am deeply concerned about the future of Oregon's Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument. ... Although the Secretary of the Interior has yet to publically release recommendations for potential changes to national monuments, the signal from D.C. is that Oregon's public lands are in the crosshairs of the federal administration."

The [Bristol \(VA\) Herald Courier](#) (8/25) and the [Clark County \(WA\) Columbian](#) (8/25) also reported.

Interior Secretary Zinke's Secret National Monuments Report Comes Under Legal Attack. The [Think Progress](#) (8/25) reported that Zinke's recommendation "could open hundreds of thousands of acres of public lands to oil and gas drilling and mining, according to leaked copies of a report prepared by the Department of the Interior." In the recommendations, the Interior Department "calls for shrinking the size of the Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante national monuments in Utah and the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument in Oregon, according to the Washington Post. Zinke reportedly did not recommend eliminating any of the national monuments he reviewed." The Western Values Project "filed an expedited Freedom of Information Act request with the Interior Department on Thursday seeking information on the monument review that was submitted to the White House." And on Friday, "the Sierra Club filed its own Freedom of Information Act request seeking details on recommendations from Zinke on the future of public lands protected as national monuments."

Patagonia Joins Forces With Activists To Protect Public Lands From Trump. [The Guardian \(UK\)](#) (8/26, McCarthy) reported that environmental activists, Native American groups, and a coalition of outdoor retailers "have vowed to redouble their efforts to protect public lands, after the US interior secretary, Ryan Zinke, recommended on Thursday that Donald Trump change the boundaries of a 'handful' of national monuments." Advocates "fear that Zinke's recommendation, which has not been revealed beyond its most basic outline, could mean the largest reversal of federal monument status in history and the first alteration of any national monument boundary since 1964."

Tribes Call Interior Secretary's Monument Recommendations 'An Insult,' Vow Lawsuits.

The [Washington Times](#) (8/25, Wolfgang) reported tribal leaders on Friday "blasted Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke, saying his plan to shrink Utah's Bears Ears National Monument is 'an insult' and shows blatant disregard for their concerns." In a statement, "the Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition – a governing body established by the Obama administration to oversee the massive 1.5 million-acre Bears Ears site – said they plan to sue." Carleton Bowekaty, Zuni councilman and Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition co-chair said, "Secretary Zinke's recommendation is an insult to tribes. He has shown complete disregard for sovereign tribes with ancestral connections to the region, as well as to the hundreds of thousands of people who have expressed support for Bears Ears National Monument."

The [Washington Times](#) (8/27, Wolfgang) reports that "other coalition leaders said they're prepared for a lengthy legal battle with the administration. 'The designation of Bears Ears National Monument was a celebratory moment where our voice was finally heard, and our cultural and spiritual heritage was respected,' said Davis Filfred, Navajo Nation council delegate. 'Our tribes stand together and are willing to go into battle in terms of litigation and we are here to fight for our monument.' The threats, which were echoed by environmental groups, came just hours after Mr. Zinke officially completed his review of more than two dozen monuments across the country."

Additional coverage is provided by the [Washington Post](#) (8/27, Stromberg), [Philly \(PA\)](#) (8/25), [Deseret \(UT\) News](#) (8/25), [KSL-TV](#) Salt Lake City (8/25), the [Deseret \(UT\) News](#) (8/26), the [Atlanta Journal-Constitution](#) (8/25), [KTVX-TV](#) Salt Lake City (8/25).

Gasoline Prices Spike As Harvey Shuts Refineries.

[Bloomberg News](#) (8/27, Summers) reports gasoline surged to the highest level in two years, while oil was steady as Tropical Storm Harvey flooded refining centers along the Texas coast. Gasoline futures jumped as much as 6.8 percent, while oil sat around \$48. Andy Lipow, president of Lipow Oil Associates said, "With pipeline operators beginning to shut down their crude oil and refined product infrastructure, I expect to see further curtailment of refinery operations, resulting in less product being available. A spike in gasoline and diesel prices will drag up crude oil prices."

[USA Today](#) (8/27, Davidson), [Washington \(DC\) Post](#), (8/27, Mufson) [AP](#) (8/25, Koenig), and [San Antonio \(TX\) Express-News](#) (8/25) also contained coverage that gasoline prices are expected

to rise.

Experts Say Gas Prices Going Up Five To 25 Cents Per Gallon. The [AP](#) (8/26, Koenig) reported that even before the Harvey made landfall late Friday, “dozens of oil and gas platforms had been evacuated, at least three refineries had closed and at least two petrochemical plants had suspended operations.” The piece added, “How soon they reopen depends on the severity of flooding and the resumption of power to the areas.” And experts “say it’s still too early to say, with the storm still moving through the region Saturday evening. But they believe gas prices will increase 5 cents to 25 cents per gallon.”

EPA Issues Emergency Waiver To Combat Fuel Shortage From Hurricane Harvey. The [Houston Chronicle](#) (8/26) reported the Environmental Protection Agency “announced late Friday it was waiving environmental standards on fuel, ‘to address shortages resulting from Hurricane Harvey.’” The agency said, “Extreme and unusual fuel supply circumstances exist in portions of Texas as a result of the hurricane.” EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt “has granted a temporary waiver to help ensure an adequate supply of gasoline is available in the affected areas until normal supply to the region can be restored.”

Sage Grouse Proposal Draws Mixture Of Praise And Alarm.

The [Eugene \(OR\) Register-Guard](#) (8/27) reports President Trump’s Administration “has opened the door to industry-friendly changes to a sweeping plan imposed by his predecessor to protect a ground-dwelling bird across vast areas of the U.S. West.” Wildlife advocates “warned that the proposed changes would undercut a hard-won struggle to protect the greater sage grouse.” However, “representatives of the ranching and energy industries cheered the policy shift as needed to give states flexibility.”

Democrats Might Not Lose Any Ground In The Senate.

The [Washington Post](#) (8/25, Rubin) reported in its “Right Turn” blog that Trump “undercut his party’s chances of picking up a seat. He selected as his interior secretary former congressman Ryan Zinke (R-Mont.) and potential Montana challenger to Sen. Jon Tester (D-Mont.)”

Congressman Wants Columbus Statues For Federal Park If City Takes Them Down.

The [New York Post](#) (8/25) reported a Staten Island congressman “wants an iconic statue of Christopher Columbus relocated to federal park land in his borough if the city takes it down in Manhattan in a frenzy of political correctness. ‘Christopher Columbus is a permanent fixture of our national history. Rarely can we trace the wheels of progress over 500 years back to the actions of a single person,’ said Rep. Dan Donovan (R-SI/Brooklyn).” Donovan and his office “spoke with senior U.S. Department of Interior officials on Thursday afternoon about the matter.”

Sale Of Interior Secretary’s Motor Home Raises \$25K Question.

The [AP](#) (8/28) reports Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke’s “dormant congressional campaign committee recently sold a 2004 motor home at a steep discount to an old friend in the Montana Legislature.” But a “seemingly ordinary transaction between friends, when seen through the optics of stringent campaign finance laws, can raise a bevy of questions – especially when those friends are politically high-powered and well-connected.” After learning about the transaction, campaign finance watchdogs “are raising a \$25,000 question: Why would Zinke’s campaign committee sell the Kountry Star Freightliner for half the price of its apparent \$50,000 market value?”

Interior’s High-Profile Whistleblower Gets A Boost From OSC And Legal Community.

[Government Executive](#) (8/25) reported the federal government’s whistleblower protection office “is investigating the claims of retaliation against perhaps the civil service’s most famous whistleblower in the Trump administration, and he has new backing from a group of legal scholars.” The article adds, “Joel Clement made a name for himself by writing an op-ed in The Washington Post claiming the Interior Department reassigned him to a job for which he was ill suited after he spoke out on the potential dangers of climate change for Native Alaskans. He filed a complaint on the alleged reprisal to the Office of Special Counsel, which handles cases involving potential whistleblower retaliation, and has since told Government Executive that OSC has opened an investigation. On Friday, 13 law school professors with varying experience in federal service and with groups advocating good government submitted a letter to OSC advocating for Clement’s case as a whistleblower.”

