

From: POLITICO Pro Energy
To: megan_bloomgren@ios.doi.gov
Subject: Morning Energy, presented by POET: Will climate change pop up as Trump, Pope meet? — Fiat sued in latest emissions cheating scandal — Trump taps another for DOE role
Date: Wednesday, May 24, 2017 4:46:13 AM

By Anthony Adragna | 05/24/2017 05:42 AM EDT

With help from Anca Gurzu and Esther Whieldon

ON THE ROAD TO ... ST. PETER'S: All eyes turn to Vatican City this morning where Pope Francis and President Donald Trump are meeting for the first time. Of course, the two hold starkly different views is climate change — Francis wrote an entire encyclical urging action to confront the problem while Trump has dismissed it as a Chinese hoax — and many observers expect the issue to come up in their discussions as U.S. weighs whether to pull out of the Paris agreement. Archbishop Marcelo Sánchez Sorondo, chancellor of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences, told [an Italian news agency](#) last week he thought the pope might be able to influence Trump on the issue. "This president has already changed about several things, so perhaps on this as well," he said. The pope, for his part, said he didn't have a strategy to sway Trump on any political issue: "We'll talk, each of us will say what he thinks. Each of us will listen to the other," Francis said on May 13, according to [Bloomberg](#).

ME FIRST — Democrats urge Trump to stick with Paris: Forty Senate Democrats, led by Senate Minority Leader [Chuck Schumer](#), are sending [a letter](#) to Trump this morning urging him not to abandon the 2015 Paris agreement on climate change. "Backing out of the Paris Agreement now, after the years of painstaking negotiations and strong U.S. leadership it took to get the world to this point, would be a self-inflicted injury to America's credibility and influence on the world stage," they wrote. Schumer, as well as Democratic Sens. [Tom Carper](#), [Maria Cantwell](#), [Ben Cardin](#), [Sheldon Whitehouse](#), [Brian Schatz](#), and [Ed Markey](#), will hold a press conference in the Capitol at 10 a.m.

Meanwhile, the European Union, China and Canada have agreed to co-host a global ministerial gathering in September to move the Paris agreement forward, Climate Action and Energy Commissioner Miguel Arias Cañete [tweeted](#) Tuesday evening. "The three parties agree on the need for urgent climate action and are ready to lead the way," he said in a statement. "No one should be left behind but our message today is very clear: we are moving ahead."

U.S. allies are frustrated by Trump's vague stances on climate change and trade in the days preceding the G-7 summit in Taormina, Italy on Friday and Saturday this week, POLITICO's Tara Palmeri [reports](#). The lack of clarity on those matters is holding up the crafting of the formal statement usually released at the end of the conferences. "Trade and climate are holding up the communique," a senior French official said.

BUDGET URGES EVEN CHEAPER ENERGY: Don't expect many oil, natural gas and power producers to jump aboard the Trump budget's calls for even lower energy costs as they continue to struggle with the soft prices for their products and as the U.S. energy burden for most households is at its lowest level in decades, Pro's Ben Lefebvre and Darius Dixon [report](#). Tuesday's document explicitly makes the call "for strengthening our national security, lowering the price of electricity and transportation fuels, and driving down the cost of consumer goods so that every American individual and business has more money to save and

invest."

But oil producers are just regaining their footing after prices rebounded from lows in the [mid-\\$20s per barrel](#) early last year. "Closing your eyes and keeping your fingers crossed that the market will always move in one direction with fossil fuels — which, in essence, is what the Trump administration proposes with this budget — is not what any smart business person or political leader would pin their future economic hopes to," Josh Freed, Third Way's vice president for clean energy, said. Not to mention that if oil price do sink, sustained low prices could stall the deployment of new technologies, such as electric cars, potentially putting the U.S. at risk of falling behind the rest of the world.

