

To: Earnest, Gifford[kyle_earnest@nps.gov]
From: Powell, Christine
Sent: 2017-12-11T10:18:24-05:00
Importance: Normal
Subject: Fwd: U.S. Department of the Interior News Briefing for Monday, December 11, 2017
Received: 2017-12-11T10:18:41-05:00

Christine Powell
Acting Deputy Assistant Director,
Legislative and Congressional Affairs
(o) 202-513-7245
(c) 202-878-2309

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Bulletin Intelligence** <Interior@bulletinintelligence.com>
Date: Mon, Dec 11, 2017 at 6:00 AM
Subject: U.S. Department of the Interior News Briefing for Monday, December 11, 2017
To: Interior@bulletinintelligence.com

Mobile version and searchable archives available [here](#). Please [click here](#) to subscribe.

DATE: MONDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2017 6:00 AM EST

Today's Table Of Contents

DOI In The News

- Los Angeles Times: Trump Approves Disaster Declaration As California Fires Continue.
- The Hill: Zinke: Reports On Helicopter Use Are 'Total Fabrications'.
- Washington Post: Republicans Say Resizing Of Utah Monuments Will Not Lead To Energy Extraction.
- Associated Press: Patagonia, Outdoor Retailers Fight Trump On US Monuments.
- Associated Press: Tribe Wary Of Monument In Montana As Others Reduced By Trump.
- CNN: Interior Secretary Pushing Controversial Road Project.
- Federal News Radio (DC): Interior No. 2 Details His Intention And Rationale For Reassigning More Senior Executives.
- Associated Press: Senator Proposes Act To Subtract From Wilderness Study Areas.
- Havasu (AZ) News-Herald: Feds Flexing Against Mussels.

Bureau Of Land Management

- Carlsbad (NM) Current-Argus: Industry Celebrates Trump Rollback Of BLM Venting And Flaring Rule.
- Associated Press: Oil And Gas Lease Sale Nets \$30M For New Mexico.
- Durango (CO) Herald: Critics Of Oil, Gas Leasing Near Chaco Sense Déjà Vu.

- Casper (WY) Star-Tribune: Wyoming Sage Grouse Leaders Say Debate With Feds Over The Bird Is Improving.

- Associated Press: Burning Man May Eventually Grow To 100,000.

Bureau Of Ocean Energy Management

- Some Are Salivating At Chance To Drill Off Florida.

- Possible Wind Farm Sites 17 Miles Off Hamptons Identified.

Bureau Of Reclamation

- Black Canyon Reservoir Maintenance Requires Drawdown.

Fish And Wildlife Service

- New York Times: How Arctic Drilling, Stymied For Decades, Made Surprise Return In Tax Bill.

- Associated Press: Judge Stops US From Allowing Destruction Of Miami Forest.

- Los Angeles Times: Wildfire Threatens Sensitive California Condor Population.

- Associated Press: Alaska Suffers Resurgence Of Tree-killing Beetle.

- NPR: Biologists With Drones And Peanut Butter Pellets Are On A Mission To Help Ferrets.

- Associated Press: Ex-US Fish And Wildlife Employee Sentenced For Theft.

National Park Service

- WTOP-FM Washington: Lawmaker Wants To Add This Word To Rock Creek Park's Name.

- Auburn (NY) Citizen: Tubman National Park In Auburn: 'We're Bringing Resources Into The Community Now'.

- Bozeman (MT) Daily Chronicle: Study On Proposed Park Fee Increase Marks Uncertainty For Gateway Communities.

- Ogden (UT) Standard-Examiner: National Park Service Proposes Fee Increase At Golden Spike Historic Site.

- Willoughby (OH) News-Herald: Garfield Historic Site Gets Underground Railroad Designation.

- Associated Press: \$18K Awarded To Aid Restoration Of Constitution Hall.

- Scranton (PA) Times Tribune: Steamtown National Historic Site Hit Hard By Tree-killing Beetle.

- Associated Press: Soda Butte Creek Set To Be Removed From Impaired List.

Office Of Surface Mining

- Scars Of The Past: Cleaning Up Abandoned Mines, And The Fight Over The Funding To Do It.

US Geological Survey

- Santa Cruz (CA) Sentinel: USGS Scientists Share Their Research With Community At Open House.

- Additional Reading.

Opinion Pieces

- The Looting Of America's Public Lands.

- Ryan Zinke Just Made Himself Sky Rodeo Clown.

- Bears Ears Is Here To Stay.

- Commentary: Utahns Won't Benefit From More Oil And Gas Production.

- Additional Reading.

Top National News

- NBC: Trump Says Tax Bill "Getting Closer And Closer," But Analyses Say Much Work Remains.
- Washington Post: Trump Honors Civil Rights Heroes At New Mississippi Museum.
- Bloomberg News: Trump Signs Short-Term Spending Bill Ahead Of Strong Jobs Report.
- Wall Street Journal: White House Plans To Roll Out Infrastructure Plan In January.
- TIME: Trump Administration Energy Policy Includes Alarming Challenges For Wind, Solar.
- CNN: Haley: International Community United On Isolating North Korea.

Editorial Wrap-Up

- New York Times.
 - "Wisconsin's Fire Sale For Big Business."
 - "Hate Smears India's Symbol Of Love, The Taj Mahal."
 - "Opening Up New York's Public Records."
- Washington Post.
 - "Virginia Should Stick With Its I-66 Express Lanes – Tolls And All."
 - "The Supreme Court's Privacy Case Shows Congress Needs To Draw New Lines."
 - "Trump's Deportation Tough Talk Hurts Law-Abiding Immigrants."
- Wall Street Journal.
 - "Christopher Wray's FBI Stonewall."
 - "Killing The Electric Car Credit."
 - "The Apple 'Windfall' That Isn't."

Big Picture

- Headlines From Today's Front Pages.

Washington Schedule

- Today's Events In Washington.

Last Laughs

- Late Night Political Humor.

DOI In The News

Trump Approves Disaster Declaration As California Fires Continue.

The Los Angeles Times (12/8, Etehad, Sahagun, Vives, Serna, Kohli) reports President Trump on Friday approved a disaster declaration in response to wildfires in California, which lets the state access federal aid and "put[s] the Department of Homeland Security and the Federal Emergency Management Agency in charge of disaster relief efforts."

Meanwhile, according to a front-page New York Times (12/8, A1, Fuller) article, "around 8,700 firefighters continued working on several fronts on Friday in Southern California as the largest of six major fires 143,000 acres burned, with 10 percent containment — spread from Ventura County into Santa Barbara County." The Times reports "officials said that fire, which has already claimed at least one life and destroyed 401 structures, was threatening thousands more buildings in several towns." The Times adds that "in San Diego County, where a

grass fire that started Thursday morning quickly consumed 4,100 acres, the blaze was only 15 percent contained as of late Friday. Dozens of buildings there were destroyed, thousands of people were forced to evacuate and around 25 racehorses were killed." The Wall Street Journal (12/8, A1, Carlton, Phillips) reports on its front page that half a dozen fires raged across southern California, leaving \$27.7 billion worth of homes at risk, according to Irvine, California-based analytics firm CoreLogic.

In the lead NBC Nightly News (12/8, lead story, 2:50, Holt) segment, Miguel Almaguer reported "this epic firefight spans 200 miles, from San Diego to Santa Barbara. In Ventura county, a staggering 400 structures destroyed." ABC World News Tonight's (12/8, story 2, 2:50, Muir) Matt Gutman reported "the Thomas Fire in Ventura County so explosive it looked like a volcano." He added, "Because this fire has been so relentless, firefighters no longer can hope to stop it at its source, so they're trying to cut perimeter lines to create a buffer as far as 10 miles out." The Washington Post (12/8, Wilson, Berman) reports that "as the fires spread for a fifth day, much of the region also faced a lingering threat posed by the dense smoke."

The Wall Street Journal (12/8, Carlton, Phillips, Malas) reports more than 100,000 people have fled their homes so far. In addition, the New York Times (12/8, Medina, Jordan, Smith) reports that "on Friday night, the Ventura County Medical Examiner's Office confirmed the first known, fire-related death this week" and said in a statement "that the remains of Virginia Pesola, 70, of Santa Paula, were found at the site of a car crash on an evacuation route."

However, on the CBS Evening News (12/8, story 2, 2:10, Glor), Carter Evans stated that in San Diego on Friday, "firefighters took advantage of calm winds by cutting fire lines and water-dropping helicopters doused hot spots." On NBC Nightly News (12/8, story 2, 2:00, Holt), Lester Holt reported that "in the steep canyons north of us in Ojai, where fires are still burning, the winds continue to howl. And just as troubling for firefighters, they are rapidly shifting directions." ABC World News Tonight's (12/8, story 3, 0:40, Muir) Rob Marciano reported there are still "some gusty winds at the higher terrain, but we're looking for a bit of a break. But long term, it's not good. Take a look. That pesky high still in control across the inner-mountain West. That means we'll continue to be dry. No rain in the forecast. And red flag warnings up with dangerously low levels of humidity."

Nonetheless, NBC Nightly News (12/8, story 3, 1:35, Holt) Kristen Dahlgren said "the one thing almost as fast as the flames is the community that galvanized in an instant to lend a hand."

Zinke: Reports On Helicopter Use Are 'Total Fabrications'.

