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



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DOI In The News

Western Monuments Set To Be Reduced Under Proposal To Trump.

[Bloomberg News](#) (8/24, Flavelle) reports that Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke "is recommending scaling back but not overturning some controversial national monument designations" which would otherwise "put oil, timber and mineral riches out of reach." Zinke communicated the recommendations to President Trump on Thursday "at the end of a four-month review of 27 national monuments created under the previous three presidents," which opens the possibility of a "significant shift" in government land use policy.

[The Hill](#) (8/24, Cama) reports that Zinke proposes reducing the size of "a handful" of national monuments, but his official report "will not ask the president to eliminate any of the 27 protected areas that were under review since an April executive order." The [Wall Street Journal](#) (8/24, Carlton) quotes a Thursday statement from Zinke saying that the recommendations would "provide a much needed change for the local communities who border and rely on these lands for hunting and fishing, economic development, traditional uses, and recreation."

[Reuters](#) (8/24, Volcovici) reports that Republican Rob Bishop, chairman of the House natural resources committee, "said he has not yet seen the full report but was briefed on some aspects of it by Zinke." Bishop "said his committee will eventually take up legislation to carry out some of Zinke's recommendations and attempt to reform the Antiquities Act." He said, "If we don't do reform of the Antiquities Act, we will have failures in the future. We don't need to eliminate the Antiquities Act totally but need to go back to what its original purpose was."

The [Washington Post](#) (8/24, Eilperin, Fears) says the move is "certain to trigger major legal fights." The Post adds that the White House confirmed that the President received the report "but would not say when it would be released or when the president would act on Zinke's recommendations." The [Los Angeles Times](#) (8/24, Boxall, Halper) says the "blueprint" delivered to Trump "represents an unprecedented effort to roll back protections on federal land." The Times adds that even before the report's release, "state attorneys general, environmental groups and Native Americans have put the administration on notice that acting on it would be illegal."

[The Hill](#) (8/24, Henry) reports that opponents of Zinke's "push to shrink national monuments say they will sue the Trump administration if the president follows through on Zinke's suggestions." Drew Caputo, the vice president of litigation for lands, oceans and wildlife at Earthjustice, said, "The law is clear: only Congress has the authority to change a national monument designation under the Antiquities Act – not the president." He said, "If President Trump attempts to carry out any recommendations to gut or shrink our national monuments, we will see him in court."

According to the [New York Times](#) (8/24, Turkewitz, Friedman), parts of the Bears Ears National Monument in Utah "could lose their strict federal protection as a national monument," under Zinke's recommendation. The Times adds that shrinking the monument "would be widely seen as a direct blow to former President Barack Obama's environmental legacy, and the first major test" of the Antiquities Act.

Also reporting are the [Washington Times](#) (8/24, Wolfgang), the [Washington Examiner](#) (8/24, Siegel), the [Los Angeles Times](#) (8/24, Boxall, Halper), [USA Today](#) (8/24, Roth), [Reuters](#) (8/24, Volcovici), [CNN](#) (8/24, Green), [CBS News](#) (8/24), [CBS News](#) (8/24), [NPR](#) (8/24, Siegler), [NPR](#) (8/24), [PBS NewsHour](#) (8/24, Akpan), [MarketWatch](#) (8/24, Carlton), the [Huffington Post](#) (8/24, D'angelo), [TIME](#) (8/24, Waxman), [TIME](#) (8/24, Steinmetz), the [Chicago Tribune](#) (8/24,

Eilperin, Fears), the [Albuquerque \(NM\) Journal](#) (8/24, Coleman), the [Albuquerque \(NM\) Journal](#) (8/24, Coleman), the [Bangor \(ME\) Daily News](#) (8/24, Sambides), [Colorado Daily](#) (8/24, Brennan), the [Orange County \(CA\) Register](#) (8/24, Scauzillo), the [San Luis Obispo \(CA\) Tribune](#) (8/24, Ferreira), the [San Gabriel Valley \(CA\) Tribune](#) (8/24, Scauzillo), the [Bend \(OR\) Bulletin](#) (8/24, Hamway), [Santa Fe New Mexican](#) (8/24, Oxford), the [Denver Post](#) (8/24, Flesher), the [Deseret \(UT\) News](#) (8/24, O'Donoghue), the [Boston Globe](#) (8/24, Abel), the [Daily Intelligencer \(NY\)](#) (8/24, Raymond), the [Colorado Springs \(CO\) Gazette](#) (8/24, Bunch), [Southern California Public Radio](#) (8/24), and [KEYT-TV Santa Barbara \(CA\)](#) Santa Barbara, CA (8/24, Flores, Carls), [National Geographic](#) (8/24, Parker), the [Missoula Current \(MT\)](#) (8/24, Devlin), the [Missoula Current \(MT\)](#) (8/24, Kidston), the [Daily Mail](#) (8/24), [The Guardian \(UK\)](#) (8/24, Tobias, Agencies), [The Guardian \(UK\)](#) (8/24, Calvert), [The Guardian \(UK\)](#) (8/24, Tobias), [Vox](#) (8/24, Arrieta-Kenna), [Vice](#) (8/24, Sherman), [GO](#) (8/24, Darby), [Salon](#) (8/24, Rozsa), and [Yahoo! News](#) (8/24, Buncombe).