WELCOME TO WEDNESDAY! I'm your host Anthony Adragna, and the Nuclear Energy Institute's Robert Powers was first to identify Rep. Darrell Issa as the wealthiest current member of Congress. For today: Just two U.S. vice presidents have ever resigned. Who are they? Send your tips, energy gossip and comments to aadragna@politico.com, or follow us on Twitter [@AnthonyAdragna](#), [@Morning_Energy](#), and [@POLITICOPro](#).

NON VA BENE: Fiat Chrysler faces potentially billions of dollars in fines after DOJ accused the company of selling almost 104,000 diesel vehicles equipped with software designed to cheat on emissions testing, Pro's Alex Guillén [reports](#). Fiat Chrysler faces fines of \$37,500 to \$45,268 per vehicle sold, along with further penalties for each undisclosed software device and reporting violations.

The automaker flatly denied the accusations. "The company intends to defend itself with strength especially against the accusations that it has deliberately planned to install manipulative technology to apply to U.S. emission tests," Fiat said in a statement. As POLITICO Europe's Joshua Posaner [reports](#), Fiat said it has cooperated with an ongoing investigation by EPA and the California Air Resources Board.

TRUMP TAPS ANOTHER FOR DOE POST: David Jonas, a partner at the Virginia law firm Fluet, Huber and Hoang since 2016, has been tapped by the Trump administration to be general counsel at DOE, Pro's Alex Guillén [reports](#). He was previously general counsel for the National Nuclear Security Administration, DOE's nuclear security arm, from 2001 to 2010, and then general counsel for the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board, an independent agency that advises DOE on nuclear defense facilities, from 2012 to 2014. Expect a confirmation hearing in the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee sometime after the Memorial Day recess.

**** A message from POET - one of the world's largest ethanol producers:** With scientists and engineers, POET operates 30 biofuel facilities & America's first cellulosic biofuel plant. We produce a cleaner fuel for millions of drivers, every day. We're POET and we're driving innovation, from the ground up. Learn more [here](#). **

PRUITT SPEAKS: Look for EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt to deliver keynote remarks today at noon during an energy symposium hosted by Faegre Baker Daniels Consulting. Also worth flagging: Pruitt's [expected](#) No. 2 EPA pick, Andrew Wheeler, is slated to deliver closing remarks at 3 p.m., after FERC Commissioner Tony Clark speaks on a panel entitled "The Future of the Electric Grid" at 2 p.m.

This is weird: Pruitt [tweeted](#) he met with Rep. [Fred Upton](#), chairman of the Energy and Commerce Energy Subcommittee, about "the importance of protecting the Great Lakes"

during a Wednesday meeting. That came after Trump's budget zeroed out the \$300 million program cleaning up the Great Lakes. In addition to Upton, Pruitt also mentioned meetings with California Democrat Rep. [Jim Costa](#) and the [Congressional Western Caucus](#).

TOP DEMOCRAT PUSHES FOR ETHICS WAIVERS: Schumer said on Tuesday he pressed OMB Director Mick Mulvaney to releases copies of waivers the Trump administration granted to former lobbyists to get around their ethics pledge. That came after the White House sent a letter to Walter Shaub Jr., the head of the Office of Government Ethics, asking him to withdraw a request for those waivers. "There is absolutely no excuse for the Administration to keep these waivers from the OGE or the American people," Schumer said in a statement. "[Mulvaney] assured me that he would take my concerns under consideration — I hope they make this change for the good of our country."

PESTICIDES BILL ON THE FLOOR: Expect House floor action today on legislation — the [Reducing Regulatory Burdens Act](#) (H.R. 953) — that would exempt pesticide applicators from needing a Clean Water Act permit for spraying over water. It's broadly opposed by most Democrats as well as the environmental and public health communities. Similar legislation cleared the House in May 2016.

ZINKE TEES UP INTERIOR REORG: Look for proposals in the next couple of months aimed at reorganizing the Interior Department, Secretary Ryan Zinke said Tuesday. As Pro's Esther Whieldon and Annie Snider [report](#), he hopes to increase coordination on issues like wildlife corridors, watersheds and trail systems that span multiple federal agencies, as well as state and local ones. "I view this as a century reorganization to look at how best to manage, protect, use our public lands in the next 100 years given that we have a number of challenges," Zinke said during a conference call.