The Hill (12/9, Delk) "Briefing Room" blog reports Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke on Saturday "called reports that he used helicopters to fly between his Washington, D.C. office and nearby locations at taxpayer expense 'total fabrications.'" Zinke tweeted, "Here are the #facts the DC media refuses to print." In an attached statement, Zinke said, "Recent articles about official Interior Department helicopter usage are total fabrications and a wild departure

of reality.”

The AP (12/8, Daly) reports that Sen. Maria Cantwell, the top Democrat on the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, “said the Interior’s inspector general should add Zinke’s use of taxpayer-funded helicopter rides to an ongoing investigation of Zinke’s travel practices.” Cantwell said, “If the secretary misused public funds, he should write the treasury a check for the full amount and apologize.”

CNN (12/8, Wallace) reports that the Interior Department Inspector General’s Office “declined to say Friday whether its investigation, which began earlier this year after Zinke’s trips to the US Virgin Islands and Las Vegas combined work with political events, includes the helicopter uses.” Nancy DiPaolo, the inspector general’s spokeswoman, said, “We are taking a comprehensive look at the secretary’s travel since he took office.”

Also reporting are The Hill (12/9, Manchester), The Hill (12/9, Delk), Politico (12/9, Lefebvre), the Washington Times (12/8, Wolfgang), the Washington Examiner (12/9, Leach), CNN (12/9, Diaz, Wallace), MSNBC (12/8, Benen), the Huffington Post (12/9, D'Angelo), the Daily Intelligencer (NY) (12/8, Raymond), the Daily Mail (12/8), the Missoula Current (MT) (12/8), The Cut (NY) (12/8, Paiella), and Government Executive (12/8, Clark).

Republicans Say Resizing Of Utah Monuments Will Not Lead To Energy Extraction.

The Washington Post (12/7, Karklis, Berkowitz, Meko) reported President Trump drastically reduced the size of the Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante national monuments, which contain oil, gas, uranium, coal and other archaeological and paleontological finds. The day after Trump’s announcement, Utah’s governor and several House Republicans sought to emphasize that the changes would not lead to additional energy development. Rep. John Curtis proposed banning mineral extraction in the original boundaries, while Rep. Bob Bishop said, “The idea that we’re going to give these over to oil and gas companies is a false narrative.”

The Washington Post (12/8, Eilperin) reports that “a uranium company launched a concerted lobbying campaign to scale back Bears Ears National Monument, saying such action would give it easier access to the area’s uranium deposits and help it operate a nearby processing mill, according to documents obtained by The Washington Post.” Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke and “top Utah Republicans have said repeatedly that questions of mining or drilling played no role in President Trump’s announcement Monday that he was cutting the site by more than 1.1 million acres, or 85 percent.” However, the article notes that “the nation’s sole uranium processing mill sits directly next to the boundaries that President Barack Obama designated a year ago when he established Bears Ears.” According to the article, the documents “show that Energy Fuels Resources (USA) Inc., a subsidiary of a Canadian firm, urged the Trump administration to limit the monument to the smallest size needed to protect key objects and areas, such as archeological sites, to make it easier to access the radioactive ore.”

Scientists Decry Trump's Move To Strip Fossil Treasures From Utah's Grand Staircase Monument. The Salt Lake (UT) Tribune (12/10, Maffly) reports scientists are concerned that Trump's move will risk one of the world's most important paleontological areas, leading some researchers to sue the federal government to halt the order. The Society of Vertebrate Paleontology joined the Conservation Lands Foundation and Grand Staircase Escalante Partners in a federal lawsuit looking to block the Interior Department from resizing the monuments.

Patagonia, Outdoor Retailers Fight Trump On US Monuments.

The AP (12/8, PRICE) reports that "outdoor clothing giant Patagonia and other retailers have jumped into a legal and political battle over President Donald Trump's plan to shrink two sprawling Utah national monuments." Patagonia and outdoor firm like The North Face and REI have "protested Trump's actions online and through social media." Patagonia also "filed a lawsuit Wednesday that claims Trump's order is illegal and threatens natural treasures that the company's employees and customers use and value."

The Washington Times (12/9, Wolfgang) reports that "Republicans in the White House and on Capitol Hill declared war on Patagonia this week after the outdoor clothing giant sued President Trump and told its customers the commander-in-chief 'stole your land' by reducing two highly controversial national monuments in Utah." Republicans in Congress "sent out emails Friday taking direct aim at Patagonia and pushing back hard against its claims that public land had been stolen from American citizens, marking the latest instance of a high-profile company going toe-to-toe with the GOP in a political battle."

Also reporting are Bloomberg News (12/8, Bhasin, Mosendz), the Huffington Post (12/9, D'Angelo), GQ (12/9, Darby), and Outside (12/8, Streep).

Tribe Wary Of Monument In Montana As Others Reduced By Trump.

The AP (12/9, Brown) reports that the Trump Administration is "pursuing creation of a new monument" in the Badger-Two Medicine area in Montana, even though officials from the Blackfeet Indian tribe "remain wary of the idea." Blackfeet Chairman Harry Barnes "sees a 'workable solution' in Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke's proposal to co-manage the area with the tribe, but stressed that the Blackfeet have never sought a national monument designation for the land." Zinke "says he'd seek co-congressional approval for the co-management proposal...but Barnes cautioned that the tribe would be unwilling to surrender treaty rights dating to the 1800s that let its members hunt, fish and gather timber from the Badger-Two Medicine."

Interior Secretary Pushing Controversial Road Project.

CNN (12/10, Bronstein, Griffin) reports that the Interior Department is pushing a plan that would allow a new road through the Izembek National Wildlife Refuge, according to internal government emails. Local officials "say the road is needed to transport residents of the tiny, isolated city of King Cove to hospitals in the event of medical emergencies." However, critics claim "it would be disastrous, not just for the Izembek refuge but in setting a precedent for construction in

wilderness areas nationwide." Interior Department press secretary Heather Swift said, "The absence of the road has meant life-and-death for the inhabitants of King Cove. The careful construction of an 11-mile single lane gravel road in a manner that conforms with all applicable environmental laws, rules, and regulations ... makes sense."

Interior No. 2 Details His Intention And Rationale For Reassigning More Senior Executives.

Federal News Radio (DC) (12/8, Ogrysko) reports that "more than six months after the Interior Department reassigned 30-to-50 of its senior executives, the agency's deputy secretary is offering more insight into the role he foresees for DOI's most experienced career leaders." In a Dec. 4 memo to all Interior senior executives, Deputy Secretary David Bernhardt outlined "his vision for the agency's Senior Executive Service members." According to the article, though the memo "didn't explicitly announce plans to reassign more senior executives, it's clear Bernhardt sees these rotations as a potentially valuable management tool." Bernhardt wrote, "It is my view that potentially greater cross-bureau collaboration and innovation can be achieved by bringing new leadership perspectives to our operations by rotating SES members from bureaus to headquarters, from headquarters to the field and across different functional areas and disciplines. Going forward, I will seek to strike a balance between leadership continuity and achieving fresh perspective by reassigning SES employees across bureaus and offices."

Senator Proposes Act To Subtract From Wilderness Study Areas.

The AP (12/10) reports that Sen. Steve Daines "introduced the 'Protect Public Use of Public Lands Act' to remove more than 700 square miles (1,819 square kilometers) from the state's Wilderness Study Areas." Daines describes the West Pioneer Wilderness Study Areas, Sapphire Wilderness Study Area, Middle Fork Judith Wilderness Study Area, Big Snowies Wilderness Study Area and the Blue Joint Wilderness Study Area as "improperly managed public lands."

Feds Flexing Against Mussels.

The Havasupai (AZ) News-Herald (12/11, Messick) reports that "the development of a containment strategy for the invasive quagga mussel has been identified as a top priority for the U.S. Department of the Interior." A two-day meeting was held in Lake Havasu City last week "between a number of state and federal agencies" could lead to more funding and "new initiatives to stop the little mussel from invading waters in other western states."

Bureau Of Land Management

Industry Celebrates Trump Rollback Of BLM Venting And Flaring Rule.

The Carlsbad (NM) Current-Argus (12/8, Hedden) reported that the oil and gas industry is celebrating the Trump administration's delay of BLM's venting and flaring rule. According to BLM deputy director of policy and program, Brian

Steed, "By holding off on certain requirements, the BLM now has sufficient time to review the 2016 final rule while avoiding any compliance costs on industry that may not be needed after the review." Meanwhile, the American Petroleum Institute touted its new voluntary industry program to reduce methane emissions, known as the Environmental Partnership. According to API director of Upstream and Industry Operations, "The environmental partnership will target the greatest sources of emissions, as identified by research and collected data from the EPA and industry sources. To that end, the partnership's first initiative is focused on further reducing emissions of methane and volatile organic compounds associated with natural gas and oil production."

The AP also reports that the rollback of the BLM rule "comes as the oil and natural gas industry announced a voluntary partnership to reduce methane emissions at drilling sites nationwide." The American Petroleum Institute announced the program and its 26 members on Tuesday. API President and CEO Jack Gerard said the new partnership "seeks to accelerate emissions reductions and we're headed in the right direction."

Oil And Gas Lease Sale Nets \$30M For New Mexico.