Additional coverage was provided by [Politico](#) (8/24), [Bloomberg News](#) (8/24, Flavelle), the [Boston Herald](#) (8/24), [Philly \(PA\)](#) (8/24, BROWN, McCOMBS), the [Daily Mail](#) (8/24), [ABC News](#) (8/25, McCombs, Brown), the [Idaho Statesman](#) (8/24, McCombs, Brown), the [Washington Post](#) (8/25, McCombs Matthew Brown |, Ap), the [Washington Times](#) (8/25, McCombs, Brown), the [Las Vegas Sun](#) (8/24, Brown, McCombs), the [St. Joseph \(MO\) News-Press](#) (8/24, BROWN, McCOMBS), the [Yakima \(WA\) Herald-Republic](#) (8/24, BROWN, McCOMBS), the [Banning \(CA\) Record-Gazette](#) (8/24, Folmer), the [Columbus \(OH\) Dispatch](#) (8/24), the [Savannah \(GA\) Morning News](#) (8/24), the [Vail \(CO\) Daily](#) (8/24), the [St. George \(UT\) Spectrum](#) (8/24, DeMille), the [Las Vegas Review-Journal](#) (8/24, Brean), the [San Francisco Chronicle](#) (8/24, Lochhead), the [Flathead \(MT\) Beacon](#) (8/24, BROWN, McCOMBS), the [Las Cruces \(NM\) Sun-News](#) (8/24, Brown, McCombs), the [Salem \(OR\) Statesman Journal](#) (8/24, BROWN, McCOMBS), the [Denton \(TX\) Record-Chronicle](#) (8/24, Brown, McCombs), [Oregon Public Broadcasting](#) (8/24, Brown, McComb), the [Bristol \(VA\) Herald Courier](#) (8/24, Sharp), the [Charlottesville \(VA\) Daily Progress](#) (8/24, Sharp), [ABC News](#) (8/24, Brown, McCombs), [WRC-TV Washington](#) Washington (8/24, Brown, McCombs), [WBBH-TV Fort Myers \(FL\)](#) Fort Myers, FL (8/24, BROWN, McCOMBS), [KTVX-TV Salt Lake City](#) Salt Lake City (8/24), [KSBY-TV San Luis Obispo \(CA\)](#) San Luis Obispo, CA (8/24, BROWN, McCOMBS), [KSBW-TV Monterey \(CA\)](#) Monterey, CA (8/24), [KSBW-TV Monterey \(CA\)](#) Monterey, CA (8/24, BROWN, McCOMBS), [WMAQ-TV Chicago](#) Chicago (8/24, Brown, McCombs), and [WABI-TV Bangor \(ME\)](#) Bangor, ME (8/24).

Feinstein Calls On Trump Admin To Release National Monuments Report. [The Hill](#) (8/24, Delk) reports that Sen. Dianne Feinstein "demanded Thursday that Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke make public a formal report asking President Trump to reduce protections on a number of national monuments." The senator "pushed back on any potential plans to shrink parkland while calling for Zinke to release his full report." She said, "The American people have the right to see his entire report. A proposal to strip protections from public lands should be made public immediately."

California Mulls Lawsuit Against Trump's National Monuments Decision. The [Washington Examiner](#) (8/24, Chaitin) reports that "California is open to the possibility of suing the Trump administration should it move to shrink national monuments located in the state." [McClatchy](#) (8/24, Luna) reports that California Gov. Jerry Brown is "ready to sue the federal government if the Trump administration decides to allow drilling, mining or timber harvesting at national monuments in the Golden State."

Supporters Of New Mexico Monument Areas Vow To Keep Pushing. The [AP](#) (8/24, Bryan) reports that "tribal leaders, conservationists and elected leaders gathered Thursday to express their frustrations and keep pressure on the White House to ensure two national monument areas in New Mexico remain intact." Sen. Martin Heinrich and "several dozen people packed an REI store in Albuquerque while others took to the historic Mesilla plaza in southern New Mexico to show their support for Organ Mountains-Desert Peak and the Rio Grande del Norte." Heinrich said, "These places aren't just about outdoor recreation. They're not just about land. They're about our culture and history and trying to live up to the greatest potential of that culture and history."