ANOTHER PUBLIC KEYSTONE MEETING SCHEDULED: The Nebraska Public Service Commission announced Tuesday it would hold an additional public meeting on June 7 on the Keystone pipeline's proposed route through the state. That meeting will be held in O'Neill, Neb., from 1 to 8 p.m. "We recognize the emotion and conviction surrounding this application," Jeff Pursley, executive director of the commission, said in a statement. The notice said even more meetings are possible and a public hearing on the application will be held sometime during the week of Aug. 7-11 at the Lincoln Marriott Cornhusker Hotel.

TAKING AIM AT SUE AND SETTLE: Two House Oversight subcommittees today [receive testimony](#) on "sue and settle" agreements, in which federal agencies agree to regulatory actions as part of settlement deals with outside groups. Republicans have long contended that Democrats and greens engaged in the practice, which they say imposes significant economic burdens on regulated industries without giving them an opportunity to participate in the process. The hearing gavel in today at 2 p.m. in Rayburn 2154.

PANEL EXAMINES NATURAL RESOURCES LAWS: The House Natural Resources Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations holds [a hearing](#) this morning on the implementation of the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934, the Wilderness Act of 1964, and the Federal Land Policy and Management Act, paying special attention to "instances where federal agencies' application of these three federal laws has strayed beyond their original purposes and intent." Chairman [Raul Labrador](#) kicks things off today at 9 a.m. in Longworth 1324.

SOLAR PANEL TRADE PROBE LAUNCHED: The U.S. International Trade Commission

[announced](#) Tuesday it would take the first step in investigating U.S.-based solar cell manufacturer Suniva's request for trade tariffs to protect the manufacturing sector, Pro's Esther Whieldon [reports](#). Suniva argues a flood of cheap solar panel modules and cells, mainly from Chinese companies, are severely harming its business. In a statement, the Solar Energy Industries Association pledged to "remain at the forefront of the opposition to Suniva's requested remedies."

INTERIOR REVIEWING PAST MOUs: The Interior Department late Monday ordered assistant secretaries to have their agencies report by June 2 on any memorandum of understanding or memorandum of agreement they signed last year and until Trump's January inauguration that "are high level and national or regional and represent a commitment of resources or memorialize policy direction," according to a copy of the email obtained by ME. Zinke has ordered a full review of the agency's actions under the last administration. Among those that could be targeted are Interior's MOU with Mexico on resource management, its MOU with California to coordinate on renewables and a multi-agency MOU creating a wildland fire leadership council.

FERC LOOKS FOR MORE INPUT ON MARKET DESIGN: FERC staff is [asking](#) for additional comments following up on an early May technical conference on how the agency should design long-term solutions to problems facing the three Eastern power markets. FERC will be accepting comments for 30 days.

LAWSUIT SEEKS CLIMATE CENSORSHIP RECORDS: The Center for Biological Diversity filed [another lawsuit](#) against the Trump administration Tuesday seeking public records showing federal employees at DOE, EPA, Interior and State have been barred from using climate change-related terms in official communications. "Just as censorship won't change climate science, foot-dragging and cover-ups won't be tolerated under the public records law," CBD's Taylor McKinnon said in a statement.

MAIL CALL! SENATORS URGE CAREFUL MONUMENT REVIEW: Twenty-three Republican senators [urged](#) Zinke to "keep all remedies on the table as you consider how to correct past abuses of the Antiquities Act" and ensure a "more measured approach" is taking moving forward with monument designations. Meanwhile, Sen. [Cory Gardner](#) and Rep. [Scott Tipton](#) urged Zinke in their [own letter](#) not to make any changes to the designation of the Canyons of the Ancients National Monument in Southwest Colorado.

RELEASE THE FUNDS: Fifty-eight Democratic congressmen, led by [Don Beyer](#), [Paul Tonko](#) and [Anna Eshoo](#), sent [a letter](#) to Energy Secretary Rick Perry Wednesday seeking the immediate release of funds for previously approved ARPA-E projects and more information on existing procedures for approving and funding grants. "Agencies may not thwart the intent of Congress by withholding or impounding funds directed for a specific purpose," they wrote.