Ryan Zinke's Daughter Goes After Trump For Transgender Military Ban.

The [Washington Examiner](#) (8/26, Mayfield) reported Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke's daughter "went after Trump following his announcement of the transgender military ban, calling the president a 'disgrace.'" Jennifer Detlefsen "wrote in an Instagram post in July that was widely circulated Friday." The Examiner said, "Like her father, Deltefsen is a Navy veteran and was frequently mentioned by Zinke as he ran for re-election in the House. Zinke was chosen to head the U.S. Department of Interior by Trump following the election."

Additional coverage is provided by The [Daily Mail](#) (8/26), [The Hill](#) (8/26, Bowden), and the [Missoulian \(MT\)](#) (8/25).

Zinke's Wife's Tweet Suggests Endorsement In Senate Race.

The [Bozeman \(MT\) Daily Chronicle](#) (8/25) reported that a Republican candidate "challenging Democratic U.S. Sen. Jon Tester in 2018 has garnered the support of Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke's wife, Lola Zinke." On the social media website Twitter on Friday, "Lola Zinke shared Big Sky entrepreneur Troy Downing's first campaign video and said, 'Great choice for #mtpol.' The hashtag '#mtpol' is a method Twitter uses to gather statements on one feed for particular issues – in this case Montana politics."

Bureau Of Indian Affairs

Kevin Brown Re-elected To Mohegan Tribal Council, Bozsum Ousted.

The [New London \(CT\) Day](#) (8/27) reports that Kevin Brown, "the retired Army colonel elected chairman of the Mohegan Tribal Council in 2013, won re-election to a second four-year council term in voting among tribal members that concluded Sunday, according to tribal sources who asked to remain anonymous." Brown "and three other incumbents – Kathy Regan-Pyne, William Quidgeon Jr. and James Gessner Jr. – were elected along with a newcomer, Sarah Harris, the daughter of Roland Harris, a former council chairman and first selectman of Griswold." Sarah Harris "is a former chief of staff in the U.S. Department of the Interior's Bureau of Indian Affairs. In 2016, the National Center for American Indian Enterprise Development named her one of 40 emerging leaders under the age of 40."

Pipeline Company Response To Settlement Offer Not Disclosed.

The [AP](#) (8/25) reports the company "that built the Dakota Access pipeline has responded to an offer by North Dakota regulators to settle state allegations that it improperly reported the discovery of American Indian artifacts during construction." But the response from Energy Transfer Partners "isn't being disclosed yet." According to North Dakota Public Service Commissioner Julie Fedorchak, the agency is meeting with the company on Monday to discuss the response.

Lawmakers Say BLM Inhibiting Oil And Gas Development To Protect View From Native American Sites.

The [Casper \(WY\) Star-Tribune](#) (8/26) reported state lawmakers in Wyoming "say a new interpretation of federal rules is inhibiting oil and gas development near Native American sites on private land." At issue "is section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, which seeks to avoid, minimize or mitigate 'adverse effects' to historic sites. ... 'The concern is that nothing has actually changed,' said Sen. Brian Boner, R-Douglas, who's heard from a number of his constituents about the issue." Boner also said, "The federal statute hasn't changed. The only thing that seems to have changed is the BLM's interpretation of the current rules and regulations. There's no public comment. They just showed up with the landowners one day and said 'This is how it's going to be.'"

Civil Rights Commission Reviews Alaska Native Voting Rights.

[KYUK-TV](#) Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta, AK (8/25, Eurich) reported the State of Alaska is "under a court order to provide the translation of election materials into Native languages to Yup'ik communities in the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta, the Bristol Bay region, and Gwich'in country in the Interior." On Thursday, the Alaska Advisory Committee of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights "held a hearing in Anchorage to review the state's work and to look at the implications of a plan to shift the state to voting by mail." The state "unveiled an impressive amount of work accomplished since the court order was handed over to the Walker Administration." However, at

Thursday's hearing, she "heard from election workers in Koliganek that the Yup'ik Ballot they got was unusable by local elders who use another dialect that election workers did not know about." And that's "just one example of the kind of changes the state is making after the 2013 court decision that found Alaska in violation of the Voting Rights Act because it did not provide election materials in Alaska Native languages."

Oklahoma City Council To Vote On Indian Cultural Center Agreements.

The [Oklahoman](#) (8/28) reports the Oklahoma City Council "is to vote Tuesday on agreements intended to clear the way to completing and opening the American Indian Cultural Center and Museum." The latest plans "are to open to the public on April 1, 2021. The museum's primary focus is to be on the cultures and histories of Oklahoma's 39 federally recognized tribes."

Bureau Of Indian Education

Most AZ Native Americans Now Speak Only English At Home.

The [Eastern Arizona Courier](#) (8/26) reported that families "in more than half of Native American homes in Arizona now speak only English at home, according to new numbers from the U.S. Census Bureau." American Community Survey data "covering 2011-2015 showed that 53 percent of people who identified as American Indian in the state said they speak only English at home, up from 49 percent in the previous five-year survey."

Bureau Of Land Management

Report: Democrat Backs BLM Move West.

[Politico Morning Energy](#) (8/25, Adragna) reported that Sen. Michael Bennet "became the latest Colorado politician to back moving three federal agencies – the Bureau of Land Management, the Bureau of Reclamation and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service – to the Denver area, according to a report in Western Wire, a project of the Western Energy Alliance." He is quoted saying, "I think anything we can get out of Washington, D.C. and into Colorado, I'm for." Republican Sen. Cory Gardner and Gov. John Hickenlooper "are among the other proponents of the move west."

BLM Headquarters Could Move To Denver. The [Grand Junction \(CO\) Daily Sentinel](#) (8/26) reported US Sen. Cory Gardner's (R-CO) proposal to move the Bureau of Land Management headquarters out of Washington, DC "gained support from Gardner's counterpart, Sen. Michael Bennet, even as discussion emerged that the headquarters of three federal agencies might move to Denver. ... Bennet, a Democrat, said Friday that he supported the idea of moving the BLM, and possibly other agencies, out of the Beltway."

BLM Agent Accused Of Taking Valuable Stones Held As Evidence.

The [Las Vegas Review-Journal](#) (8/25) reported a Bureau of Land Management agent "who has been scrutinized for past behavior took valuable stones held as evidence and handed them out 'like candy' to colleagues and a contractor, federal investigators said in a report made public Thursday." US Department of Interior investigators "also found Love told an employee to delete some emails that contained bureau information requested by then-U.S. Rep. Jason Chaffetz. Though the report does not name Love, Chaffetz confirmed Thursday that his request had been directed to Love. Chaffetz did not specify the nature of the request."

[Idaho State Journal](#) (8/24) and [KSL-TV Salt Lake City \(UT\)](#) Salt Lake City (8/27) also reported.

Bureau Of Reclamation

Lake Mead Able To Avoid Water Shortage For Another Year.

[Fox News](#) (8/25, Craft) reported there could be "some promising relief for those residents living in the southwestern United States after a new report declared there will be no water shortage at Nevada's Lake Mead in 2018." A new study by the Bureau of Reclamation "found that water flows slightly improved compared with recent years. A good winter and early spring on the western slope of the Rocky Mountains provided an adequate snow pack, which will eliminate the prospects for a water shortfall for next year."

Bureau Of Safety And Environmental Enforcement

Harvey Reduces Gulf Of Mexico Output.