Fate Of 1st Atlantic Marine Monument Likely Headed To Court. The [AP](#) (8/24, Whittle) reports that "environmentalists and fishing groups said Thursday they are prepared for a legal battle in the wake of Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke's decision to preserve the nation's first Atlantic Ocean marine monument." The Northeast Canyons and Seamounts Marine National Monument has "been contested from the beginning." Some fishing groups have claimed "it was created through an illegal use of the Antiquities Act of 1906 and jeopardizes their industry, and they've sued to challenge its creation." However, "conservationists said the monument protects marine mammals, sea turtles and underwater habitats."

Editorial: Trump's Threat To The Outdoors. The [San Francisco Chronicle](#) (8/24) editorializes

that “both presidential power and wilderness preservation are at stake as the Trump team decides how far to go in trimming outdoors protections that past presidents and millions of Americans support.” The paper is concerned by “troubling impacts” as it sees “a likely rollback on millions of acres, mostly in the West, which are safeguarded from logging, drilling and mining by presidential decree.” The paper argues that “protecting wild places against intrusive human activities was the reason for the Antiquities Act, and it should remain a timely and necessary tool.”

How US Heritage Is Reflected In Our National Parks. In an op-ed for the [San Diego Union-Tribune](#) (8/23, Beck), Larry Beck, a professor in the L. Robert Payne School of Hospitality and Tourism Management at San Diego State University, argues that “at a time when visitation to our parks is skyrocketing, and causing congestion problems in places such as Yosemite and Zion, reducing land protected within established park monuments is nonsensical.” He claims that “this action would simultaneously exacerbate climate change.”

Commentary: Zinke Leaves San Juan County In Economic Limbo. In an op-ed for the [Salt Lake \(UT\) Tribune](#) (8/24, Kurth), Nazz Kurth, president of Petzl America, writes that “instead of getting on with sorting out the issues in the Bears Ears, President Trump has left San Juan County in a kind of economic limbo, by ordering a review of all monuments over 100,000 acres that were established since 1996, and demanding an expedited review of the Bears Ears.” Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke has “weighed in, adding to San Juan County’s economic uncertainty by issuing an ‘interim report’ – following a selective and cursory public review of Bears Ears – recommending that the monument be shrunk and that Congress take up legislation to create National Recreation and Conservation Areas.” Kurth claims that “Zinke is ignoring the painstaking three-year Public Land Initiative that recently failed trying to do just that.” Kurth believes that “there is no reason to think that Congress can succeed this time.” Kurth concludes that “if President Trump and Secretary Zinke truly want improved economic conditions and more jobs for San Juan County, the answer is readily available, commit the resources needed to move forward with a management plan for the Bears Ears National Monument.”

Zinke’s Decision To Keep Maine Monument Worth Celebrating. In his column for the [Bangor \(ME\) Daily News](#) (8/24, Holyoke), John Holyoke welcomes Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke’s decision on the Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument. Holyoke says that allowing “some form of limited logging activity in part of the monument,” which may be under consideration, is “a workable compromise.”

Trump And Our National Monuments: What America’s Hunters And Anglers Want The White House To Do. In an op-ed for [Fox News](#) (8/24, Tawney), Land Tawney, the president and CEO of Backcountry Hunters & Anglers, writes that sportsmen are “standing up in support of the Antiquities Act.” Tawney raises concerns that “recommendations made by Secretary Zinke, if adopted, could erode the strength of the act, blunt a powerful conservation tool and diminish our national monuments system overall.” Tawney joins with American hunters and anglers who “demand leadership from the secretary that upholds – and advances – Theodore Roosevelt’s legacy.”

Lien: Sportsmen Want Trump To Leave Monuments Intact (Column). In an op-ed for the [Vail \(CO\) Daily](#) (8/24, Lien), David Lien, a former Air Force officer and chairman of the Colorado Backcountry Hunters & Anglers, expects that “currently protected public lands will be opened to extractive industries, such as mining and oil and gas development, most likely.” Lien joins with sportsmen and women who “call on Zinke to make good on his word, to uphold Theodore Roosevelt’s protected public-lands legacy by expanding America’s rich system of national monuments – not diminishing it.”

Cabinet Secretaries Say Lawsuits Prolong Forest Fire Problem.

[The Missoulian \(MT\)](#) (8/24, Chaney) reports that Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke and Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue “joined two-thirds of Montana’s congressional delegation at the Lolo Peak fire base to decry the effect of lawsuits on firefighting.” They were joined by Montana Republican Sen. Steve Daines and Rep. Greg Gianforte in “arguing that litigation was keeping forests in an unhealthy state.” Zinke also said “front-line government workers were too burdened by micromanagement and bureaucracy to get out in the field.” He said, “We need more resources on the front line, to give them the flexibility they need and get rid of the lawsuits so they can do their jobs. That’s where we can focus on near-term gains.”

Also reporting are the [Billings \(MT\) Gazette](#) (8/24, Chaney), the [Missoula Current \(MT\)](#) (8/24, Kidston), the [Huffington Post](#) (8/24, D’angelo), [KECI-TV Missoula \(MT\)](#) Missoula, MT (8/24, Georgiou), and [KGVO-FM Missoula \(MT\)](#) Missoula, MT (8/24, Christian).