REPORT: GOVERNMENT GIVING BILLIONS IN DRILLING SUBSIDIES: A collection of environmental groups led by Oil Change International today released [a report](#) finding the government provides at least \$7 billion per year in subsidies to support fossil fuel production on federally held lands and offshore waters. It argues the fossil fuel leasing program on public lands should be phased out, among other recommendations.

REPORT: CLIMATE LITIGATION ON THE RISE: The number of countries with active litigation over climate change has tripled since 2014 and there are three times as many cases involving the issue in the U.S. than the rest of the world combined, according to [a report](#) out

Tuesday from the United Nations Environment Programme and Columbia Law School's Sabin Center for Climate Change Law. "Judicial decisions around the world show that many courts have the authority, and the willingness, to hold governments to account for climate change," Michael Burger, executive director of the Sabin Center, said in a statement.

MOVER, SHAKER: Andrew Malcolm has become a manager of public advocacy at Exelon; he was previously with Rep. [Greg Walden](#) for seven years.

SEEN AROUND TOWN: At the Hall of States for the Large Public Power Council's 30th Anniversary reception Monday: Sen. [Cory Gardner](#) (R-Colo.); acting FERC Chairman Cheryl LaFleur; former Sen. Mary Landrieu (D-La.); former Rep. Norm Dicks (D-Wash.); Tom Kuhn, president of Edison Electric Institute; Sue Kelly; president and CEO of the American Public Power Association; and John Di Stasio, president of the LPPC (h/t POLITICO Influence).

QUICK HITS

- Trump's Interior Secretary Took Time To Discuss The Border Wall With A Far-Right Troll. [Huffington Post](#).
- State appeals court rules Exxon must give records to NY prosecutor. [Reuters](#).
- The Rise of the Amateur Oil Sleuths. [Wall Street Journal](#).
- FERC Will Not Delay Pipeline At Senators' Urging. [New England Public Broadcasting](#).
- Hit Hard by Coal's Decline, Eastern Kentucky Turns to Drones, Tomatoes, Solar Energy. [Wall Street Journal](#).
- While wrangling over undoing Bears Ears continues, treasures go unprotected. [Salt Lake Tribune](#).
- Tackling climate change will boost economic growth, OECD says. [CNBC](#).

HAPPENING TODAY

9:00 a.m. — House Natural Resources subcommittee [hearing](#) on federal natural resource laws, 1324 Longworth

9:15 a.m. — Report release on the state of American cities, National League of Cities Office, City-County Leadership Center, 660 North Capitol St. NW

10:30 a.m. — House Energy and Water Subcommittee Appropriations hearing on the FY2018 budget request, 2362-B Rayburn

10:30 a.m. — "[Energy & Environmental Symposium: What Can We Expect From the New Administration and Congress?](#)" Faegre Baker Daniels, The City Club of Washington, 555 13th Street NW

10:30 a.m. — "[Corps of Engineers \(Civil Works\) and the Bureau of Reclamation FY 2018 Budget Requests](#)," House Appropriations Energy and Water Subcommittee, 2362-B Rayburn

1:00 p.m. — "[The Kremlin's Gas Games in Europe: Implications for Policy Makers](#)," The Atlantic Council, 106 Dirksen

2:00 p.m. — "[High Risk American Indian and Alaska Native Programs \(Education, Healthcare, Energy\)](#)," House Appropriations Committee's Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Subcommittee, 2007 Rayburn

2:00 p.m. — "[Examining 'Sue and Settle' Agreements: Part 1](#)," House Oversight and Government Reform subcommittees, 2154 Rayburn

2:30 p.m. — "[Department of Energy Atomic Energy Defense Activities and Programs](#)," Senate Armed Services Committee's Strategic Forces Subcommittee, G50 Dirksen

3:00 p.m. — Deutch, Curbelo Host Climate Solutions Caucus Meeting on Coastal Issues, 2020 Rayburn

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Stories from POLITICO Pro

Trump's budget calls for even cheaper energy [Back](#)

By Ben Lefebvre and Darius Dixon | 05/23/2017 06:47 PM EDT

President Donald Trump's budget proposal released Tuesday says lowering energy costs must be a national priority to benefit U.S. households — but that call's likely to fall flat with many oil, natural gas and power producers that have been struggling with the weak prices for their products in recent years.