[Reuters](#) (8/27, Scheyder) reports the BSEE said about 22 percent of US Gulf of Mexico oil production is offline on Sunday because of Harvey. Output levels rose slightly from Saturday, when approximately 25 percent of production was offline. On Sunday, 378,633 barrels of the 1.75 million bpd produced in the Gulf was offline. Approximately 26 percent of the Gulf's natural gas production is shuttered, about 828 million cubic feet per day. Around 105 platforms in the region have been evacuated so far. The [AP](#) (8/27) reports the BSEE said it has been monitoring and working with offshore operators so that the storm does not threaten commercial activities in the Gulf. The [Houston Chronicle](#) (8/26, Eaton) reported BP slowed output from its Atlantis and Mad Dog Platforms in the Gulf, while Noble Energy evacuated non-essential personnel from its offshore and Eagle Ford operations. ConocoPhillips halted operations and production in the Eagle Ford and evacuated workers from the Magnolia platform, and BHP Billiton shut its upstream and midstream shale facilities. ExxonMobil evacuated all of its offshore workers that were in the path of the storm and shut its Hoover and Galveston 209 production platforms. [Reuters](#) (8/25, Scheyder) reported BP's Gulf production was affected by the shutdown of the Cameron Highway Oil Pipeline System, controlled by Genesis Energy LP, which was shut down because of the storm. The company said without the pipeline, Gulf operations could not pump crude out of its Atlantis and Mad Dog platforms.

Additional coverage is provided by [CNN Money](#) (8/27) [NBC News](#) (8/25) [National \(ARE\)](#) (8/28), [Reuters](#) (8/27), the [New York Daily News](#) (8/26), [Reuters](#) (8/26), the [Rhea County \(TN\) Herald News](#) (8/25), [WXYZ-TV](#) Detroit (8/25), the [Houma \(LA\) Courier](#) (8/24), the [Houston \(TX\) Chronicle](#) (8/25, Collette), [Fox Business](#) (8/27), the [Washington \(DC\) Examiner](#) (8/27, Shepherd), [Reuters](#) (8/27, Scheyder), [WTVR-TV](#) Richmond, VA (8/27), [Reuters](#) (8/26, Scheyder), [Reuters](#) (8/25), the [Washington \(DC\) Post](#) (8/27, Gordon), the [Houston \(TX\) Chronicle](#) (8/27, Press), [WTVR-TV](#) Richmond, VA (8/26), the [Washington \(DC\) Times](#) (8/25, Koenig), [PennEnergy](#) (8/25), the [Financial Times](#) (8/24, Raval), the [Washington \(DC\) Examiner](#) (8/27, Shepherd), and [Offshore Engineer](#) (8/25).

Cheniere Does Not Expect Sabine Pass Operations To Be Interrupted. The [Houston Chronicle](#) (8/27, Hunn) reports Cheniere Energy said that as of Sunday, Hurricane Harvey had not significantly affected production at its Sabine Pass facility. Spokesman Eben Burnham-Snyder said early inspections of the company's Corpus Christi expansion site revealed only minor damage. Cheniere evacuated and locked down its Corpus Christi construction site on Thursday, closed Houston offices on Friday and reduced Sabin Pass personnel to essential workers only. Burnham-Snyder said the company does not expect the Sabine Pass facility to close, and will continue operations through the storm. Burnham-Snyder said, "Bottom line. ... we did a lot of work to prepare and respond to the storm, and we appear to be lucky with impacts."

[Engineering News-Record](#) (8/25) reported personnel "have been evacuated off 89 offshore production platforms, or 11.67 % of the manned platforms in the Gulf of Mexico, according to the Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement. People have also been evacuated from four of the 10 rigs operating in the Gulf, while one dynamically positioned rig has moved off location. BSEE estimates 21.55 % of the current oil production in the Gulf of Mexico has been shut-in, or 377,117 barrels of oil per day."

[Argus Media](#) (8/25) reported Cheniere said on Friday that the storm was not expected to impact production at Sabine Pass. The company said, "While at this time we do not expect production to be affected at our Sabine Pass LNG facility, we will continue to monitor the storm, stay in close contact with local emergency officials, and respond with safety as the paramount concern. ... Cheniere's gas supply and trading unit has activated its emergency protocols and will ensure that all gas flows and contractual obligations needed for production will be met." Cheniere did not discuss if ship loadings would be affected. [Platts](#) (8/25) reported feedgas nominations for delivery to the plant were 1.96 Bcf on Friday, higher than the average nominations in August so far of 1.81 Bcf/d. Atlantic-based trading sources said demand for spot cargoes in the basin were not changed and that there were no expected disruptions to normal trading activity. [Natural Gas Intelligence](#) (8/25) reported Burnham-Snyder said, "Cheniere's Gas Supply and Trading unit has activated its emergency protocols and will ensure that all gas flows and contractual obligations needed for production at Sabine Pass LNG will be met."

[Platts](#) (8/25) and [Platts](#) (8/26) also provided coverage.

Fish And Wildlife Service

New Mexico Commission Supports Wolf Recovery Proposal.

The [Washington Times](#) (8/25) reported the New Mexico State Game Commission “has voted to support a federal proposal to recover an endangered wolf species that once roamed parts of New Mexico, Arizona and northern Mexico.” The vote “came Thursday after commissioners received an update from the state Game and Fish Department on the recovery planning process for the Mexican gray wolf. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is under a court order to have a completed recovery plan by the end of November.”

Toxic Algae Prompts Health Advisory For SW Idaho Lake.

The [AP](#) (8/26) reported visitors at a southwest Idaho lake “shouldn’t enter the water due to toxic algae.” Southwest District Health “tells the Idaho Press-Tribune in a story on Saturday that high concentrations of blue-green algae at Lake Lowell led to the health advisory.” Officials “say coming in contact with the algae can cause nausea, vomiting, liver damage and other problems.” The piece adds, “Lake Lowell is part of the Dear Flat National Wildlife Refuge that’s managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.”

\$2.4M Grant To Help Preserve Land In Schuylkill Highlands.

The [Norristown \(PA\) Times Herald](#) (8/27) reports that a federal program “aimed specifically at preserving naturally and culturally valuable land in the East Coast highlands region has awarded more than \$2.4 million for the acquisition of land in the seven-county Schuylkill Highlands.” The grant of \$2,420,000 “was announced by the office of U.S. Rep. Ryan Costello, R-6, and will be provided to the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources through the federal Highlands Conservation Act.”

National Park Service

Sen. Alexander Praises Interior Secretary For Working To Solve National Park Maintenance Problem.

The [Chattanooga \(TN\)](#) (8/25) reported Senator Lamar Alexander (R-TN) on Friday “hiked the Rainbow Falls Trail at the Great Smoky Mountains National Park with Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke, park volunteers, and young conservationists to mark the 101st anniversary of the U.S. National Park Service.” Senator Alexander “praised the secretary for his efforts to address the growing maintenance needs in national parks and on public lands and the more than 2,200 Park volunteers who help reduce the maintenance backlog in the Smokies.” He said, “Secretary Zinke is trying to solve a big problem – our national parks are struggling with a backlog of maintenance needs that are not being addressed. The maintenance backlog – which includes roads, buildings, campgrounds, trails, water systems and more – limits access to our national parks and diminishes visitor experiences.”

[WATE-TV](#) Knoxville, TN (8/25) reported US Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke “stopped in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park on Friday to celebrate the 101st anniversary of the founding of the National Park Service.” Zinke said, “As a former Seal commander, there’s two things that our government needs to fund: our military and our parks.” In his first visit to the park as secretary, he “expressed the need for more funding of our national parks,” saying, “We’re looking at prioritizing and delivering more money on the front line where I think it belongs, more money for our rangers. ... We’re too short in the field. We’ve been regionalized, so our rangers are feeling like they don’t have the right resources, the right manpower, the right funding on the front line, as well as the park system as a whole, we need to catch up and reinvest in our greatest treasures.”