Interior Secretary To Visit Smokies Friday.

[WBIR-TV](#) Knoxville, TN (8/24) reports that Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke will “visit Great Smoky Mountains National Park on Friday to mark the 101st anniversary of the founding of the National Park Service.” Zinke will “visit Rainbow Falls Trail with U.S. Sen. Lamar Alexander on Friday morning.” In the afternoon, Zinke will “visit the Pisgah Inn on top of Mt. Pisgah on the Blue Ridge Parkway.”

Environmental Groups Say Industry Had Undue Influence On Sage Grouse Review.

The [Casper \(WY\) Star-Tribune](#) (8/24, Richards) reports that “environmental groups are crying foul after a letter from an oil and gas advocacy group to Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke surfaced indicating energy may have played a significant role in the department’s recent, and controversial, sage grouse decision.” In the July letter, Western Energy Alliance “recommended 15 changes to federal sage grouse conservation plans to make it easier for industry firms to do business in the bird’s habitat.” A review of federal conservation plans by a panel of sage grouse experts earlier this month “included 13 of WEA’s suggestions.”

Additional coverage of the sage grouse was provided by the [High Country \(CO\) News](#) (8/24, Wiles), the [Denver Post](#) (8/24), and the [Mesquite \(NV\) Local News](#) (8/24, Mitchell).

Greg Walden On Bundy-led Standoffs: Protesters ‘Need Not Be Armed.’

[The Oregonian](#) (8/24, Friedman) reports following a visit to Intel’s Hillsboro facilities on Wednesday, Rep. Greg Walden was asked at a press conference “what, if anything, Congress should do to deter future would-be insurrections on federal property.” Walden said, “Those that violate the law should be prosecuted.” He added, “It’s important that we respect the rights of the people who work in those facilities, and it was very problematic for the federal employees who were there at the wildlife refuge, the Bureau of Land Management office. It was very problematic for the city of Burns and Harney County. However these protests take place, they need not be armed, they need not be violent, they need not be vile.”

Ex-Interior Secretary Who Helped Conserve Alaska Land Dies.

The [AP](#) (8/25, Kruesi, Ridler) reports: “Former Interior Secretary Cecil V. Andrus, who engineered the conservation of millions of acres of Alaska land during the Carter administration, has died. He was 85. Andrus died late Wednesday of complications from lung cancer, daughter Tracy Andrus said.”

Additional Coverage: Government Considers Zinke Investigation: Preliminary Probe Opened Into Call With Murkowski.

Additional coverage that “the Office of the Inspector General has opened a preliminary investigation into phone calls made from Secretary of the Interior Zinke to Alaska senators Lisa Murkowski and Dan Sullivan” was provided by the [Ketchikan \(AK\) Daily News](#) (8/24, Halaschak).

Sportsmen Can Thank Themselves For Attack On Public Lands.

In an op-ed for the [Albuquerque \(NM\) Journal](#) (8/24, Williams), Ted Williams writes that without the support of sportsmen, “Trump wouldn’t be president and Zinke wouldn’t be running Interior.” Williams decries their “hypocrisy” and their silence “about the felonious, 41-day armed occupation and trashing of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge in Oregon.”

Bureau Of Indian Affairs

Order Allowing Drilling At Van Hook Extended.

The [Bismarck \(ND\) Tribune](#) (8/24, Dalrymple) reports that “a federal judge has extended an order allowing oil drilling near the Van Hook arm of Lake Sakakawea through at least Oct. 31.” US District Court Judge Daniel Hovland, “who last week ruled Slawson Exploration could continue drilling until a hearing scheduled for Aug. 29, has since canceled that hearing.” The federal government “agreed to the extension and requested the court case before Hovland be put on hold while an administrative appeal within the Department of Interior continues.”

Tribe Pushes To Revive Suit Over Calif. Gov. Casino OK.

[Law360](#) (8/24, Powell) reports that “the United Auburn Indian Community continued Wednesday to press the California Supreme Court to revive its lawsuit challenging Gov. Jerry Brown’s role in

greenlighting another tribe's competing off-reservation casino project, calling his arguments that he had not exceeded his authority or violated the separation of powers among government branches 'off the mark.'"

Bureau Of Land Management

APNewsBreak: Investigators Say US Land Agent Took Evidence.

The [AP](#) (8/24, Whitehurst) reports that "a Bureau of Land Management agent who has been scrutinized for past behavior took valuable stones held as evidence and handed them out 'like candy' to colleagues and a contractor, federal investigators said in a report made public Thursday." Daniel Love, "played a command role in an April 2014 standoff involving backers of Nevada rancher and states' rights figure Cliven Bundy," was "previously faulted for using his influence to get tickets to a sold-out Burning Man counterculture festival in Nevada's Black Rock Desert that he was helping oversee security for and manipulating a job search for a friend." US Department of Interior investigators "also found Love told an employee to delete some emails that contained bureau information requested by then-U.S. Rep. Jason Chaffetz."