The AP (12/9) reported that the latest quarterly oil and gas lease sales by the Bureau of Land Management on parcels in southeastern New Mexico resulted in more than \$30 million in competitive bids. According to the BLM, the parcels include 2,100 acres in Lea and Eddy Counties that partially include the Permian Basin. Federal Abstract Co. offered the highest bid, \$40,001.00 per acre, which "set an agency record for the highest bid per acre."

Additional coverage was provided by the Artesia (NM) News (12/8).

Critics Of Oil, Gas Leasing Near Chaco Sense Déjà Vu.

The Durango (CO) Herald (12/9, Romeo) reports that "an oil and gas lease sale that would sell off more than 4,400 acres in the Greater Chaco region in March is again raising tension between resource development and cultural preservation interests." On Wednesday, the Bureau of Land Management's Farmington field office "announced the beginning of a protest period on the lease sale, which would offer 25 parcels covering 4,434 acres in northern New Mexico." The protest period runs until Jan. 4.

Wyoming Sage Grouse Leaders Say Debate With Feds Over The Bird Is Improving.

The Casper (WY) Star-Tribune (12/10, Richards) reports that "some of Wyoming's sage grouse leaders say the discord that began after the Interior Department announced it would review the bird's protections in the West is giving way to Wyoming's collaborative approach." The comments were made at a meeting of the state's Sage Grouse Implementation Team last week. Environmentalists attending the meeting "said they hoped that change was happening and that the federal approach would be methodical." However, "they'd wait and see what comes out of the government's response to public comment in January before they felt optimistic."

Burning Man May Eventually Grow To 100,000.

The [AP](#) (12/8) reports that "Burning Man organizers are seeking permission for as many as 100,000 people to attend the annual counter-culture festival in future years." The Bureau of Land Management "currently caps attendance at the annual event in the Black Rock Desert north of Reno at 68,000." Burning Man officials are "proposing their new special use permit be expanded to allow at least 80,000 participants and eventually as many as 100,000." The BLM is "reviewing the criteria used to set the attendance cap and other guidelines that regulate the festival so as to minimize environmental and other impacts on the high desert and surrounding communities." The BLM plans "to issue a rough draft of the new conditions in about a year with a final draft scheduled to be released for public comment in early 2019."

Additional coverage was provided by [KQED-FM](#) San Francisco (12/8, Myrow).

Bureau Of Ocean Energy Management

Some Are Salivating At Chance To Drill Off Florida.

The [Miami Herald](#) (12/9, Hiassen) reported that twelve House Republicans co-signed a letter asking Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell to remove a provision allowing oil drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge from the tax reform bill. Although Rep. Carlos Curbelo of Miami is among those opposed to expanding oil and gas development in the ANWR, the article suggests that Curbelo is mainly motivated by a desire to prevent offshore oil drilling in the Gulf of Mexico and off Florida from becoming the next region where protections are rolled back.

Possible Wind Farm Sites 17 Miles Off Hamptons Identified.

[Newsday](#) (NY) (12/9, Harrington) reports the federal Bureau of Ocean Energy Management "has identified a swath of the South Shore 17 miles off the coast of the Hamptons as a potential area for new offshore wind farms." If chosen, "the site would encompass 211,839 acres of ocean waters 15 nautical miles from land, from Center Moriches to Montauk." In recent years, "interest in the waters around Long Island and the Northeast has been heating up."

Bureau Of Reclamation

Black Canyon Reservoir Maintenance Requires Drawdown.

The [Emmett \(ID\) Messenger-Index](#) (12/8) reports that the Bureau of Reclamation is "lowering Black Canyon Reservoir to perform repairs identified during routine, scheduled maintenance." Vicki Hoffman, Middle Snake Field Office Operations and Maintenance Program Manager said, "The post-irrigation season is an important time of year for Reclamation and irrigation districts to perform maintenance activities. We want to remind folks to be aware of changing river flows downstream of the dam and to be cautious around the reservoir edge and riverbanks since they may be unstable and pose safety hazards to people and pets."

Fish And Wildlife Service

How Arctic Drilling, Stymied For Decades, Made Surprise Return In Tax Bill.

The New York Times (12/9, Hulse) reports Republicans are trying to open the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to energy exploration as part of their tax reform plan. The move "is expected to generate \$1 billion over 10 years for the government," and for drilling proponents has the added benefits of avoiding a Democrat filibuster "because of special rules being applied on the floor for considering the tax bill" and securing Sen. Lisa Murkowski's critical vote in favor of the legislation. Though previous efforts to open the refuge to drilling have failed, other political news has deflected attention from the issue and "the ranks of Republicans willing to side with the conservation groups have been depleted in the years since drilling was last seriously considered." Even if the measure is approved, the Times notes, "it is unclear that the current economics of the oil business would make it worthwhile for oil companies to lease the land and invest in costly exploration."

Additional coverage was provided by PBS NewsHour (12/7) and the Washington Post (12/8, Grandoni).

Some Are Salivating At Chance To Drill Off Florida. The Miami Herald (12/9, Hiasen) reported that twelve House Republicans co-signed a letter asking Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell to remove a provision allowing oil drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge from the tax reform bill. Although Rep. Carlos Curbelo of Miami is among those opposed to expanding oil and gas development in the ANWR, the article suggests that Curbelo is mainly motivated by a desire to prevent offshore oil drilling in the Gulf of Mexico and off Florida from becoming the next region where protections are rolled back.

Judge Stops US From Allowing Destruction Of Miami Forest.

The AP (12/8) reports that "a federal judge has temporarily blocked a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service decision that would have allowed the destruction of a rare forest near Miami to build a shopping center and apartments." U.S. District Judge Ursula Ungaro "issued an order Friday stopping the clearing of about 50 acres of pine rockland forest that is home to about 20 endangered species, including the Miami tiger beetle." Ungaro "said the lawsuit filed Friday by the Center for Biological Diversity against the service will likely succeed, so she stopped bulldozers that had begun tearing down trees this week shortly after the wildlife service approved the development."

Additional coverage was provided by the AP (12/9), the Miami Herald (12/8, Staletovich), the Huffington Post (12/10, Golgowski), and Law360 (12/8, Bayles).

Wildfire Threatens Sensitive California Condor Population.

The Los Angeles Times (12/8, Sahagun) reports that "federal biologists were concerned Friday that a wildfire that has already consumed 143,000 acres was marching toward a California condor nest where a turkey-sized fledgling was close to taking its first flight." Kirk Gilligan, deputy project leader of the U.S. Fish

and Wildlife Service's Hopper Mountain California Condor Recovery Program, said, "There are limited opportunities to protect that nest, which is in a cave on a hillside. But, if necessary, aerial water drops could cool things down." He added, "This fledgling is expected to take its first flight out of the nest any day now. Trouble is, condors don't generally get very far on their first flight."

Alaska Suffers Resurgence Of Tree-killing Beetle.

The AP (12/8) reports that "the Kenai region experienced a resurgence of the spruce bark beetle this year, an insect with a history of causing tree deaths." Entomologist Matt Bowser of the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge said, "It's not a surprise at all — it's just a matter of when. This is a beetle that's been here a long time. It's not a new thing. This is one of the forest happenings we understand better than a lot of others — we know that all it takes is susceptible trees — a mature enough forest — and then runs of warm summers. If you have those things put together, you have at least the potential for an outbreak."

Biologists With Drones And Peanut Butter Pellets Are On A Mission To Help Ferrets.

NPR (12/10, Hegyi) reports that in central Montana, "drones are dropping peanut butter pellets on prairie dog colonies" as "part of an effort by biologists to save North America's most endangered mammal — the black-footed ferret." According to the article, "a team of scientists and engineers have spent this year vaccinating prairie dogs in central Montana against the plague using drones."

Ex-US Fish And Wildlife Employee Sentenced For Theft.

The AP (12/8) reports that "a former employee of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has been sentenced to three years' probation for two felony theft convictions." John Cochnar, 59, was sentenced Friday in Hall County District Court. According to authorities, Cochnar "burglarized the service office of the Platte River Whooping Crane Trust office on March 21."

National Park Service

Lawmaker Wants To Add This Word To Rock Creek Park's Name.

WTOP-FM Washington (12/8, Moore) reports that under legislation D.C. Del. Eleanor Holmes Norton introduced Thursday, Rock Creek Park would be renamed Rock Creek National Park. The article notes that "the name change would be largely symbolic" since "Rock Creek is already owned and managed by the National Park Service." However, Holmes Norton said renaming the park "will highlight its significance to the nation."

Tubman National Park In Auburn: 'We're Bringing Resources Into The Community Now'.

The Auburn (NY) Citizen (12/10, Harding) reports that Frank Barrows, the superintendent of Fort Stanwix National Monument in Rome and project lead for the Harriet Tubman National Historical Park in Auburn, "said the National Park

Service has been invited to more community events in the Auburn area." Barrows "recently participated in a discussion at Seymour Library about the progress of the park." During a recent interview, Barrows "outlined three targets for the National Park Service: public programs, capacity building and building relationships in the community."

Study On Proposed Park Fee Increase Marks Uncertainty For Gateway Communities.

The Bozeman (MT) Daily Chronicle (12/10, Kendall) reports that "a recently released study on the effects of a National Park Service proposal to increase entrance fees at a handful of national parks across the country has businesses concerned about the potential economic impacts on gateway communities." However, "tourism organizations in the gateway communities around Yellowstone don't appear overly worried by a potential drop in spending." On the other hand, "as tourism groups take a wait-and-see approach, local tour guide companies are sweating the proposed changes."