[USA Today](#) (8/25, Ahillen) reported Sen. Alexander “hiked Rainbow Falls Trail in the park with Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke on the 101st anniversary of the National Park Service, and offered comments on several other topics.”

Ryan Zinke Promises Big Effort To Avoid Another Devastating Fire In Gatlinburg. The [Knoxville \(TN\) News Sentinel](#) (8/25) reported Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke “said the National Park Service could have done some things better on battling the Nov. 28 wildfire and vowed to do what it takes to make sure a devastating fire doesn’t happen again here.” He is quoted saying during a visit to Great Smoky Mountains National Park on Friday, “I’m convinced people participating in it did as good as they could. ... A lot of people tried to do the right thing.

Unfortunately, we lost some lives and had 2,500 structures destroyed. ... There were a lot of lessons learned. There are things we'll get better at. Hopefully, we'll put the right things in place so that it is never repeated."

US Must Invest In Its Public Lands, Interior Secretary Zinke Says. The [Asheville \(NC\) Citizen-Times](#) (8/25) reported, "It's past time to take care of an \$11.5 billion maintenance backlog for America's national parks, Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke said during a visit here Friday to commemorate the 101st anniversary of the National Park Service." He "said his goal is to eliminate the backlog in park infrastructure needs in five years." Zinke is quoted saying, "We're going to catch up. We deserve as an American citizenry and country to make sure that we maintain the park experience."

Also reporting on the 101st anniversary were [Yahoo! News](#) (8/25, Staff) and [WDBJ-TV](#) Roanoke, VA (8/26).

Grand Teton Sees Record Burst Of Visitors During Eclipse.

The [AP](#) (8/25) reported that Monday's total solar eclipse "turned out to be a record-breaking event for Grand Teton National Park as people from around the world jammed into the northwest Wyoming park to get a glimpse of the eclipse against a backdrop of scenic mountain peaks." The weekend before the eclipse and the day of the eclipse "resulted in the 'busiest weekend in the history of the park,' park spokeswoman Denise Germann said Friday." Park traffic data "indicates that there was about a 40 percent increase in park visits, or about 10,000 extra people, in the park on Monday."

Leaked Emails Show The NRA Has A Close Relationship With The Interior Department.

[Business Insider](#) (8/27) reports the National Park Service "raised serious concerns in late June over a bill backed by the National Rifle Association, but they were disregarded entirely by the agency's overseer, the Department of the Interior." According to a memo obtained by McClatchy, "the NPS's acting director, Michael Reynolds, pushed back against provisions that would prohibit his agency from managing commercial and recreational fishing within park parameters. He also objected to language that would prevent the NPS from giving input on certain development projects, and regulating the hunting of bears and wolves in Alaska wildlife preserves." And Interior's response to the memo "was less than accommodating. Casey Hammond, a political appointee of President Donald Trump, simply crossed out Reynolds' comments."

Republicans Want More Hunting On Federal Lands.

[Esquire Magazine](#) (8/25) reported, "It appears that the U.S. Department of the Interior has decided to turn the National Parks into free fire zones, the equivalent of taxpayer funded game ranches similar to the one at which Dick Cheney once ventilated his friend's face. McClatchy has all the details."

Drone Illegally Buzzes Grizzly Bears In Grand Teton Park.

[U.S. News & World Report](#) (8/25) reports Grand Teton National Park rangers "are investigating the illegal use of a drone that buzzed a grizzly bear and her two cubs in the northwest Wyoming park. The incident occurred Wednesday evening." Park spokeswoman Denise Germann "tells the Jackson Hole News & Guide that rangers and others saw the drone hover close to the grizzlies."

Zion National Park Requests Comments On Management Of Bighorn Sheep.

The [St. George \(UT\) News](#) (8/26) reported that desert bighorn sheep "are an iconic animal found at Zion National Park, and catching glimpses of them on the red cliff faces is a sought after part of a trip to the park. However, with reductions in habitat quality and disease across portions of their range, there were no documented sightings of bighorn sheep in the park between 1953 and 1973. In 1973, in cooperation with the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources and other agencies, bighorn sheep were reintroduced to the park." The biggest threat to Zion's wild bighorn sheep "is disease. ... In order to mitigate this risk, Zion National Park, in collaboration with the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources, proposes to transplant desert bighorn sheep from the population inside the park to support other parts of the state's bighorn population, and decrease the risk of disease transmission and potential for large scale mortality in the Zion herd, while contributing to the success of the regional population."

Forest Service Approves Exploratory Mining Near Mount St. Helens.

[KUOW-FM](#) Seattle (8/25) reported that US Forest Service "is moving forward with a plan to allow

exploratory mining near Mount St. Helens." The agency "issued a draft decision approving Canadian company Ascot Resources Ltd.'s plans to drill for copper and gold in Washington's Gifford Pinchot National Forest." The decision "opens a 45-day period for the public to object to the U.S. Forest Service's draft decision."

US Geological Survey

Many Texas Beaches Likely To Erode, Be Overwashed, Or Inundated By Hurricane Harvey.

[GISuser](#) (8/27) reports that "new projections from the U.S. Geological Survey indicate Hurricane Harvey is likely to cause significant beach erosion along the Texas coastline, with water overtopping dunes and in some cases inundating areas." As of Friday morning, the USGS Coastal Change Forecast model is predicting that 94 percent of Texas's 367 miles of coastline will undergo "some level of beach erosion from the storm surge and large waves Hurricane Harvey will produce." USGS Research Oceanographer Joseph Long is quoted saying, "Significant coastal erosion along the coastline of Texas is expected due to the rapid strengthening of Hurricane Harvey. ... While the forecasts are subject to change as Harvey approaches land, we are making these forecasts to help inform emergency managers and communities on the potential coastal erosion hazards to be prepared for during the storm."

USGS: 75 Million Americans At Live In Areas Of Seismic Risk.

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (8/25, Helferich) discussed the risks earthquakes pose to people in Americans and around the world. The Journal cites the USGS saying that 75 million Americans across 39 states live in areas of "significant seismic risk."

U.S. Geological Survey: Small Earthquake Shakes Summerville.

The [Charleston \(SC\) Post and Courier](#) (8/25) reported a magnitude 2.4 earthquake "occurred late Friday morning in Summerville." The US Geological Survey "confirmed the quake's strength."

Top National News

U.S. Military Finds Small Ally To Watch North Korea's Kim Jong Un With Big Radars.

[Newsweek](#) (8/24, O'Connor) reported the US "has found a new ally in its quest to undermine North Korea's Kim Jong Un, whose nuclear and ballistic weapons arsenal has increasingly frustrated Washington." The piece added, "The tiny Pacific archipelago nation of Palau and the U.S. Embassy in Koror released a statement Monday announcing the two were preparing to install U.S. radar towers that will give the Pentagon a more expansive look across the Asia-Pacific. While the statement said the plan was devised prior to North Korea's recent threats against the nearby U.S. island territory of Guam, the proposal reportedly came days after North Korea tested its first intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) and days prior to its second test."

[Sputnik News](#) (8/25) and [TODAY \(SGP\)](#) (8/25) also reported.

Trump To Visit Texas On Tuesday As Hurricane Recovery Gets Underway.

Coverage of the Trump Administration's response to Hurricane Harvey indicates that President Trump is projecting an image of focus and engagement in dealing with the first major storm to hit the US mainland since 2005. The President returned to the White House from Camp David early, and convened a second Cabinet meeting late Sunday. The President also plans to visit the affected areas on Tuesday. Most of the coverage deals with Trump's [20 tweets or retweets](#) since Saturday morning, 16 of them about the storm – though the President also faced mild criticism for also tweeting on several other subjects.