Also reporting are the [Deseret \(UT\) News](#) (8/24, O'Donoghue), the [Salt Lake \(UT\) Tribune](#) (8/25, Maffly), the [Daily Caller](#) (8/24, Pearce), and the [Daily Caller](#) (8/24, Barton).

Judge Sends Vegas Water Pipeline Plan Back To Feds For A Fix.

The [AP](#) (8/24, Ritter) reports that "a federal judge tapped the brakes Thursday but didn't stop a proposal for a massive and expensive water pipeline to draw underground water from rural valleys along Nevada's eastern edge to supply the growing Las Vegas metropolitan area." The Bureau of Land Management "needs to take another look at possible environmental effects of the Southern Nevada Water Authority project and identify what can be done about them, U.S. District Judge Andrew Gordon said." Gordon "characterized the fixes he ordered as 'narrow deficiencies' in environmental impact statements."

Additional coverage was provided by the [Las Vegas Review-Journal](#) (8/24, Brean) and [Law360](#) (8/24, Powell).

Department Of Justice Says Clark County Owes Federal Government \$75 Million In Unpaid Rent On Bali Hai Golf Course.

The [Nevada Independent](#) (8/24, Valley, Snyder) reports that the Justice Department "is asking Clark County for more than \$75 million in alleged unpaid rent at a major property on federal land managed by the county and developed by prominent Las Vegas gambler Billy Walters." Clark County, "acting as the facilitator for the Bureau of Land Management, entered into a 99-year profit-sharing lease with a development company owned by Walters, recently convicted of insider trading, for the course in 2000, but the arrangement never made any money." The Justice Department "contends the county should have been collecting roughly \$1.3 million in rent annually from Walters and, thus, deserves that money," but "the county disagrees."

The [Las Vegas Review-Journal](#) (8/24, Lockhead) reports that "in a letter to the county dated Aug. 18, U.S. Department of Justice attorney John Kresse wrote that a 2011 amendment to a lease between the county and gambler Bill Walters set the 155-acre property's \$100,000 annual rent below fair market value, thereby violating the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act (SNPLMA)." County Commission Chairman Steve Sisolak "said the county sent the new deal to the Bureau of Land Management for approval, but never heard back. 'They didn't approve it. They didn't deny it. They just sat on it,' he said. 'We've been stuck in limbo.'"

Oil Lessee Seeks Quick Win In Canceled Lease Suit.

[Law360](#) (8/24, Lidgett) reports that "an oil and gas lessee of portions of a Montana national forest on Thursday moved for a quick win in its case in Washington, D.C., district court alleging the U.S. Department of the Interior improperly voided the lease, calling the move arbitrary and capricious." W.A. Moncrief "moved for summary judgment in its suit challenging the 'wrongful cancellation' of its 35-year-old lease in an area of Lewis and Clark National Forest."

BLM Seeks Comment On Possible Oil And Gas Leases.

The [Elko \(NV\) Daily Free Press](#) (8/24) reports that the Bureau of Land Management is "seeking public comments to assist in preparing an environmental assessment analyzing the impacts of offering 38 oil and gas parcels, totaling approximately 67,311.79 acres, for lease in the Elko

District." Comments will be accepted until close of business Sept. 24.

Bureau Of Ocean Energy Management

Does Local Opposition Impact Offshore Drilling Decisions?

The [Jacksonville \(NC\) Daily News](#) (8/24, Buckland) reports that "local communities are again lining up to oppose efforts by the federal government to open up the Mid-Atlantic to seismic testing for potential offshore drilling." However, local resolutions are "not legally binding as the U.S. Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) moves forward to review seismic testing off the East Coast." The article says that "in the midst of adopting them, some local officials question their efficacy."

Additional coverage was provided by the [New Bern \(NC\) Sun Journal](#) (8/24, Buckland).

Expanding Offshore Energy Opportunities Will Benefit American Energy Consumers.

[Offshore Source](#) (8/24, Peterson) reports that API is urging the Trump Administration "to expand the next five-year offshore oil and natural gas leasing program to include areas of the Outer Continental Shelf, including the Atlantic, Eastern Gulf of Mexico, and Arctic, with potential for new domestic energy resources, job creation, increased government revenue, and strengthened national security." API Upstream Director Erik Milito said, "We have an opportunity in the next offshore leasing plan to truly embrace our nation's energy potential and ensure American consumers and businesses continue to benefit from the U.S. energy renaissance. In addition to contributing to the economy, creating thousands of jobs, and providing billions in government revenue, developing our abundant offshore resources will also strengthen our national security. The ability to explore our resources in the Arctic, Atlantic, and the Eastern Gulf of Mexico in the next five-year program is a critical part of advancing the long-term energy security of our nation, and we urge the administration to consider these benefits as they prepare a new offshore leasing program."