National Park Service Proposes Fee Increase At Golden Spike Historic Site.

The Ogden (UT) Standard-Examiner (12/9, Kokesh) reports that the National Park Service is seeking public comments on its proposal to hike entrance fees at Golden Spike National Historic Site. The NPS "proposed eliminating seasonal entrance fee prices and replacing them with one year-round price." The park service said, "The new revenue generated from any future fee increases may be used to provide enhanced visitor services including repair and maintenance of facilities, capital improvements, updated amenities, resource protection and additional visitor programs and services."

Garfield Historic Site Gets Underground Railroad Designation.

The Willoughby (OH) News-Herald (12/9) reports that the National Park Service has "announced that James A. Garfield National Historic Site has been designated as a contributing site on the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom." Site Manager Todd Arrington said, "This is a wonderful recognition of Garfield's long support for the abolition of slavery as well as the civil rights of the formerly enslaved during his time in Congress. President Garfield addressed civil rights during his inaugural address, reminding the nation that while much had been accomplished in this area during the Civil War and Reconstruction, there was still a great deal of work to be done."

\$18K Awarded To Aid Restoration Of Constitution Hall.

The AP (12/10) reports that "an \$18,000 grant from the National Park Service has moved a nonprofit closer to refurbishing the facade of a building where slavery opponents met during the Bleeding Kansas era." Grant Glenn, president of the nonprofit Friends of the Free State Capitol Inc., "said the group will have sufficient funds to begin the work on Topeka's Constitution Hall if it receives a \$90,000 grant from the Kansas Heritage Trust." The funds from the National Park Service is "earmarked for the restoration of the front doors and windows."

Steamtown National Historic Site Hit Hard By Tree-killing Beetle.

The [Scranton \(PA\) Times Tribune](#) (12/10, Singleton) reports that the National Park Service has "removed almost 60 dead or dying ash trees — more than half of the trees" in and around the parking lot at Steamtown National Historic Site — after finding they were infested by the emerald ash borer. According to park Superintendent Debbie Conway, "the trees taken down in recent weeks by park employees were 'predominately dead' and posed a potential safety hazard." In addition, "most of the remaining trees display clear signs of borer infestation, including the distinctive D-shaped holes adult beetles leave in the bark when they emerge."

Soda Butte Creek Set To Be Removed From Impaired List.

The [AP](#) (12/10) reports that "a creek that flows into the northeastern corner of Yellowstone National Park is set to be removed from a list of impaired waterways next year." Officials with the Montana Department of Environmental Quality "say that Soda Butte Creek now meets quality standards for heavy metals thanks to abandoned mine cleanups that started in the 1990s."

Office Of Surface Mining

Scars Of The Past: Cleaning Up Abandoned Mines, And The Fight Over The Funding To Do It.

The [Bozeman \(MT\) Daily Chronicle](#) (12/10, Wright) reports that a mine reclamation fee "expires in 2021 and a major industry association that views it as an unnecessary burden on business and a fund that states have been misusing is pushing for the fee to disappear." Luke Popovich, a spokesman for the National Mining Association, "said the funds have been misdirected while hazardous abandoned coal sites remain." However, "some feel that funding for state-based reclamation programs is as important now as ever." Bonnie Gestring, the northwest program director for Earthworks, "said she worries what the Trump administration's proposed cuts may mean for federal abandoned mine lands programs, and that the funding for state programs is critical."

US Geological Survey

USGS Scientists Share Their Research With Community At Open House.

The [Santa Cruz \(CA\) Sentinel](#) (12/9, Zonszein) reports that the U.S. Geological Survey on Saturday held an open house at the Pacific Coastal and Marine Science Center. The center "focuses on issues such as coastal erosion, tsunami hazards and offshore research." Rex Sanders, a physical scientist and director of communications for USGS, said, "We love talking about this stuff. It's a good chance to show our own friends and neighbors and family what we do."

Additional Reading.

- *Grim Video Of A Starving Polar Bear Could Show The Species' Future.* [Mashable](#) (12/8, Kaufman).
- *North Korea Nuclear Test May Have Moved The Earth's Crust With Aftershocks,*

Study Finds. [Newsweek](#) (12/10, Silverstein).

- *Yellowstone Supervolcano: An Eruption Isn't Coming, But Here's What Scientists Would See.* [Newsweek](#) (12/8, Bartels).

Opinion Pieces

The Looting Of America's Public Lands.

The [New York Times](#) (12/9) editorializes that President Trump "is doing what [former Vice President Dick] Cheney always wanted to get done" by removing environmental protections and withdrawing land from two Utah national monuments. The Administration argues that "America needs the energy buried beneath these lands," but this argument is "spurious: Coal is in free fall as an energy source. ... Oil, meanwhile, is in such plentiful supply that America's net imports are at their lowest since 1970." The Times argues that "a small handful of Utah lawmakers" is behind the shrinking of the two Utah monuments, and that the move has "shredded what little is left of [Interior Secretary] Zinke's reputation in the environmental community."

Ryan Zinke Just Made Himself Sky Rodeo Clown.

In his column for the [Washington Examiner](#) (12/8, Wegmann), Philip Wegmann criticizes Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke for recent controversies over his use of private planes and helicopters. Wegmann argues that the nation does want "flashy secretaries of the Interior." He urges Zinke to step away from "the limelight" if he "wants to keep his job."

Bears Ears Is Here To Stay.

In an op-ed for the [New York Times](#) (12/8, Baca), Angelo Baca, a cultural resources coordinator for the organization Utah Dine Bikeyah, criticizes the Trump Administration for reducing the size of Bears Ears National Monument. Baca writes that the decision "strikes at the heart of a concerted effort to protect the ancestral land of these tribes and others whose histories permeate this land." Baca also asserts that "this reduction of the national monument by a shortsighted president is ultimately illegal (because only Congress has the authority to make such a change under the Antiquities Act), and will not survive a court challenge."

Commentary: Utahns Won't Benefit From More Oil And Gas Production.

Stanley Holmes, co-founder and outreach coordinator for Utah Citizens Advocating Renewable Energy, writes an oped in the [Salt Lake \(UT\) Tribune](#) (12/10, Holmes) saying the citizens of Utah will not benefit from additional oil and gas production. Holmes says federal subsidies have stimulated production and consumption of fossil fuels beyond market forces. Holmes argues that additional drilling in the Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante national monuments will only lead to additional subsidies for the fossil fuel industry.

Additional Reading.

- ***GOP Centrists Can Affirm Conservation Legacy Of Eisenhower, Roosevelt.*** [Huffington Post](#) (12/8, Kolton).
- ***Op-ed: Systematic Review Of Monument Designations Is An Important Check On Unilateral Power.*** [Deseret \(UT\) News](#) (12/9, Everton).
- ***Viewpoints: Trump's Monumental Mistake | HeraldNet.com.*** [Everett \(WA\) Herald](#) (12/10, Bryner).
- ***Tom Wharton: Utah Politicians Would Rather Fight Than Manage Public Lands.*** [Salt Lake \(UT\) Tribune](#) (12/8, Wharton).
- ***Tom Hannagan: Our Public Lands Are There To Be Protected.*** [Arizona Daily Star](#) (12/10, Hannagan).
- ***Preserve Integrity Of Castle Mountains Desert Monument.*** [Palm Springs \(CA\) Desert Sun](#) (12/9).
- ***Locally Appropriate Solutions – Mount Desert Islander.*** [Mount Desert \(ME\) Islander](#) (12/8, MacDonald).
- ***Sage-grouse And The Looting Of The American West.*** [Idaho State Journal](#) (12/10, Molvar).
- ***Don't Toss Out Cooperation In The West's Sage Country: Rohlf.*** [Reno \(NV\) Gazette-Journal](#) (12/8, Rohlf).
- ***The Right Way To Do The Wrong Thing.*** [Grand Junction \(CO\) Daily Sentinel](#) (12/10).
- ***Wan: SECURE Act Bad For Business, Bad For Wyoming.*** [Casper \(WY\) Star-Tribune](#) (12/8, Wan).
- ***Grand Canyon Could Soon Become A Bison Hunting 'Horror Show'.*** [Arizona Republic](#) (12/8, Scully).
- ***Opening ANWR Isn't A Given: Alaska Congressional Delegation Is Working Hard, But Hurdles Remain.*** [Fairbanks \(AK\) News-Miner](#) (12/10).
- ***Let's Not Ruin Alaska's Arctic Refuge.*** [Juneau \(AK\) Empire](#) (12/8, Miller).
- ***A Boondoggle On The Last Wild River In New Mexico.*** [Los Angeles Times](#) (12/8, Connors).

Top National News

Trump Says Tax Bill "Getting Closer And Closer," But Analyses Say Much Work Remains.

President Trump touted the Republican tax plan in a Sunday morning [tweet](#), writing, "Getting closer and closer on the Tax Cut Bill. Shaping up even better than projected. House and Senate working very hard and smart. End result will be not only important, but SPECIAL!" In addition, House Majority Leader McCarthy expressed optimism about a vote by the end of next week. However, coverage and analyses focus on the substantial differences between the House and Senate versions, pointing out that there is a lot of work to be done in a short time.