The [New York Times](#) (8/27, Landler), for example, reports that though the President "wrapped up a sparkling late-summer weekend" at Camp David, "to judge by his Twitter feed and the photos and statements released by the White House, he did little other than monitor" Harvey. The President "posted regular updates on the status of the storm and praise for the government's response" in "a calculated display of energetic presidential leadership – one hardly unique to the Trump administration. But it also revealed a president who was genuinely engaged by the drama unfolding in Texas." The President also "did not wait long to start doling out praise. On Saturday, as relief efforts were just gearing up, the president [tweeted to Long](#), 'You are doing a great job – the world is watching! Be safe.'" The Times says that "echoed...Bush's premature endorsement of

his FEMA chief, Michael Brown – ‘Brownie, you’re doing a heck of a job’ – in 2005.

[Politico](#) (8/27, Dawsey) also reports that Trump “sought to project tough competence in the face of the biggest natural disaster of his presidency. ... Trump’s friends say he has a short attention span...but he sought to present himself as focused on Texas, posting online about the hurricane repeatedly.” One “close adviser” said, “He enjoys playing the role even if he’s never handled anything like this. He knows what a president is supposed to look like during something like this.”

Coverage of the storm took up the entirety of all three of the broadcast network newscasts, with each spending about two minutes on the White House response, and the remainder on storm coverage, forecasts, and recovery efforts. [ABC World News Tonight](#) (8/27, story 7, 1:45, Llamas) reported that the President plans to “travel to the storm region Tuesday.” ABC’s Mary Bruce: “President Trump today returning from Camp David, with a wave. ... He’s been monitoring the storm response via video conference. Harvey is a major test for the President. And from the flood zone today, warm words from the Texas governor.” Gov. Greg Abbott: “We could not be more appreciative of what the federal government has one, from the President on down.” Bruce: “On Twitter, the President is touting the great coordination, [saying](#), ‘We have an all-out effort going, and going well!’ But he’s is also tweeting about everything from a book by a controversial political ally to the border wall, NAFTA, and his upcoming visit to Missouri, a state he, quote, ‘won by a lot.’”

[NBC Nightly News](#) (8/27, story 7, 2:05, Holt) reported, “The White House announced late today that President Trump will visit Texas on Tuesday. The President tweeted his comments on the storm today, praising the coordination between the federal, state, and local government, and saying effort was going well.” NBC’s Kelly O’Donnell: “President Trump returned to the White House from Camp David, where he held a second video link conference with senior officials planning the federal government response. But the President did not respond to shouted questions about the storm. ... Instead, he let social media do the talking with a burst of tweets. And just [four words](#) appeared to frame the scope of this crisis: ‘Major rescue operations underway.’ He also seemed eager to get high marks on the response in real time. ‘Good news is that we have great talent on the ground.’ A more urgent, even dire tone came from FEMA Administrator Brock Long.” Long: “We are deep into the life safety mission of helping people be rescued through swift water, swift water rescue, search and rescue.”

The [CBS Weekend News](#) (8/27, story 8, 1:35, Strassmann) reported that Trump has been “briefed regularly about the storm.” Long: “I’d like to say that President Trump is extremely concerned about this.” [The Hill](#) (8/27, Mitchell) reports that the President “held a second Cabinet meeting on Hurricane Harvey to shore up response and recovery efforts, according to the White House.” The President and Vice President Pence “led a video teleconference with Cabinet and senior administration officials ‘to discuss ongoing federal support for Hurricane Harvey response and recovery,’ the White House press office said in a statement.”

White House Homeland Security Adviser Tom Bossert told [ABC’s This Week](#) (8/27) that Long was “coordinating federal efforts across different departments and agencies” to help aid in the relief and rescue efforts. On [CBS’ Face The Nation](#) (8/27, Garrett), Bossert said, “I think there’s two messages for me today. First is that we’re focused on life safety operations, and the second is that we’re not going to lose our focus as the next days and weeks unfold and people need continued assistance.” [USA Today](#) (8/27, Berry) reports, “Federal officials warn the danger is far from over.” Bossert said rain “is expected to continue upward of 30 inches.” Bossert told CBS, “We’re going to posture ourselves for the long-term care of the medical needy, of the elderly, of the weak and then we’ll put ourselves in the position to provide the resources to rebuild and recover.” The [Washington Post](#) (8/27, Baddour) reports that by Sunday afternoon, the National Weather Service “was predicting that parts of Texas could receive nearly 50 inches of rain, the largest recorded total in the state’s history.”

[ABC World News Tonight](#) (8/27, lead story, 4:50, Llamas) reported Harvey has caused “disaster” that “is staggering by every measure.” Houston is “a city in crisis” and the “911 system [is] overwhelmed.” The [CBS Weekend News](#) (8/27, lead story, 3:10, Strassmann) reported that the “monster storm, roughly 600 miles wide, is also unleashing tornadoes, though officials say the biggest threat now is the catastrophic flooding.” [NBC Nightly News](#) (8/27, story 4, 1:45, Holt) meteorologist Dylan Dreyer said, “It’s an incredible amount of rain.” The [CBS Weekend News](#) (8/27, story 11, 0:20, Strassmann) briefly mentioned that “we may not have reached the halfway point in this slow-moving catastrophe. ... Some places may get two more feet by Friday.”

The [AP](#) (8/27, Yen) reports that Trump said “his administration was handling its responsibilities well, approving of the effort in a series of weekend tweets that showcased his

personal involvement. He [marveled](#) over the size of the storm like a TV host and, in a tangential aside, [hawked a book](#) on race and crime in America written by a supporter." Long warned of "a 'landmark event' that could require years to get damaged areas back on track." The AP says the Trump Administration seeks "to offer a contrast" to President Bush's response to Hurricane Katrina. Long said FEMA "is now 'vastly different' than in 2005 and that he has the power he needs to mobilize forces and coordinate staffing." The [Washington Examiner](#) (8/27, Shepherd) reports that Long told CNN, "This disaster is going to be a landmark event. We're setting up and gearing up for the next couple of years."

The [Washington Post](#) (8/27, Phillip) reports that the President "praised the federal government's response to Hurricane Harvey on Sunday morning, comments that came as millions still face the threat of deadly floods from the storm." The [Los Angeles Times](#) (8/27, King) reports that Trump said he would visit Texas "as soon as it was possible to do so without interfering with rescue efforts." The [Washington Times](#) (8/27, Sherfinski) reports that Trump [tweeted](#), "I will be going to Texas as soon as that trip can be made without causing disruption. The focus must be life and safety." The [Houston Chronicle](#) (8/27, Ellis) and [Politico](#) (8/27, Nelson, Cohen) also briefly report on the trip announcement.

Long: FEMA Will Be In Texas "For Years." Long said on [CNN's State Of The Union](#) ☐ (8/27, Tapper) that FEMA was focused on Houston right now. Long said that FEMA has "nearly five thousand people from the federal government on site in Texas and Louisiana, fulfilling missions." He said that they are not only working on safety and rescue but "care" missions, as well. [Bloomberg News](#) (8/27, Niquette, Schoenberg) reports that Long said FEMA "is prepared to be in the Houston area 'for years' as the fourth largest US city takes the brunt of rainfall and flooding from the 'landmark' storm."

The [Washington Post](#) (8/27, Achenbach) writes that Long "said in an interview a few weeks ago that there was one thing that worried him most when it comes to natural disasters: 'You know what's keeping me up at night? This country has not been hit by a major hurricane since 2005.' That was the right thing to worry about, it turns out." Long, who has been in his job for just two months, is now coordinating the federal response to "the first Category 3 or greater storm to hit the US in 12 years – and its lethal aftermath." Long told the Post on Sunday, "This will be a devastating disaster, probably the worst disaster the state's seen." The [Los Angeles Times](#) (8/27, Pearce, Jarvie) reports that Long "said that although Houston was taking the brunt of the catastrophic rainfall, it was important to remember that 'there are many communities inside the state of Texas that are hurting.'"