Bureau Of Safety And Environmental Enforcement

Big Industry Hunkers Down Ahead Of Harvey.

The [Houston Chronicle](#) reports industrial activity on the Gulf Coast slowed as energy companies evacuated offshore oil platforms and ships left port in preparation for Hurricane Harvey. About 5 percent of oil platforms in the Gulf were evacuated as of midday Thursday, while 10 percent of all Gulf oil production was cut off. Shell said it had halted production and secured its Perdido platform.

[USA Today](#) (8/24, Rice, Stanglin) reports Harvey is now forecast to hit the Gulf Coast as a Category 3 hurricane with winds up to 115 mph late Friday into Saturday. About 700,000 people live where the hurricane warning is in effect, approximately half are in the Corpus Christi area. [Reuters](#) (8/24, Forsythe) reports the storm forced gasoline prices to a three-week high as two refineries in Corpus Christi are shutting down. Approximately 167,000 bpd, or 9.6 percent, of crude output capacity in the Gulf was shut.

[Offshore Magazine](#) (8/24) reports offshore operators said personnel have been evacuated from 39 production platforms, 5.29 percent of the 737 manned platforms in the Gulf.

Additional coverage was provided by the [New York Post](#) (8/24, Moore), [Reuters](#) (8/24), [AP](#) (8/24), [Fox Business](#) (8/24, McKenna), [Fox Business](#) (8/24, Rocco), [Washington \(DC\) Examiner](#) (8/24, Siciliano), [Houston \(TX\) Business Journal](#) (8/24, Mann), [Offshore Technology](#) (8/24), [MarketWatch](#) (8/24, Sjolin), and [MarketWatch](#) (8/24, Saefong).

Fish And Wildlife Service

Sea Ice Loss Dooms Walrus If Not Protected, Groups Claim.

[Courthouse News](#) (8/24, YOUNG-GRINDLE) reports that "as sea ice melts at an alarming rate, 21 environmental groups urged the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to complete the endangered species listing for the Pacific walrus." The Center for Biological Diversity and "allied groups sent a letter to the USFWS regarding the upcoming court-determined Sept. 30 deadline for the agency to either begin the endangered species listing process for the Pacific walrus or remove it from the

candidate list." However, listing the animal under the Endangered Species Act "could endanger the current administration's plans for offshore drilling in the Arctic."

NM Votes To Support Federal Wolf Recovery Plan.

The [Albuquerque \(NM\) Journal](#) (8/24, Reed) reports that the New Mexico State Game Commission "voted 6-1 Thursday to support the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's recently revised Mexican wolf recovery plan." Paul Kienzie, game commission chairman, "said he would entertain a motion to support the federal plan, subject to review if it was substantively changed, and also to submit a transcript of the commission's discussion at the meeting as a comment on the plan."

Iron County Plans For Renewed Federal Oversight Of Prairie Dogs.

The [St. George \(UT\) News](#) (8/24, Sullivan) reports that "after three years of being free from federal oversight, Iron County is now forced to return to regulations mandated by the U.S Fish and Wildlife Service regarding the relocation of prairie dogs on private property." Iron County Commissioners "met Tuesday for an emergency meeting to discuss returning to their old habitat conservation plan in the interim while the FWS prepares a separate general conservation plan that will determine how the county deals with the prairie dogs." Commissioners "remain hopeful, however, the rules in the GCP will not resemble those they once operated under for many years."

Teen Tells Judge He Bought Tiger Cub On Streets Of Tijuana.

The [AP](#) (8/24, Watson) reports that "U.S. border officials confiscated a Bengal tiger cub after inspecting a car heading from Mexico to California, federal authorities said Friday." According to the article, "a California teenager who says he bought a Bengal tiger cub on the streets of Tijuana for \$300 was arrested when he tried to bring it into the United States in his 2017 Chevy Camaro." Luis Eudoro Valencia was "charged with smuggling a Bengal tiger into the United States after U.S. Customs and Border Protection officials found the furry cub lying on the floor of the passenger side of his car during an inspection around 1:30 a.m. Wednesday at the Otay Mesa border crossing."

Also reporting are [CNN](#) (8/25, Mossburg, Simon), [USA Today](#) (8/24, Jansen), the [Arizona Republic](#) (8/24, Santistevan), and the [Los Angeles Times](#) (8/24, Queally).

High Court Must Review ESA Decision That Endangers Ability To Appeal Agency Actions.

In a piece for [Forbes](#) (8/24, Samp), Rich Samp urges the Supreme Court to review "a US Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit decision that dramatically expands the scope of the Endangered Species Act." He says that the group of Louisiana landowners' "concerns are well-justified; the appeals court upheld land-use restrictions imposed by the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) for the purpose of protecting an endangered species of frog – even though the frog does not exist in Louisiana and could not live on the Petitioners' land unless they substantially modified it." However, Samp argues that "Supreme Court review is warranted for an additional and perhaps more important reason: the Fifth Circuit agreed with FWS that the Service's refusal to undertake a cost-benefit analysis of its actions was not subject to judicial review."