[NBC Nightly News](#) (12/10, story 4, 1:20, Snow) reported, "Members of the House and Senate will meet this week to come up with final tax bill. President Trump tweeted, 'The bill is shaping up even better than projected.' He said the end result will be not only important but special. There are some

sticking points, however." NBC's Hallie Jackson: "The President and the Republicans in Congress are hoping for a big win with this \$1.5 trillion tax cut bill. ... But when you look at what's actually the sticking points here, there's a few of them. One surrounds capping deductions for state and local taxes. That is something that affects people in high tax states the most, places like California and New York. So Republicans, especially in the House, who represent those areas have some real concerns. Lawmakers are also deciding on just how big that corporate tax rate cut should be, 20% or 22%."

On the CBS Weekend News (12/10, story 5, 2:05, Quijano), Errol Barnett reported, "Trump tweeted this morning about the stock market's record highs, the unemployment rate...and the tax cut bill getting closer. He then played golf in West Palm Beach with Republican Sen, Lindsey Graham in an effort to shore up GOP support amid mounting headwinds. ... Sen. Susan Collins is withholding support until she sees the final version. Collins wants her amendment to eliminate automatic cuts to Medicare included."

The AP (12/10, Superville) reports that Trump "sought Sunday to gloss over the difficult work ahead for lawmakers laboring to finalize tax cut legislation he can sign by his self-imposed Christmas deadline." Trump and Graham "discussed the tax bill and upcoming budget talks after they teed off, said White House spokesman Raj Shah." Bloomberg News (12/10, Jacobs) reports that the President is expected to "deliver a closing argument for the proposed Republican tax overhaul in a speech on Wednesday."

Collins Will Wait Before Deciding On Vote. The Washington Times (12/10, Sherfinski) reports that Collins said that she "plans to wait until the final conference report on the tax bill is released before she makes a decision on how she'll vote." Collins said on CBS' Face The Nation (12/10, Dickerson) that she "always waits" to see the final version of the bill before deciding. She added, "I also obviously care very much about amendments that I was successful in getting in the bill that particularly helped middle income families and I'm also concerned about agreements that I have." Reuters (12/10, Volcovici) says that Collins' "support was crucial in passing the Senate tax reform bill earlier this month."

David Leonhardt of the New York Times (12/10) writes, "A couple of weeks ago, Collins made a classic Collins deal" that "tried to split the difference between Democratic and Republican positions." Collins "said that she would vote for the recent Senate tax bill so long as Republicans leaders promised to pass other legislation in the near future that would reduce the bill's knock-on damage to health care programs." But "within days of the Senate vote on the tax bill, conservative House Republicans started saying that they didn't care about her deal." Bloomberg News (12/10, Niquette) reports briefly on Collins' remarks.

McCarthy Anticipates Final House Vote Next Week. The Washington Times (12/10, Sherfinski) reports McCarthy "said Sunday that congressional Republicans are hopefully on track for final passage of their tax bill next week, which would be in line with" Trump's deadline. McCarthy said on Fox News' Sunday Morning Futures, "We made great progress." He added that we

"moved the House come back in" and "we were not supposed to start until Tuesday of last week, but we came in Monday."

The Washington Times (12/10, Sherfinski) reports, "As Mr. McCarthy indicated, there are a number of differences. For example, the Senate-passed bill includes a repeal of Obamacare's individual mandate, and the House's does not." Both plans also "restore a deduction of up to \$10,000 for local property taxes that had been on the chopping block, but negotiators are now looking at going even further to potentially allow taxpayers a choice between applying the money to their property taxes or to their income taxes."

WPost Analysis: GOP's Speed Leaves Bill Open To Errors, Loopholes. The Washington Post (12/10, A1, Werner) writes that Republicans "are moving their tax bill toward final passage at stunning speed," leaving it "vulnerable to...expensive problems already popping up in their massive and complex plan. Questionable special-interest provisions have been stuffed in along the way," and "drafting errors by exhausted staff are cropping up in need of fixes." The Post writes, "Veterans of congressional tax overhauls, particularly the seminal revamp under President Ronald Reagan in 1986, have been stunned and in some cases outraged at how swiftly Republicans are moving."

The Wall Street Journal (12/10, Rubin) reports that as drafted, the Senate bill could see some high-income business owners facing marginal tax rates above 100%. The Los Angeles Times (12/10, Koren) looks at how the plans "would affect the tax returns of a grad student, a single renter, married renters and middle-class homeowners."

Sen. Bernie Sanders said on NBC's Meet The Press (12/10, Todd), "One of the absurdities of this whole process is Republicans made a decision to go forward without any Democratic Party input, and they made a decision to do is operate behind closed doors."

Former Treasury Secretary Lawrence Summers writes in the Washington Post (12/10), "The tax-cut legislation now in conference committee on Capitol Hill exacerbates every important problem it claims to address." Tax cuts "may prolong the sugar high a bit. But they are no substitute for the new economic foundation we desperately need."

WTimes Analysis: Bills May Allow Those In US Illegally To Continue To Claim Child Tax Credit. The Washington Times (12/10, Miller) reports that Trump "has been willing to accept almost anything to close the deal on his giant tax cut bill before Christmas, including staying mum about a measure that would allow illegal immigrants to pocket the more generous child tax credit included in the package." Both the House and Senate bills "neglect to require that the worker have a Social Security number to claim the credit but require only that the qualifying child have a Social Security number."

House Bill's Medical Deduction Elimination Would Affect Millions. The Washington Post (12/10, Long) reports that the House bill would eliminate the medical deduction, which was used by 8.8 million Americans in 2015. The Senate bill "would keep it (and even make it a bit more generous). It's a key difference that must be reconciled before the final legislation goes to President Trump."

USA Today Poll: Just 32% Back Tax Plan. USA Today (12/10, Page) reports that "Americans remain unconvinced that the measure will cut their own taxes or significantly boost the economy." A USA Today/Suffolk University Poll "finds just 32% support the GOP tax plan; 48% oppose it. That's the lowest level of public support for any major piece of legislation enacted in the past three decades." In addition, 53% predicted that "their own families won't pay lower taxes as a result of the measure, and an equal 53% say it won't help the economy in a major way."

USA Today (12/10) editorializes, "Though many Republican lawmakers have doubts about the tax package working its way through Congress, it is easy to see why many see a yes vote on a final version negotiated between the House and Senate as a political imperative, no matter what's in the final package." A "no" vote "risks a potential Republican primary challenge from President Trump's base" and "could shut off the cash flow from angry GOP donors." But "the tax measure is to put it mildly wildly unpopular," and supporters who represent even "remotely competitive states or districts" might be "burdened by a grossly unfair tax cutting plan such as this." However, F.H. Buckley of George Mason University's Scalia Law School argues in a USA Today (12/10) op-ed that the bill "is good news for most middle-class Americans," and that it will "give firms an incentive to invest in the United States."

WSJournal Says Electric Car Credit Should Be Ended. In an editorial, the Wall Street Journal (12/10) calls the electric car tax credit an indulgence for wealthy citizens and urges the US Senate and House to remove it as they work to reconcile their respective tax bills. The Journal says the credit is a prime example of a government policy that subsidizes business, wastes money and also creates additional complications in the tax code.

Trump Honors Civil Rights Heroes At New Mississippi Museum.

President Trump on Saturday traveled to attend the opening of the new Civil Rights Museum in Jackson, Mississippi where he praised the "true American heroes" of the movement. While media coverage credited Trump for staying on message during his speech, reporting highlighted that a number of black leaders boycotted the ceremony over his invitation while others took part in protests about his Administration's civil rights record.

The Washington Post (12/9, Brown, Wootson) reports that "amid backlash and boycotts, President Trump addressed an invitation-only gathering Saturday at the Mississippi Civil Rights Museum in Jackson instead of attending the public opening ceremony." The Jackson (MS) Clarion Ledger (12/9, Pender) describes Trump as "uncharacteristically reserved during his brief visit to Jackson on Saturday a visit arranged by Mississippi Gov. Phil Bryant for the state's bicentennial celebration and opening of two long-planned state landmarks, the Civil Rights and Mississippi History museums." The Clarion Ledger adds the President "did not mention the protests or boycotts" and he "eschewed politics of the day also uncharacteristic [in his] erudite speech to several-hundred people before the main ceremony outside the museum attended by thousands."

The New York Times (12/9, Shear, Fentress) says the President's "presence

jolted the opening" of the museum by "generating boycotts from some leaders in the movement and small protests by activists as the state's attempt to confront its racially violent past clashed with more recent divisions wrought by Mr. Trump's presidency." However, according to the Times, "Trump gave brief remarks, largely sticking to his prepared script as he hailed the icons of the civil rights movement and rejected the racism and hatred on display in the new museum." Trump said, "The civil rights museum records oppression, cruelty and injustice inflicted on the African-American community." The President continued, "Here we memorialize the brave men and women who struggled to sacrifice and sacrificed so much so that others might live in freedom."