And the call to lower energy prices, which follows Trump's campaign promises to boost U.S. oil and gas output, seems to overlook data that shows the energy burden for most households is at its lowest level in at least 25 years.

Since taking office, the Trump administration has moved to open up new lands and offshore areas for drilling, approved the Keystone XL and Dakota Access pipelines and removed Obama-era rules that the industry has complained stood in the way of its growth.

And Tuesday's budget calls for increasing energy production explicitly "for strengthening our national security, lowering the price of electricity and transportation fuels, and driving down the cost of consumer goods so that every American individual and business has more money to save and invest."

But U.S. oil producers have been breathing a sigh of relief since oil prices rebounded from lows in the [mid-\\$20s per barrel](#) early last year. That selloff triggered a wave of bankruptcies and tens of thousands of layoffs in the industry. Now, with oil prices hovering near \$50, oil producers have resumed drilling new wells, raising expectations that production could reach record levels next year — even as retail gasoline prices hover near \$2.36 a gallon.

"When oil prices were high and U.S. economy was weak — at \$100 a barrel and 10 percent unemployment — upstream jobs made a big difference," said Kevin Book, an analyst at ClearView Energy Partners. "Now that oil prices are low and the economy is stronger — \$50 a barrel and 5 percent unemployment — policy emphasis appears to have returned to its usual focus: end-users."

The White House is also seeking to sell much of the nation's Strategic Petroleum Reserves. Trump's budget would put 270 million barrels of oil on the market, a move the White House says could shave \$16.6 billion off the federal deficit over the coming decade by selling half the inventory the Energy Department holds for emergencies. However, in this case, the budget takes a bullish stance for oil prices: To reach the deficit reduction goal, DOE would have to sell the oil at more than \$61 a barrel, 20 percent higher than the current price.

In the power sector, retail electricity prices in the U.S. have been rising steadily over the past two decades — but they have lagged inflation, shrinking their hold on household budgets.

In fact, Americans in 2015 spent the smallest share of their income on energy since the Energy Information Administration started tracking [the number](#) in 1992. U.S. consumers are spending less than 6 percent of U.S. GDP to buy electricity, gasoline, natural gas and other fuels, according to EIA statistics, down from nearly 10 percent in 2008.

Many power producers have struggled as demand growth for electricity flattened out in recent years, and as cheap wind and solar power — as well as plentiful natural gas — cut deeply into the profits of nuclear and coal-fired power over the past decade. In the West, solar power has made electricity in California so inexpensive that it's even thrown the economics of some gas-fired power plants there into question and the state has resorted to shipping excess electricity across state lines.

Meanwhile, several states across the Midwest to the East Coast have seen power prices fall to their lower point since the decade began, fueled in large part by the rising flow of natural gas. The prices are so low that some utilities and power companies with large "baseload" facilities have pressed states and federal regulators to craft new market rules the industry hopes will provide more cash for those big plants.

The American Petroleum Institute, American Fuel and Petrochemical Manufacturers and the Edison Electric Institute declined to comment on the Trump budget call for lower prices.

While voters and lawmakers alike lament spikes in gasoline prices, sustained low prices can also stall the deployment of new technologies, such as electric cars, potentially putting the U.S. at risk of falling behind the rest of the world and missing a big trade opportunity.

"There's an enormous emerging market in China for electric vehicles. Do we want to be exporting to China?" said Josh Freed, Third Way's vice president for clean energy. "It wouldn't appear so from this budget."

Trump's budget also leans too heavily on cost factors while ignoring the need to sustain a mix of energy sources on the electric grid that are also clean, Freed said.