Fish And Wildlife Is Right On Endangered Frogs.

In an op-ed for the [Sacramento \(CA\) Bee](#) (8/24, Solvesky), Ben Solvesky, a biologist with the US Fish and Wildlife Service from 2008 to 2014, and now with a Sierra Nevada conservation group, defends the critical habitation designation for two frog species and the Yosemite toad. Solvesky asserts that the US Fish and Wildlife Service "painstakingly reviewed the best available science" on the animals. According to Solvesky, the FWS "also invited extensive input and thoroughly responded to public comments on the potential economic and social effects." He adds that "the service bent over backward to assure that the 1.8 million acres of critical habitat would include little private property – only 0.6 percent of habitat for the Yosemite toad and 7 percent and 0.01 percent for the two frog species."

National Park Service

Celebrate With Free Entrance To National Parks.

The [Las Cruces \(NM\) Sun-News](#) (8/24, Prewitt) reports that "the National Park Service turns 101 years old on Friday, Aug. 25." To celebrate the occasion, "also known as Founders Day – a day that commemorates the establishment of the National Park Service – several national monuments

that charge an entrance fee will offer free admission to everyone.”

Also reporting are the [Newport News \(VA\) Daily Press](#) (8/23, Heeter), the [San Francisco Chronicle](#) (8/24, Dowd), and the [Rapid City \(SD\) Journal](#) (8/24).

Everglades National Park Entrance Fees To Rise In January 2018.

The [Miami New Times](#) (8/24, De Varona) reports that Everglades National Park “plans to raise its entrance fees beginning in January 2018 to pay for \$88 million in overdue maintenance work.” According to the article, “walk-in, paddle-in, and bike-in visitors would pay \$12 instead of \$8, while annual memberships would rise from \$40 to \$50.” Fees would “rise again in October 2018 to \$15 and \$60, respectively.”

UP Road Lands On National Register Of Historic Places.

The [Traverse City \(MI\) Record-Eagle](#) (8/24, Freedman) reports that Brockway Mountain Drive in the northwestern Upper Peninsula, has been added to the National Register of Historic Places. The National Park Service “recognized the 9-mile road built by the Keweenaw County Road Commission in 1933 for its historic importance in recreation, entertainment, transportation, social history and landscape architecture.”

73-Year-Old Dies After Climbing Fall In Rocky Mountain Park.

The [AP](#) (8/24) reports that “a 73-year-old man has died after a fall while descending a peak in Rocky Mountain National Park.” According to park spokeswoman Kyle Patterson, “the body of Ken Teselle of Estes Park was recovered by helicopter on Thursday from the Chasm Lake area.” The National Park Service “says Teselle was a volunteer at the park but was off-duty at the time of his fall.”

National Park Service & Federal Lands – Over-Protection.

In an op-ed for the [National Review](#) (8/25, DeVoe), Philip H. DeVoe writes that “on the 101st anniversary of the NPS, we must toast a noble division of the federal government, but continue fighting government over-protection of state lands.” He argues that “we need to save a program conservative in its conception but toxically liberal in its present form.” DeVoe warns that “the government itself has become the avaricious vandals the NPS was created to resist, and our conservative heritage, our federalist history, and our representative democracy are on the line.”

The Park Service’s Botched Bottle Ban.

In an editorial, the [Wall Street Journal](#) (8/24) writes that the Trump Administration’s recent reversal of an Obama Administration ban on bottled water in national parks highlights what the Journal calls a teachable moment in the unintended consequences of environmental policy. Despite the National Park Service’s desire to reduce plastic waste by banning bottled water, studies found that bottled beverage consumption did not decrease, as park-goers switched to drinking bottled sodas, which use more plastic.

Office Of Insular Affairs

US Provides \$\$ For Compact Impact.

The [Marshall Islands Journal](#) (8/25) reports that Interior Acting Assistant Secretary Nikolao Pula “made available \$3 million in discretionary ‘Compact impact’ funding for fiscal year 2017, as an additional federal contribution toward defraying the costs that Guam, Hawaii, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI), and American Samoa bear due to the presence of migrants from the freely associated states (FAS).” According to the article, “Guam received \$1,491,000, Hawaii \$1,276,000, the CNMI \$231,000, and American Samoa \$2,000.” Pula said, “The governors of the affected jurisdictions have reported that the Federal government is not providing sufficient funds to cover the costs they bear for the impact of migrants from the freely associated states on social services. Both Guam and Hawaii have each reported costs exceeding \$100 million a year.”

Conference Focuses On Improving The Accountability Of Island Governments.