Reuters (12/9, Mason) reports Trump added, "We want our country to be a place where every child from every background can grow up free from fear, innocent of hatred and surrounded by love, opportunity and hope." Trump, referencing murdered civil rights activist Medgar Evers and other civil rights leaders, said: "Today we strive to be worthy of their sacrifice. We pray for inspiration from their example." He also "acknowledged Evers' wife Myrlie and brother Charles in the audience." Politico (12/9, Cook) says that in his "restrained, formal remarks," the President "spoke specifically of Evers' bravery, his love for his family, and his civil rights work for the NAACP in Mississippi." According to Politico, he also hailed "Martin Luther King, Jr. a 'man who I studied and watched and admired for my entire life' and paid tribute to the nine students who protested segregation at the Jackson Public Library."

Bloomberg News (12/9, Pettypiece) reports the President "spent about 40 minutes at the museums, including his remarks, accompanied by Mississippi Governor Phil Bryant, a Republican, and Housing Secretary Ben Carson, among others."

In addition, NPR (12/9, Booker) reports that "following the event, Trump tweeted that it was an 'honor' to celebrate the museum's opening." The President said, "It was my great honor to celebrate the opening of two extraordinary museums-the Mississippi State History Museum & the Mississippi Civil Rights Museum. We pay solemn tribute to our heroes of the past & dedicate ourselves to building a future of freedom, equality, justice & peace."

Black Lawmakers, Jackson Mayor Boycott Museum Opening Over Trump Appearance. The Hill (12/9, Delk) "Briefing Room" blog reports Trump's "highly scrutinized appearance...was boycotted by some Democratic lawmakers," including Reps. John Lewis and Bennie Thompson, who in a joint statement Thursday said the President's attendance "attendance and his hurtful policies are an insult to the people portrayed in this civil rights museum." The Hill adds Jackson Mayor Chokwe Antar Lumumba (D) "echoed Lewis's remarks on CNN, calling Trump's visit 'ill-considered,' and saying that Trump and 'the policies he espouses are disrespectful to the legacy and history that is to be portrayed in this museum.'"

ABC World News Tonight's (12/9, story 3, 2:55, Llamas) David Wright reported that "in Jackson, an echo of the civil rights struggle. A peaceful protest of a president who has fanned racial tensions attending the opening of a new civil rights museum." Wright added that "because Trump was there, civil rights

legend John Lewis was not. Congressman Lewis, one of the heroes of Bloody Sunday in Selma, called President Trump's attendance 'an insult to the people portrayed in this civil rights museum.'"

CNN (12/9, Diaz) reports that although the President stayed "on message" in his address at the museum, speakers "at a news conference protesting Trump's visit on Saturday hit the President on his White House record, including his efforts to repeal Obamacare and enact a travel ban, saying his moves contradict the work of the civil rights movement." The Jackson (MS) Clarion Ledger (12/9, Harris) reports Lumumba, speaking alongside NAACP President Derrick Johnson, "denounced" the President and "called Trump's stances an affront to the movement's goals." Lumumba said, "It is my appreciation for the Mississippi martyrs not here the names both known and unknown that will not allow me, that will not allow many of us standing here today to share a stage with a president who has not demonstrated a continuing commitment to civil rights."

The Washington Times (12/9, Boyer) reports Johnson "called Mr. Trump's appearance 'a distraction,' and other black leaders also stayed away from the grand opening in protest." The Times notes the "civil-rights icon" Lewis skipped the public ceremony "in protest of the president's visit, calling it a 'mockery' of black leaders' efforts." The Hill (12/9, Manchester) "Briefing Room" blog reports the Rev. Al Sharpton, in an appearance on MSNBC, said Trump's visit was "a missed opportunity," as he "could have addressed the issue of today that he mentioned people fought for to bring us to today."

On NBC Nightly News (12/9, story 4, 2:00, Diaz-Balart), Peter Alexander acknowledged "Trump has struggled to win over African-American support." Alexander added Trump before he ran for office "champion[ed] the conspiracy of birtherism of President Obama. And once in office, reigniting divisions after the racial violence in Charlottesville." The Huffington Post (12/9, Levine) highlights that "lawyers for his Justice Department are defending a voting law in Texas that a district court judge found intentionally discriminated against black and Latino voters." The HuffPost adds that "the Texas case is just one of a series of examples of how the Trump administration so far has failed to advance a key civil right: the right to vote."

Meanwhile, the Wall Street Journal (12/9, Radnofsky) reports White House spokesman Raj Shah last week expressed regret that the lawmakers had decided to boycott in protest and said, "We think it's a little unfortunate that a moment like this that could be used for unification and bringing people together, some folks are choosing to play politics with it but that's not going to deter us from honoring heroes of the civil rights movement." Shah added that the President's visit was "about honoring icons of the movement; that would include Mr. Lewis."

AP Analysis: Trump Made False Statement On Black Homeownership At Florida Rally. An AP (12/9, Boak, Rugaber) "Fact Check" that reviews Trump's remarks at his rally in Pensacola, Florida on Friday says the President "falsely stated that black homeownership has hit a record high under his stewardship." While Trump said: "black homeownership just hit the highest level it has ever been in the history of our country," the AP contends his assertion is "not true or even close,"

as US Census data shows "the black homeownership rate peaked during 2004, when 49.7 percent of black households owned homes (the rate for all races that year reached 69.2 percent, also a modern record). The black homeownership rate stayed in similar territory until the recession, when it dropped to the mid-40s." The AP adds the black homeownership rate this year was "42.7 percent in the first quarter, 42.3 percent in the second and 42 percent in the third. That's an uptick from last year but far from a record." On the [CBS Weekend News](#) (12/9, story 3, 2:10, Ninan), Errol Barnett similarly highlighted the President's comments on black homeownership at the rally and said "it seems the key audience for the President's speech were Gulf Coast Republicans, primarily those heading to the polls next week in Alabama's special election."

Trump Signs Short-Term Spending Bill Ahead Of Strong Jobs Report.

President Trump on Friday signed a short-term spending bill in order to prevent a government shutdown hours before the Labor Department released its jobs report for November, which showed nonfarm hiring rose by 228,000 jobs over the previous month. While media coverage was largely favorable about the economy's performance, reporting on the President's action to avert a shutdown was largely straightforward and portrayed his decision as a stopgap measure that funds the government through December 22 and gives Congress more time to reach a deal on major budget disputes.

Typical of the tone of his coverage was [Bloomberg News](#) (12/8, Wasson, Litvan), which reports Trump signed "a two-week extension of federal funding that averts a government shutdown this week but defers contentious decisions on spending on defense and domestic programs." The [Washington Post](#) (12/8, Debonis) similarly reports the bill "does not resolve a standoff between Republicans and Democrats over federal spending levels" and does not "include any agreement on immigration or other policy issues that have divided the parties."

[The Hill](#) (12/8, Fabian) says the President "signed the measure without fanfare." [Reuters](#) (12/8, Cowan, Rampton) notes White House press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders announced in [tweet](#) that Trump had signed the bill.

According to the [Washington Times](#) (12/8, Miller), by signing the legislation, Trump has given "lawmakers breathing room to pass tax cuts and smooth out budget snags." The Times states that "topping the list is resolving a standoff with Democrats over the fate of 'Dreamers,' illegal immigrants brought to the U.S. as children who were given a temporary reprieve by the Obama administration but who could be deported beginning in March." The Times adds another obstacle to the budget negotiations is that GOP lawmakers are also "hurrying to finish a major tax cut bill that is the centerpiece of Mr. Trump's economic agenda and the last chance to score a legislative victory before the end of the year."

Meanwhile, the [New York Times](#) (12/8, A1, Casselman) says on its front page that "the latest evidence" of the US economy's revival "came Friday, when the Labor Department reported that American employers added 228,000 jobs in November" while the unemployment rate "held steady at 4.1 percent, the lowest

since 2000." The Times adds "job growth has slowed since its peak in 2014 but remains remarkably steady: For the first time on record, employers have added jobs every month for more than seven years 86 months, to be precise." Sanders "said on Friday that the jobs report was evidence that 'President Trump's bold economic vision continues to pay off.'" CNN Money (12/8, Isidore) reports she added, "We're especially pleased to see the manufacturing sector roaring back to life, adding a total of 159,000 jobs since President Trump took office after averaging a loss of more than 1,000 jobs per month during the last year of the previous administration." Sanders continued, "As we continue to unleash the American economy from unnecessary regulation and taxes, we look forward to seeing more reports like this, showing a healthy and thriving jobs market for the American people."

A front-page Wall Street Journal (12/8, A1, Morath) article touts the November jobs report, as do brief ABC World News Tonight (12/8, story 8, 0:15, Muir), CBS Evening News (12/8, story 10, 0:20, Glor), and NBC Nightly News (12/8, story 9, 0:20, Holt) broadcasts. Breitbart (12/8, Carney) says hiring "exceed[ed] economist expectations of 200,000 jobs," as well as Business Insider (12/8), which said the data "crush[ed] expectations."

In particular, USA Today (12/8, Davidson) reports "businesses added 221,000 jobs, lifted by hiring in professional and business services, health care and manufacturing. Federal, state and local governments added 7,000." Bloomberg News (12/8) reports the jobs report showed "factory payrolls over the last four months have increased 27,000 on average, the most since April 2012," even as "employees at producers of non-durable goods, such as chemicals, fuels and foods, worked longer hours in November and saw their weekly pay advance 3.2 percent from a year ago." The Wall Street Journal (12/8, Smith) also reports logistics companies were responsible for 8,100 new jobs, which was the sector's largest amount since December 2015 and its eighth straight month of growth.