The [New York Post](#) (8/27, Brown) reports that Long said FEMA is "hunkering down for a years-long recovery effort in Texas." Long told CNN, "FEMA is going to be there for years. This disaster recovery – this disaster is going to be a landmark event." The [Washington Times](#) (8/27, Sherfinski) reports that Long added, "This event is nothing like Katrina. This is completely different. Every storm impacts different jurisdictions differently. Every Category 4 storm is different. This is a storm that the United States has not seen yet." [The Hill](#) (8/27, Savransky) reports that Long "added he has 'great lines of communication' with President Trump."

Ex-FEMA Director James Lee Witt writes in [USA Today](#) (8/27), "Trump, who is facing his first hurricane but certainly not his last natural disaster," made an "excellent and experienced choice" in Long, "who knows what buttons to push – and when – to get things done. It is Long's day-to-day responsibility to support the local and state efforts to house and feed those who cannot go home and get the lights turned back on, the toilets working, the roads cleared and the schools open."

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (8/27) editorializes that while the cost of recovery will be great, the United States has the resources to do it, which is one of the reasons the Journal editorial page advocates for policies that foster economic growth and the wealth to which it leads.

Abbott Praises Federal Response. Abbott told [NBC Nightly News](#) ☐ (8/27, story 6, 1:30, Holt), "This is really unprecedented. But we're going to find a way to deal with it. We've dealt with hurricanes and storms before. We will rebuild here. One thing that will help us rebuild is that I quickly asked for a presidential declaration of a disaster. We are already getting help from FEMA." Abbott said on [CNN's State Of The Union](#) ☐ (8/27, Tapper) that the President had responded to his request for a state of emergency and sent the resources needed. Abbott said on [Fox News Sunday](#) ☐ (8/27, Wallace) that the damage "is large and growing larger, it will be in the billions of dollars but we really will not be able to tell for the next couple of days when better assessments can be made." Abbott said his biggest challenge was "working to save lives and to keep as many people as safe as possible in the Houston area."

The [Washington Times](#) (8/27, Sherfinski) reports that Abbott "said he has spoken to

President Trump several times and that Texans are getting 'absolutely everything we need' from the federal government." [Townhall](#) (8/27, Rousselle) reports that Abbott said, "I give FEMA a grade of A+, all the way from the President down." Abbott also discussed the storm and recovery efforts on [ABC's This Week](#) (8/27) and the [CBS Weekend News](#) (8/27, story 2, 2:00, Strassmann).

[USA Today](#) (8/27, Homer, Bacon) reports that Abbott has "activated 3,000 National Guard troops in addition to hundreds of other state emergency personnel aiding local first responders. He said 600 boats were aiding rescue efforts, and the Coast Guard said at least 16 helicopters were tapped for air rescues."

The [Washington Times](#) (8/27, Sherfinski) reports that Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner said at a news conference, "I don't need to tell anyone this is a very, very serious and unprecedented storm. We have several hundred structural flooding reports. We expect that number to rise pretty dramatically." [ABC World News Tonight](#) (8/27, story 2, 1:50, Llamas) reported that Turner is "facing criticism for telling residents Friday to stay put." [Reuters](#) (8/27, Thevenot) reports that the storm has now killed at least two people.

The [Houston Chronicle](#) (8/27, Carroll, Harden, Blakinger), the [Texas Tribune](#) (8/27, Najmabadi), the [Wall Street Journal](#) (8/27, Olson, Campo-Flores, Bustillo), and [Bloomberg News](#) (8/27, Sullivan, Skerritt, Carroll) are among the sources detailing storm damage. The [New York Times](#) (8/27, Fernandez) has a feature on early cleanup efforts in Rockport, the coastal town of 11,000 where Harvey made landfall; Matt Gutman of [ABC World News Tonight](#) (8/27, story 6, 2:10, Llamas) said that the destruction in the town is "mind-numbing." On its front page, the [Washington Post](#) (8/27, Craig) profiles Corpus Christi Mayor Joe McComb, who "knows the power of water."

Trump Tweeted About McCaskill On Sunday. [USA Today](#) (8/27, Singer) reports, "Trump and his top aides have said he is intently focused on the government response to Hurricane Harvey this weekend, but Trump still took a moment Sunday to poke a Missouri Democratic senator" on Twitter, [tweeting](#) regarding Sen. Claire McCaskill, "I will also be going to a wonderful state, Missouri, that I won by a lot in '16. Dem C.M. is opposed to big tax cuts. Republican will win S!" [USA Today](#) writes that that "political tweet posted" while Long "was on CNN describing the government's response to Hurricane Harvey and Trump's focus on the storm." [Politico](#) (8/27) reports that Trump had "an extremely busy Twitter morning."

Shut-Down Refineries Likely To Mean Higher Gas Prices. [ABC World News Tonight](#) (8/27, story 8, 0:25, Llamas) briefly reported on "a possible aftershock to the unfolding disaster in Texas: a spike in oil and gas prices. Dozens of oil rigs in the Gulf and several refineries shut down ahead of the storm. Today, Exxon closing its refinery complex in Houston, the second largest in the country. Experts predict gas prices could go up five to 25 cents per gallon." [USA Today](#) (8/27, Davidson) reports, "Refineries in the Houston and Corpus Christi areas shut down before the storm hit Friday to minimize damage. ... Nationally, regular unleaded gasoline averaged \$2.36 a gallon Sunday, up from \$2.35 Saturday and \$2.33 a week ago."

The [Washington Examiner](#) (8/27, Shepherd) reports that about one-quarter of all the oil and natural gas produced in the Gulf Coast region of Texas is now offline. For oil, "that's the equivalent of about 430,000 barrels of oil per day." Tom Kloza of the Oil Price Information service said "gas prices nationwide could see a 5 to 15 cent increase, and that could spike even further if a major refinery suffered direct damage." The [Wall Street Journal](#) (8/27, Molinski, Matthews) reports that Valero Energy said its two Corpus Christi-area refineries did not sustain significant damage, so the company was looking for ways to restart operations. However, that requires the port to also be functional, and Valero offered no timeline.

Texas Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick said on [Fox News' Sunday Morning Futures](#) (8/27, Bartiromo) that as far as he knows, no refineries have been damaged but that a third of the refineries were offline. He said, "All of those people who work on those refineries are focused on their families and their homes." He added that the storm will likely cause the refineries to remain "offline longer than people felt."

Politico Magazine: US Has Not Yet "Learned The Lessons Of Katrina." [Politico Magazine](#) (8/27) runs a 5,000-word piece called "Why America Still Hasn't Learned The Lessons Of Katrina" in which Annie Snider writes, "From the way Congress appropriates money to the specific rebuilding efforts that federal agencies encourage, national policies almost uniformly look backwards, to the last storm, rather than ahead to the next. And the scale of the potential damage has caused agencies to become more risk-averse in ways that can obstruct, rather than help, local communities' attempts to protect themselves." However, "as the effects of climate change play out, the risks posed by storms like Katrina and Harvey only stand to get worse."

Delta Tunnels Sued Over SMUD Hydro Power.

The [Sacramento \(CA\) Bee](#) (8/25) reported that Sacramentans “enjoy cheap electricity compared to most Californians, thanks in part to a string of hydroelectric dams along the American River. Which is why SMUD, the Sacramento Municipal Utility District, joined the deluge of regional governments, environmentalists and others suing the state in an effort to block its Delta tunnels project.” Although the project “would have obvious impacts on the Sacramento and San Joaquin rivers, SMUD said it is concerned about the impact the tunnels, known officially as California WaterFix, would have on its water supplies on the American.”

Tillerson: Trump “Speaks For Himself” On Values.