"Leaving it to one or two cheapest-at-the-moment commodities is a very, very risky bet for the future of the American economy, our ability to create jobs and American security," he said. "Closing your eyes and keeping your fingers crossed that the market will always move in one direction with fossil fuels — which, in essence, is what the Trump administration proposes with this budget — is not what any smart business person or political leader would pin their future economic hopes to."

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EPA sues Fiat Chrysler over emissions cheating allegations [Back](#)

By Alex Guillén | 05/23/2017 03:49 PM EDT

The Justice Department and EPA today [sued](#) Fiat Chrysler, contending the automaker sold almost 104,000 diesel vehicles equipped with software designed to cheat on emissions testing, threatening the Italian-owned company with billions of dollars in fines.

The agencies first went public with their allegations in January, when Obama-era officials [demanded](#) Fiat Chrysler explain whether its "auxiliary emission control devices" were acting as defeat devices on Ram 1500 and Jeep Grand Cherokee models.

Those defeat devices, consisting of at least eight software features that were undisclosed to EPA during the company's certification process, boost performance under real-world driving conditions by increasing nitrogen oxide emissions, according to DOJ.

Fiat Chrysler faces fines of \$37,500 to \$45,268 per vehicle sold, along with further penalties for each undisclosed software device and for reporting violations, which could add up to billions of dollars.

Fiat last week said it was in talks with the DOJ to settle the allegations, though today's filing does not indicate the parties have reached a deal. DOJ said in a release the talks continued but that timing was unclear.

Fiat on Friday announced it has taken a first step toward getting its 2017 model year diesel vehicles approved by EPA and the California Air Resources Board, and will install updated emissions software in 2014-2016 vehicles.

The Fiat allegations come after Volkswagen settled its own emissions cheating scandal for a record \$4.3 billion.

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Trump to tap nonproliferation expert as DOE's top lawyer [Back](#)

By Alex Guillén | 05/23/2017 05:55 PM EDT

President Donald Trump plans to nominate David Jonas to be the Energy Department's general counsel, the White House announced today.

Jonas, a partner at the Virginia law firm Fluett, Huber and Hoang since 2016, was also a DOE landing team member and is an expert on nuclear nonproliferation.

He previously served as the general counsel for the National Nuclear Security Administration, DOE's nuclear security arm, from 2001 to 2010, according to his LinkedIn page. From 2012 to 2014, Jonas was general counsel for the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board, an independent agency that advises DOE on nuclear defense facilities.

Jonas's resume also includes a year as DOE's director of legal strategy and analysis and a year as a vice president at the Pentagon Federal Credit Union. He holds advanced law degrees in military law and international law.

Jonas's wife, Tina Jonas, served as chief financial officer for the FBI under Robert Mueller and later as CFO and under secretary of Defense from 2004 to 2008.

WHAT'S NEXT: The Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee likely will schedule a hearing on his nomination for sometime after Congress returns from its Memorial Day recess in early June.

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Sources: Trump expected to tap Wheeler as EPA deputy [Back](#)

By Andrew Restuccia, Alex Guillén and Anthony Adragna | 03/16/2017 08:00 PM EDT

President Donald Trump is expected to tap Andrew Wheeler, a coal lobbyist and former aide to Sen. Jim Inhofe, to be deputy administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, sources familiar with the hiring process told POLITICO.

Sources cautioned that the decision has not yet been finalized, but they said Wheeler is expected to get the job. It's unclear when Trump will make the announcement, but one source said it could be weeks before Wheeler is officially tapped.

Wheeler worked as an EPA staffer earlier in his career. He later joined Inhofe's Senate office and then spent more than a decade as a Republican staffer on the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, where he worked on several major pieces of legislation, including the 2005 and 2007 energy bills.

He has worked at the law firm Faegre Baker Daniels since 2009. He now co-leads the firm's energy and natural resources practice.

Wheeler is a registered lobbyist for Murray Energy, the nation's largest privately owned coal company, which regularly filed lawsuits against the Obama administration over its environmental regulations.