However, Reuters (12/8, Mutikani) reports analysts charge that as the data "paint[s] a portrait of a healthy economy," the US "does not require the kind of fiscal stimulus that...Trump is proposing, even though wage gains remain moderate." According to Reuters, "the fairly upbeat report underscored the economy's strength and could fuel criticism of efforts by Trump and his fellow Republicans in the U.S. Congress to slash the corporate income tax rate to 20 percent from 35 percent." The AP (12/8, Rugaber) credits the global economy with having benefited the US job market and says the jobs report "coincided with other signs that the U.S. economy remains on firm footing. In the past six months, economic growth has exceeded an annual rate of 3 percent, the first time that's happened since 2014. Consumer confidence has reached its highest level since 2000."

Acosta Touts Jobs Report, Cohn Says Tax Reform Will Raise Wages. Labor Secretary Acosta said the jobs report "shows steady growth fueled by optimism about the [Administration's] pro-growth, pro-jobs policies" and hailed the manufacturing sector for its "lowest ever" unemployment rate of 2.7 percent, but the Washington Post (12/8, Paquette) reports wages in the sector "appear

especially stagnant, growing only 1.9 percent since last November." The Post says the Bureau of Labor Statistics showed "workers' average hourly earnings grew by 5 cents in November to \$26.55 part of an overall increase of 2.5 percent since the same period last year," but this growth rate "lags significantly behind pre-recession levels, when year-over-year wage increases exceeded 4 percent." The Post concedes the President and Congressional Republicans believe tax reform "will create more well-paying jobs and supercharge economic growth." The Post adds National Economic Council Director Cohn, during a Friday interview with Fox Business, asserted, "People are going to be very excited when they see their paycheck bigger."

Cohn Downplays Risks As Bitcoin Continues "Meteoric Rise." Bloomberg News (12/8, Condon) reports Cohn, in a Friday interview on Bloomberg Television, "said he and other administration officials are monitoring the meteoric rise in cryptocurrency bitcoin, while adding that he didn't see any serious threat in the phenomenon." Cohn stated, "We're watching it, of course we're watching it. ... Right now we don't think it's a serious risk, but right now we're watching it." Bloomberg says that when "asked if any new regulation might be required, Cohn noted that the Commodity Futures Trading Commission had recently approved bitcoin futures contracts, giving some investors the ability to short the currency." Cohn added, "We'll see what goes on here. ... It's an evolving market. We've watched this happen before as markets have evolved." Bloomberg highlights that "the digital currency surged in recent days, trading above \$17,000, up from \$9,654 on Nov. 30 and from below \$1,000 at the end of 2016. It was around \$15,500 as of 10:32 a.m. New York time."

Jobs Report Boosts Dow And S&P 500 To New Weekly Records, As Nasdaq Declines. The Wall Street Journal (12/8, Gold, Driebusch) reports that following the release of the November jobs report on Friday led the Dow Jones Industrial Average rose by 0.5 percent to 24329.16, the S&P 500 rose by 0.6 percent to 2651.50, and the Nasdaq Composite rose by 0.4 percent to 6840.08; however, the Nasdaq nonetheless ended the week down by 0.1 percent, extending its losses by a second week.

Consumer Sentiment Index Posts December Declines. The Wall Street Journal (12/8, Leubsdorf) reports the University of Michigan on Friday said its consumer-sentiment index had fallen to 96.8 in early December, which was also less than economist estimates of 99.9. The Journal adds the reading was down from 98.5 in November and 100.7 in October, which had marked its highest level since January 2004.

WSJournal Hails Latest Jobs Report. A Wall Street Journal (12/8) editorial hails the latest jobs report and celebrates the health of the US economy. The Journal lauds the Administration's policies for fostering business confidence, but advises President Trump and Commerce Secretary Ross to remember that manufacturing is doing well due to the improving global economy and increased exports. While the Journal suggests tax reform will likely benefit the economy, the editorial warns Trump not to succumb to protectionism by withdrawing from Nafta and says he should not exacerbate the labor shortage by further curtailing legal immigration.

White House Plans To Roll Out Infrastructure Plan In January.

The Wall Street Journal (12/10, Mann) reports that the White House plans to unveil an infrastructure rebuilding plan in January, wagering that while some lawmakers oppose a road-and-bridge-building, it will be well-received by voters. According to the Journal, Trump's advisers are finalizing a plan to spend some \$200 billion in order to leverage billions in spending from local governments and the private sector for infrastructure projects.

Trump Administration Energy Policy Includes Alarming Challenges For Wind, Solar.

TIME (12/8, Worland) reports that "Republicans in Washington have launched a campaign against renewable energy that includes market interventions that alarm other industries, including oil and gas." These efforts to "preserve the coal industry at the expense of wind and solar" include "aggressive attempts at regulatory rollback," a tax bill that hurts the financing of clean-energy projects, and particularly the Energy Department's proposal to prop up coal and nuclear power plants. The article says that the slew of threats to renewable energy "could slow the industry's growth in ways unimaginable just a year ago."

Haley: International Community United On Isolating North Korea.

UN Ambassador Haley said on CNN's State Of The Union (12/10, Tapper), "Every ounce of revenue that North Korea receives, they put it toward the nuclear program so the fact that the sanctions have completely squeezed them is less money they can put towards this program." She added that the "international community is with us in isolating North Korea."

Haley also appeared on Fox News Sunday (12/10, Wallace) where she was asked about Chinese pressure on Pyongyang. Said Haley, "I think what we are saying that China is actually following through with the sanctions." She said, however, "China can do more. ... I think President Xi has his reasons to have red lines, but President Trump and President Xi have a very good relationship and for that I think that's why we've gotten as far as we have in getting what we got done."

On CBS' Face The Nation (12/10, Dickerson), Haley said, "We're watching North Korea very carefully. If you look at the last ballistic missile launch, it had advanced quite a bit compared to the missile before and it's a concern."

US Officials Warn North Korea Making Gains Toward Biological Weapon.

According to a front-page story in the Washington Post (12/10, A1, Warrick), "Five months before North Korea's first nuclear test in 2006, US intelligence officials sent a report to Congress warning that secret work also was underway on a biological weapon." A decade later, North Korea is "moving steadily to acquire the essential machinery that could potentially be used for an advanced bioweapons program," according to "US and Asian intelligence officials and weapons experts." The gains have "alarmed US analysts, who say North Korea...could quickly surge into industrial-scale production of biological pathogens if it chooses to do so."

Editorial Wrap-Up

New York Times.

"Wisconsin's Fire Sale For Big Business." In an editorial, the New York Times (12/10) calls the decision of Gov. Scott Walker to offer \$3 billion in state subsidies to draw Taiwanese electronics manufacturer Foxconn to Wisconsin "a low-road scheme to advance big business by scapegoating environmental laws." The Times observes that "the contract grew out of a high-bidding competition with other states, encouraged by the Trump White House with the blessing of the House speaker, Paul Ryan, whose district includes Foxconn's planned site." Under the deal, Foxconn was released from state environmental restrictions that are normally enforced against Wisconsin companies.

"Hate Smears India's Symbol Of Love, The Taj Mahal." In an editorial, the New York Times (12/10) reaffirms the importance of preserving the Taj Mahal "as a pledge to an inclusive future" in India, particularly amid increasing "anti-Muslim rhetoric and unprovoked physical attacks on Muslims...under the government of Prime Minister Narendra Modi." The Times says that the Taj Mahal, which was built as an Islamic mausoleum, has been criticized as of late by Hindu nationalists as "a blot on Indian culture" that was constructed by "traitors."

"Opening Up New York's Public Records." In an editorial, the New York Times (12/10) calls for Gov. Andrew Cuomo to sign legislation that would "remove one of the biggest obstacles facing those who are wrongly denied documents they have requested under New York's open-records law the cost of hiring a lawyer to fight that denial in court." Under the proposed legislation, plaintiffs would not be liable for their legal fees if they prevailed in any lawsuit concerning the release of information that was wrongly denied by the state of New York. The Times says, "the statewide culture of noncompliance needs to be addressed immediately, and the bill on Mr. Cuomo's desk, which sailed through the Legislature last spring, is one small and simple fix."

Washington Post.

"Virginia Should Stick With Its I-66 Express Lanes – Tolls And All." A Washington Post (12/10) editorial.

"The Supreme Court's Privacy Case Shows Congress Needs To Draw New Lines." The Washington Post (12/10) editorializes that regardless of the outcome of recent arguments at the Supreme Court over a Fourth Amendment case involving the warrantless retrieval of location data from a man's cellphone, "it's past time for Congress to raise the standard for longer-term, larger-scale location record requests." In this effort, the Post encourages Congress to look toward state legislatures for examples on how to legislate such restrictions and also to be mindful "not to overburden law enforcement in emergency situations."

"Trump's Deportation Tough Talk Hurts Law-Abiding Immigrants." The Washington Post (12/10) editorializes that President Trump's "hard-line posture" on immigration fails to address "the broader dysfunction in America's immigration system" and fundamentally will not "change the scale of illegal immigrants living in this country." So far, the Post says, the increased number

deportations of illegal immigrants has failed "to make a big dent in the 11 million who remain in the United States," of which, "the overwhelming majority...have no criminal record." Moreover, US immigration courts face "an epic logjam," to which "only an overhaul of America's broken immigration system offers the prospect of a more lasting fix."