The [Washington Post](#) (8/27, Gearan) reports that Secretary of State Tillerson “became the latest and highest-ranking administration official to distance himself from President Trump” on Sunday, telling Fox News that the President “speaks for himself” in his response to racial hatred and violence. Tillerson was asked on “Fox News Sunday” whether he thought Trump was “expressing American values of tolerance and equality” in his handling of the violence in Charlottesville earlier this month. “The president speaks for himself,” Tillerson said. Asked by host Chris Wallace if he “separating himself” from Trump’s remarks, Tillerson answered, “I’ve made my own comments as to our values.”

The [New York Post](#) (8/27, Schultz) reports Tillerson “distanced himself – and the nation – from President Trump’s response,” while the [AP](#) (8/27) says the Secretary of State appeared to “repudiate the president’s response,” marking “the second White House official in recent days to appear to more explicitly criticize Trump.” The [New York Times](#) (8/27, Weiland) reports Tillerson’s remarks “stood in stark contrast to those” of Treasury Secretary Mnuchin, who “defended Mr. Trump’s response.”

The [Washington Times](#) (8/27, Sherfinski) and [Breitbart](#) (8/27, Key) also report similarly on Tillerson’s remarks, while [Politico](#) (8/27, Nelson) reports Tillerson also “panned the letter released last Friday by ousted White House national security aide Sebastian Gorka,” who wrote that “outside of yourself, the individuals who most embodied and represented the policies that will ‘Make America Great Again,’ have been internally countered, systematically removed, or undermined in recent months.” Asked about Gorka’s letter, Tillerson said it was “completely wrong.”

Axios Report: Trump’s Frustration With Tillerson “Rising Fast.” According to [Axios](#) (8/27, Swan), “officials inside and close to the White House” say Trump “has been growing increasingly frustrated” with Tillerson, and his “jaw-dropping comments” to Fox “will likely only worsen their relationship.” Axios reports that “we’ve been hearing for weeks, from sources who’ve spoken to the president, that Trump is getting more and more fed up with Tillerson, who has still yet to staff his agency,” but spokesman R.C. Hammond told Axios it’s because “the system is busted. The Secretary sends over recommendations and they sit on the dock.”

Breitbart: Trump’s Inner Circle Disparaging Him. [Breitbart](#) (8/27, Boyle) reports that several members of President Trump’s inner circle have “disparaged” him in recent days and he “has done nothing public to stop them.” In addition to Tillerson, National Economic Council director Gary Cohn told the Financial Times, “Citizens standing up for equality and freedom can never be equated with white supremacists, neo-Nazis, and the KKK.” Breitbart adds that “others in the White House have banded together to form the ‘West Wing Democrats,’” a group which sees “their role as moderating the president’s campaign positions to protect the established order and status quo in Washington.” Breitbart says this “display of lack of control of his own supposed allies weakens his position heading into what is likely to be one of the bloodiest legislative months in recent history.”

Trump Renews Vow To Make Mexico Pay For Border Wall.

After threatening last week “to trigger a government shutdown if Congressional Republicans don’t include funding” for his promised wall along the US-Mexico border in a spending bill due Sept. 30, President Trump on Sunday reiterated his promise to make Mexico pay for the construction of the wall, [Bloomberg News](#) (8/27, Talev) reports. Trump [tweeted](#), “With Mexico being one of the highest crime nations in the world, we must have THE WALL. ... Mexico will pay for it through reimbursement/other.” However, he “did not elaborate on how Mexico would cover the cost.” The tweet followed Trump’s comments at a rally last week in Phoenix where he told supporters, “If we have to close down our government, we’re building that wall,” and that “one way or the other, we’re going to get that wall.”

The [New York Post](#) (8/27, Schultz, Brown) reports that White House aide Tom Bossert was

asked on [ABC's This Week](#) ☐ if Trump's threat to shut down the government "meant he is conceding that Mexico is not going to pay for the wall." Bossert "claimed that's not the case," saying, "What we'll do here is go through the mechanism of getting the initial money that we need for that capital project from Congress through an appropriations process and we'll responsibly construct a barrier on the border. ... As we work with the Mexicans and other policies and trade policies and such, we'll determine ways for us to make that right." [The Hill](#) (8/27, Manchester) also reports on the tweet and says that during a phone call earlier this year, Trump "pleaded with Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto...to stop saying publicly that his country would not pay for a wall on the border, according to a transcript of the conversation obtained by The Washington Post."

Brown: "I've Never Supported" Building Wall. Sen. Sherrod Brown was asked on [NBC's Meet the Press](#) ☐ (8/27, Todd) if he supported the building of a wall between Mexico and the United States. He said, "No...I've never supported that."

Trump Moving Ahead On Nuclear Overhaul.

The [New York Times](#) (8/27, A1, Sanger, Broad) reports on its front page that the Air Force last week "announced major new contracts for an overhaul of the American nuclear force: \$1.8 billion for initial development of a highly stealthy nuclear cruise missile, and nearly \$700 million to begin replacing the 40-year-old Minuteman missiles in silos across the United States," both programs that were developed during the Obama Administration but were "seized on" by the Trump Administration, "with only passing nods to the debate about whether either is necessary or wise." The Times adds that as the Obama Administration "nurtured the programs," Obama "argued that by making nuclear weapons safer and more reliable, their numbers could be reduced." Trump "has not spoken of any such reduction, in the number of weapons or the scope of the overhaul," and it is "moving full speed ahead on the nuclear overhaul" while "critics are warning of the risk of a new arms race and billions of dollars squandered."

Perry: Administration Focused On Texas Having Everything It Needs.

[Fox News](#) (8/27) reports President Trump yesterday "said he is planning a trip to storm-ravaged Texas and praised the government response to Hurricane Harvey including emergency crews that have rescued 'thousands,' as storm water rises and strands residents across the state." Energy Secretary Rick Perry said yesterday on Fox News' "Fox & Friends," "The administration is being very focused on making sure the state has everything it needs." The former Texas governor "was like Trump careful to make clear that Texas is leading the storm-recovery efforts, praising Republican Gov. Greg Abbott's response, as flood waters reach dangerous levels in Houston, where evacuations are expected to continue for days." Perry said, "We need to be prepared for a really long recovery."

Perry Among Those That Participated In Saturday Teleconference Call. [CNN](#) (8/26, Landers, Taum, Meier) reports the White House on Saturday held a teleconference call, "led by homeland security adviser Tom Bossert, in which Trump asked a lot of questions on a range of issues, including about flooding and mass power outages, an administration official said." Key "administration and Cabinet officials joined the teleconference call from the White House Situation Room, including Bossert, Vice President Mike Pence, chief of staff John Kelly, acting Homeland Security Secretary Elaine Duke, Federal Emergency Management Agency Administrator Brock Long, Health and Human Service Secretary Tom Price and Energy Secretary Rick Perry, according to photos of the meeting released by the White House."

UVI: Pay Raises Plus Budget Cuts Equals Personnel Cutbacks.

The [St. Thomas Source](#) (8/25) reported "pay increases last year combined with budget cuts this year will force the University of the Virgin Islands to shed faculty and staff, UVI President David Hall told senators during budget hearings Thursday." The "unfortunate development appears to bear out concerns some senators raised about the sustainability of government raises last year, before the Legislature ultimately voted to approve them. Other government agencies appear to be absorbing this year's budget cuts without substantial staff reductions thus far."

Editorial Wrap-Up

New York Times.

"Looking Beyond The Obamacare Debate To Improve Health Care." The [New York Times](#)

(8/26) editorializes that with Republicans temporarily abandoning efforts to repeal the Affordable Care Act, "it seems like a good time for lawmakers to come up with plans to fulfill their promises to increase access to health care and to lower costs." The editorial discusses a number of potential options that lawmakers can pursue, which includes offering the increasingly popular single payer option, or what Sens. Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren call "Medicare for All," allowing people to buy into Medicare earlier, and increasing subsidies for Obamacare exchanges. The editorial concludes that the "Republican campaign to repeal Obamacare, for all its waste of time and energy, has at least gotten people to talk seriously about proposals to improve the health care system."