As a lobbyist, Wheeler may need to obtain a waiver to serve at the EPA.

Trump signed an [executive order](#) in January that bars registered lobbyists from participating in "any particular matter" on which they lobbied in the past two years. Those lobbying restrictions last for two years from the time the person joins the administration.

But the executive order says the administration can grant "any person a waiver of any restrictions" in its ethics and lobbyist requirements. Unlike an order signed by former President Barack Obama in 2009, Trump's executive order [doesn't require](#) public disclosure of the waivers.

Aside from Murray, Wheeler also lobbies on unspecified energy and energy efficiency issues for Underwriters Laboratories, an Illinois-based lab company, and on agricultural issues for cheese maker Sargento. His former clients include Xcel Energy and Bear Head LNG, as well as a cooking oil-recycling company, an auto auctioneer and a medical isotope coalition.

Wheeler won't be the only energy lobbyist to join the Trump administration. Mike Catanzaro, a lobbyist at the firm CGCN Group whose clients included several fossil fuel companies, [took a job](#) at the White House last month as an energy and environmental adviser at the National Economic Council. Catanzaro is a former EPW staffer to Inhofe.

Meanwhile, EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt, a fellow Oklahoman, has also brought former Inhofe aide Ryan Jackson on as chief of staff. Byron Brown, a former Inhofe aide, is EPA's deputy chief of staff and Mandy Gunasekara, a former EPW counsel, is now a senior policy adviser to Pruitt.

More aides with ties to Inhofe are expected to join the EPA in the coming weeks. Susan Bodine and Brittany Bolen, two EPA staffers, are widely expected to be offered jobs at EPA.

Wheeler, a White House spokeswoman and an EPA spokesman did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

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Zinke to unveil Interior 'century' reorganization plan [Back](#)

By Esther Whieldon and Annie Snider | 05/23/2017 03:00 PM EDT

Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke said today he will begin releasing proposals in the next couple of months to reorganize the agency.

"I view this as a century reorganization to look at how best to manage, protect, use our public lands in the next 100 years given that we have a number of challenges," Zinke said in a conference call about the fiscal 2018 budget proposal.

Zinke said the reorganization will be aimed at coordinating on issues like wildlife corridors, watersheds and trail systems that span multiple federal agencies, as well as state and local ones.

He said his staff has already begun exploring ways of applying military models, he said, and for natural resources, the concept could be based around different watersheds to push more authority down to the "front lines."

Zinke has met with White House officials and interest groups including from the energy industry and environmental sectors about a reorganization options. And he met with Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue to discuss fighting forest fires. POLITICO in January [reported](#) Zinke was mulling proposing congress move USDA's Forest Service to the Interior.

WHAT'S NEXT: With a few exceptions, Zinke will need congressional approval for any major reorganization of the Interior's nine bureaus or for bringing over bureaus from other agencies.

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U.S. trade commission launches investigation into Suniva solar trade complaint [Back](#)

By Esther Whieldon | 05/23/2017 06:10 PM EDT

The U.S. International Trade Commission has initiated an investigation into the request by U.S.-based solar cell manufacturer Suniva that the Trump administration create temporary trade tariffs to protect the manufacturing sector.

The move, [announced](#) today, clears the first first hurdle in the process.

In April, Suniva filed a [petition](#) with the USITC [asking](#) the agency to recommend Trump grant for temporary relief under Section 201 of the Trade Act of 1974 and to impose trade restrictions for four years on imported solar cells and modules. Suniva is going through a bankruptcy proceeding and agreed to file the Section 201 petition in [exchange](#) for an additional line of credit.

The company contends that an influx of cheaper solar panel modules and cells largely from China are putting it out of business.

WHAT'S NEXT: The commission said it will accept pre-hearing briefs on the case through Aug. 8. It hopes to determine the extent to which the cheaper solar panels are causing injury by Sept. 22 and to send recommendations to Trump by Nov. 13.

Doug Palmer contributed this report.

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Somewhat



Neutral



Not really



Not at all

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