Wall Street Journal.

"Christopher Wray's FBI Stonewall." In an editorial, the [Wall Street Journal](#) (12/10) criticizes FBI Director Wray's testimony last week before the House Judiciary Committee, saying he stonewalled the panel and seems to have joined an effort by the Justice Department to keep from the public the FBI's role in the 2016 election.

"Killing The Electric Car Credit." The [Wall Street Journal](#) (12/10) in an editorial calls the electric car tax credit an indulgence for the wealthy and urges the US Senate and House to remove it as they work to reconcile their respective tax bills. The Journal says the credit is a prime example of a government policy that subsidizes business, wastes money and also creates additional complications in the tax code.

"The Apple 'Windfall' That Isn't." In an editorial, the [Wall Street Journal](#) (12/8) criticizes claims that the Republican tax plan's one-time deemed repatriation rate will generate a \$47 billion tax windfall for Apple if the company brings back around \$252 billion it has stored abroad. Though the tax is lower than the standard corporate rate, the Journal explains that Apple would pay no tax if it elected to keep the funds overseas. The true windfall, the Journal argues, is the \$30 billion in taxes Apple would pay to the US government.

Big Picture

Headlines From Today's Front Pages.

Wall Street Journal:

[Hospital Giants In Talks To Create US's Largest Operator](#)

[Alabama Hears Final Pitch Ahead Of Tuesday Vote For Senate Seat](#)

[US Bitcoin Futures Climb In First Day Of Trade](#)

[In One Corner Of Afghanistan, America Is Beating Islamic State](#)

New York Times:

[Under Trump, EPA Has Slowed Actions Against Polluters, And Put Limits On Enforcement Officers](#)

[How ISIS Produced Its Cruel Arsenal On An Industrial Scale](#)

[Ahead Of Brexit, Paris Tries A Business Makeover](#)

[Liberal Outsiders Pour Into Alabama Senate Race, Treading Lightly](#)

[Nikki Haley Says Women Who Accuse Trump Of Misconduct "Should Be Heard"](#)

[Lives At Risk Inside A Senior Complex In Puerto Rico With No Power](#)

[After Fall Of ISIS, Iraq's Second-Largest City Picks Up The Pieces](#)

Washington Post:

[Trump Hurries To Boost Moore](#)

[Speed, Not Precision, Steers GOP Tax Plan](#)
[N. Korean Bioweapons Threat Seen As Growing](#)
[Journalist Risked His Life To Cover Fight For Civil Rights](#)
[In Greece, Trump Aide Rose Fast, Relished Limelight](#)
[After Newtown, A New Normal For Students](#)

Financial Times:

[Macron Reiterates Disapproval Of Trump's Jerusalem Move](#)
[Wall Street Lobbies Against Measure Hitting High-Tax States](#)
[Bitcoin Feeding Frenzy Being Fuelled By 15x Leverage, Says Exchange](#)

Washington Times:

[Fusion GPS Tried To Tie Trump To Clinton's Pedophile Pal Epstein As Part Of Smear Campaign](#)
[Putin Supporters In Russia Welcome Another Term For Hard Line Against 'Cruel' West](#)
[Tax Bill Negotiators Try To Keep 20% Corporate Rate, Consider Offering Choice Of Deductions](#)
[Trump May Get Tax Cut Bill With More Generous Credits For Illegal Immigrants](#)
[Democrats Forgave Rep. Studds For Preying On Teen Boys, Hailed As Gay Rights Pioneer](#)

Story Lineup From Last Night's Network News:

ABC: Severe Weather; California Wildfires; Roy Moore Campaign; Detroit-Highway Shootings; Trump Jerusalem Announcement-Responses; California-Plane Crash; Serial Killer Trial; TV Show Scam Alert; Airline-Breastfeeding; College Football News; Rope Walker; Christmas Charity.

CBS: Roy Moore Campaign; Air Force Academy-Sexual Misconduct Cases; California Wildfires; Severe Weather; Tax Reform Plan; Trump Jerusalem Announcement-Responses; FCC Net Neutrality; San Diego Plane Crash; Egypt-Ancient Tombs Opening; Star Wars Premier; Honda-Takata Air Bag Recall; Las Vegas Shooting-Recovery.

NBC: California Wildfires; Roy Moore Campaign; Florida Police Violence; Tax Reform Plan; China-Public Protest; Children-Mental Health Report; FCC Net Neutrality; College Football News; Tiny Book Art.

Network TV At A Glance:

Roy Moore Campaign 7 minutes, 40 seconds
California Wildfires 6 minutes, 30 seconds

Story Lineup From This Morning's Radio News Broadcasts:

ABC: Roy Moore Campaign; California Wildfires; Detroit-Highway Shootings; Whale Endangered Species.

CBS: California Wildfires; Severe Weather; Roy Moore Campaign; Bitcoin Surge; Wall Street News.

FOX: California Wildfires; Roy Moore Campaign.

NPR: California Wildfires; Al Franken Resignation; Trump Jerusalem

Announcement-Responses; North Korea Sanctions.

Washington Schedule

Today's Events In Washington.

White House:

PRESIDENT TRUMP — Has lunch with Vice President Mike Pence and Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue; participates in a presentation of the Friends of Zion award with Faith Leaders; meets with Congressman Bill Shuster; participates in a signing ceremony for Space Policy Directive; participates in a swearing-in Ceremony for Jamie McCourt as the US Ambassador to France and the US Ambassador to Monaco.

VICE PRESIDENT PENCE — Has lunch with the President and Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue; joins the President to participate in a signing ceremony for Space Policy Directive; joins the President to participate in a swearing-in ceremony for Jamie McCourt as the US Ambassador to France and Monaco; participates in a swearing-in ceremony for Peter Hoekstra as the US Ambassador to the Netherlands; participates in a swearing-in ceremony for Duke Buchan as the US Ambassador to Spain and Andorra.

US Senate: 4:00 PM Senate aims to end debate on circuit judge nominee Senate convenes and proceeds to executive session to resume consideration of Leonard Steven Grasz to be U.S. Circuit Judge for the Eighth Circuit, including a vote on a motion to invoke cloture on the nomination Location: Washington, DC <http://www.senate.gov/>

US House: 9:30 AM House Small Business subcommittee field hearing on addressing barriers to business formation and growth Agriculture, Energy, and Trade Subcommittee field hearing on 'Bridging the Entrepreneurial Gap: Addressing Barriers to Small Business Formation and Growth', with testimony from LifeWorking Enterprise founder and CEO Steven Whittington; The Zen of Slow Cooking founder Meg Barnhart; Hel's Kitchen Catering owner David Borris; and Grow Well Farms partner Cheryl Besenjak Location: Village of Deerfield Hall, 850 Waukegan Rd, Deerfield, IL <http://smallbusiness.house.gov/> <https://twitter.com/SmallBizGOP>

12:00 PM House Floor meets The House will meet at 12 noon for morning hour debate and 2 pm for legislative business. There are no news events scheduled at this time. Location: House Floor, U.S. Capitol Hill

2:00 PM House of Representatives meets for legislative business Location: Washington, DC <http://www.house.gov/>

Other: 8:00 AM Axios event on 'Energy Under Trump' Axios conversation on 'Energy Under Trump', with Democratic Rep. Paul Tonko, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission Commissioner Neil Chatterjee, and Heritage Foundation Energy and Environment Research Fellow Nick Loris Location: Newseum, 555 Pennsylvania Ave NW, Washington, DC www.axios.com <https://twitter.com/axios> #Axios360

9:30 AM MDAA Congressional Roundtable on defending against North Korea Missile Defense Advocacy Alliance Congressional Roundtable Discussion Series event on 'Layered Missile Defense Against North Korea', featuring Joint

Integrated Air and Missile Defense Organization Director Brig. Gen. Clement Coward Jr., and Missile Defense Agency Deputy Director Rear Adm. Jon Hill
Location: Hart Senate Office Building, Rm 902, Washington, DC
www.missiledefenseadvocacy.org <https://twitter.com/missiledefadv>

Last Laughs

Late Night Political Humor.

Colin Jost: "With all the complex issues facing America right now, President Trump decided to relax and solve a much simpler problem...the Middle East."

Michael Che: "Democrats hope by forcing Al Franken to step down, they will paint themselves as the party of the moral high ground. Calm down, Democrats. You are still politicians. ... Nobody is at a party like, 'Do you know who I wish was here? Nancy Pelosi.'"

Copyright 2017 by Bulletin Intelligence LLC Reproduction or redistribution without permission prohibited. Content is drawn from thousands of newspapers, national magazines, national and local television programs, radio broadcasts, social-media platforms and additional forms of open-source data. Sources for Bulletin Intelligence audience-size estimates include Scarborough, GfK MRI, comScore, Nielsen, and the Audit Bureau of Circulation. Data from and access to third party social media platforms, including but not limited to Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and others, is subject to the respective platform's terms of use. Services that include Factiva content are governed by Factiva's [terms of use](#). Services including embedded Tweets are also subject to [Twitter for Website's information and privacy policies](#). The Department of the Interior News Briefing is published five days a week by Bulletin Intelligence, which creates custom briefings for government and corporate leaders. We can be found on the Web at BulletinIntelligence.com, or called at (703) 483-6100.