"The Rush To Exploit The Arctic." A [New York Times](#) (8/26) editorial says the passage of the Russian tanker Christophe de Margerie "carrying liquefied natural gas through the warming Arctic without an icebreaker escort marks a critical milestone in a centuries-old yearning for a shorter, faster route between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans" and "a major triumph for President Vladimir Putin." While it is "probably too much to hope that the success of the Russian tanker will change" President Trump's position on climate change, the Times says, "it should open his eyes to the need to make sure that the struggle for territorial and commercial advantage" in the Arctic "does not get out of hand."

Washington Post.

"The District's Death Wish For Metro." In an editorial, the [Washington Post](#) (8/26) warns that "just as the region has started coming to grips with reversing Metro's years-long death spiral, top officials in the District are throwing a wrench in the works that could kill any chance of righting a transit system whose maintenance and safety problems have imperiled its future and the region's." The Post criticizes DC Council Chairman Phil Mendelson (D) and others for proposing "a radical overhaul of the funding formula in place since Metro's founding in the 1970s" that would require "a massive transfer of the cost-sharing burden from the District to the suburbs, especially Northern Virginia," which the editorial contends "is a recipe for impasse, inaction and inertia, the very ingredients that, over the course of decades, led to Metro's impoverishment and meltdown." The Post concludes "A game of brinksmanship with the District's suburban partners amounts to a death wish for Metro – not exactly the right strategy for a system already on the brink."

"A Judge Ruled Texas's Second Try At Voter ID Laws Is Illegal. She's Right." The [Washington Post](#) (8/26) editorializes that US District Judge Nelva Gonzales Ramos was right in ruling – again – that Texas' voter ID law is illegal. The Post discusses that Ramos ruled once against the "toughest-in-the-nation ballot ID law," which an appeals agreed with, and she has ruled again that a revised law is "not good enough." According to the editorial, it was "unsurprising" that Ramos found the law to be discriminatory "not only in effect, but also in purpose." Given Ramos' ruling, the Post criticizes as shameful the Justice Department's "switching sides," from "Texas's challengers to the state's defenders."

"How Republicans May Break Their Promise That Their Tax Plan Won't Raise The Debt." The [Washington Post](#) (8/26) editorializes that Republicans have repeatedly said their tax reform plan will be "revenue-neutral," which is "Washington-speak" for the rewritten tax code raising "as much money for the government as the old one, so as not to increase the national debt." The Post says, however, there are "signs this promise of fiscal responsibility might be about to get, well, bent." The editorial discusses how the Senate has yet to decide whether to follow the House Budget Committee, which passed a bill requiring that tax reform "produce as much revenue" as "'current law' baseline projects," and that some Republicans are urging lawmakers to "define revenue neutrality down, via adoption of a more fiscally permissive standard known as the "current policy" baseline." The Post argues that for "Republicans to act as though none of those words had any meaning would confirm that not only promises were made to be broken, but rules were, too."

Big Picture

Headlines From Today's Front Pages.

Wall Street Journal:

[Harvey Floods Houston, Strands Thousands](#)

[Energy Firms Brace For Harvey Fallout](#)

[Uber Selects Expedia's Khosrowshahi As New CEO](#)

[Arpaio On Criticism Of His Pardon: GOP Should Rally Behind Trump](#)

New York Times:

[In Houston, Anxiety And Frantic Rescues As Floodwaters Rise](#)
[Dramatic Rescues Unfold All Across Waterlogged Houston](#)
[Trump Forges Ahead On Costly Nuclear Overhaul](#)
[Hezbollah: Iran's Middle East Agent, Emissary And Hammer](#)
[Fatigue And Training Gaps Spell Disaster At Sea, Sailors Warn](#)
[Uber Chooses Expedia's Chief As CEO, Ending Contentious Search](#)

Washington Post:

[Civil War Statue Debate Personal, Painful In Va.](#)
[Catastrophic Flooding In Houston](#)
[Moscow Trump Tower Was Proposed](#)
[FEMA Indicates Its Own Limits In First Response](#)
[‘I Am A Hard Worker’](#)
[Mayor Uses Past To Guide Corpus Christi In Floods](#)

Financial Times:

[Trump Faces Chorus Of Dissent Over Arpaio And Charlottesville](#)
[Wall St's Top Bankers Sell Own Groups' Shares As Trump Rally Reverses](#)

Washington Times:

[Trump's Pardon Of Arpaio Sends Strong Messages To Immigrant Advocates, Mueller Team, Loyalists](#)
[With Gorka Out, White House Is Nearly Cleansed Of Hard-Liners Against Islam](#)
[Tunnels Become Human Smuggling Pathways Across Border While Drug Transfers Go Airborne](#)
[Deadly Storm Harvey 'Unprecedented,' Impacts 'Beyond Anything Experienced'](#)
[Trump Allies Embraces President's Call To Eliminate Senate Filibuster As Means To Advance Agenda](#)
[War-Torn Yemen Now Struggles With World's Worst — And Worsening — Cholera Crisis](#)

Story Lineup From Last Night's Network News:

ABC: Hurricane Harvey; Hurricane Harvey-Nursing Home Rescue; Hurricane Harvey-Resident Interview; Hurricane Harvey-Local Rescues; Hurricane Harvey-Forecast; Hurricane Harvey-Coastal City Destruction; Hurricane Harvey-White House; Hurricane Harvey-Gasoline Price; Hurricane Harvey-Travel Disruption; Hurricane Harvey-Updated Forecast.

CBS: Hurricane Harvey; Hurricane Harvey-Texas Gov Interview; Hurricane Harvey-Nursing Home Rescue; Hurricane Harvey-Flood Level; Hurricane Harvey-Forecast; Hurricane Harvey-Red Cross Aid; Hurricane Harvey-Truck Driver Rescue; Hurricane Harvey-White House; Hurricane Harvey-Houston Metro; Hurricane Harvey-San Antonio Sanctuary; Hurricane Harvey-Further Rainfall; Hurricane Harvey-High Water Rescues.

NBC: Hurricane Harvey; Hurricane Harvey-Coastal Cities; Hurricane Harvey-Home Destruction; Hurricane Harvey-Forecast; Hurricane Harvey-Evacuation; Hurricane Harvey-Texas Gov Interview; Hurricane Harvey-White House; Hurricane Harvey-Houston Flooding Causes; Hurricane Harvey-Local Rescuers; Hurricane Harvey-Updated Forecast.

Network TV At A Glance:

Hurricane Harvey – 46 minutes, 50 seconds
Hurricane Harvey-Forecast – 7 minutes, 50 seconds
Hurricane Harvey-White House – 5 minutes, 25 seconds

Story Lineup From This Morning's Radio News Broadcasts:

ABC: Hurricane Harvey-Houston; Hurricane Harvey-White House; Anti-Hate Protests.
CBS: Hurricane Harvey-Houston; Hurricane Harvey-White House; Hurricane Harvey-Gasoline Price; Anti-Hate Protests; Little League News.
FOX: Hurricane Harvey.
NPR: Hurricane Harvey-Houston; Hurricane Harvey-New Orleans; Tropical Storm-East Coast; Anti-Hate Protests.

Washington Schedule

Today's Events In Washington.

White House:

PRESIDENT TRUMP — Has lunch with Vice President Mike Pence and Secretary of State Rex Tillerson; meets with Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos; leads an expanded bilateral meeting with President Sauli Niinistö of Finland.

VICE PRESIDENT PENCE — Joins the President for lunch with Secretary of State Rex Tillerson; meets with US Ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley.

US Senate: On recess until 5 September.

US House: On recess until 5 September.

Other: No notable events scheduled.

Last Laughs

Late Night Political Humor.

All late-night talk shows were in re-runs or did not run.

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