The [Marshall Islands Journal](#) (8/25) reports on this week’s 38th Association of Pacific Islands Public Auditors (APIPA) annual conference. Of note, Graduate School USA President and CEO Jack Maykoski “said the school’s partnership with the US Department of Interior to provide trainings to

US-affiliated islands in the Pacific saw over 200,000 people trained over the years.”

In Photos, North Korea Signals A More Powerful ICBM In The Works.

In continuing coverage, [Reuters](#) (8/24, Kim, Yang) reports that experts say photos of a new rocket design are a North Korean “message that it is working on an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) more powerful than any it has previously tested.” State Department spokeswoman Heather Nauert said, “We consider it overall a good first step that there haven’t been any missile launches or testing for ...three-plus weeks or so.” She also said it wasn’t clear, in Reuters’ words, “if the photos were taken before or after Secretary of State Rex Tillerson on Tuesday welcomed what he called the restraint North Korea had shown recently in its weapons programs.”

US Military To Install Radar In Pacific’s Palau.

[Rappler \(PHL\)](#) (8/24) reports that “the United States has announced plans to install radar systems in Palau, a move that will increase its monitoring ability in the western Pacific region recently rocked by threats from North Korea.” In a joint statement, the US Defense Department and the Palau government “said they were working to finalize the location of radar towers on the archipelago nation of 22,000 people.” The [Jagran Josh](#) (8/24, Krishnan) reports that the statement said, “The radar systems will provide Palau enhanced maritime law enforcement capability... while also providing the US with greater air domain awareness for aviation safety and security.”

‘We Have To Make Tough Decisions If We Want To Survive’.

The [Virgin Islands Consortium \(VIR\)](#) (8/23) reports that Governor Kenneth Mapp said on talk radio on Tuesday “that the territory’s financial condition demands difficult choices relative to government spending, stating that the territory’s survival depends on its ability to live within its means.” Mapp said, “We’re just at a point where we simply have to make the tough decisions if we want to survive. Liken it to you in the community that have your family, if you’re a two parent or one parent household and somebody gets laid off or your hours get reduced. Or if you’re operating a business and the season goes off and the revenue is lower, you’ve got to make changes to survive because you can’t just spend the way that you normally spend; you can’t do the things that you normally do, so you must make the adjustments in order to remain balanced.”

Additional Coverage: Key Player In Paris Climate Deal Dies In Majuro At 72.

Additional coverage on the passing of Marshall Islands Climate Ambassador Tony deBrum was provided by [Marianas Variety](#) (8/24, Johnson).

Top National News

Trump Criticizes McConnell And Ryan For Handling Of Debt Ceiling Issue.

In a [pair of tweets](#) at 8:19 a.m. yesterday, the President wrote, “I requested that Mitch M & Paul R tie the Debt Ceiling legislation into the popular V.A. Bill (which just passed) for easy approval. They didn’t do it so now we have a big deal with Dems holding them up (as usual) on Debt Ceiling approval. Could have been so easy-now a mess!” At 9:42 a.m., he [tweeted](#), “The only problem I have with Mitch McConnell is that, after hearing Repeal & Replace for 7 years, he failed! That should NEVER have happened!” The [CBS Evening News](#) (8/24, story 3, 0:35, Mason) briefly reported on the “political storm in Washington that pits the President against fellow Republicans.” The coverage splits along two themes: Most analyses see the tweets as another sign of presidential frustration and GOP divisions, but some say Trump may be intentionally separating himself from his adopted party.

In an analysis, for example, the [Washington Post](#) (8/24, Rucker, Sullivan, Debonis) writes that “Trump is strategically separating himself from Republicans in Congress, an extraordinary move to deflect blame if the GOP agenda continues to flounder.” Robert Delahunty of [The Federalist](#) (8/24, Delahunty) writes, “This is a risky game for Trump to play” as he looks to 2020, though the GOP “establishment is dangerously out of touch with its majority” and “without Trump voters, Republicans will not control Congress for very long.” In an editorial, meanwhile, the [Wall Street Journal](#) (8/24) says that Trump is effectively governing as an independent – and that the Capitol Hill GOP should treat him as one.

The [AP](#) (8/24, Thomas, Lucey) reports, “Fanning the flames of GOP discord,” the President

accused GOP congressional leaders “of botching efforts to avoid an unprecedented default on the national debt.” His “sharp words underscored the perilous state of play” over raising the debt ceiling. [Bloomberg News](#) (8/24, Olorunnipa, Wasson, Harris) reports that Trump “blasted” GOP leaders “for ignoring his advice on raising the debt ceiling and creating a ‘mess.’” The [New York Times](#) (8/24, Sullivan, Fandos) reports that a White House official said Trump was referring to tying debt ceiling approval to popular Veterans Affairs legislation. Congressional aides said that while “there had indeed been a short-lived effort late last month” to link the two, “the idea was never given serious consideration.” The [Wall Street Journal](#) (8/24, Ballhaus, Peterson) reports that the idea originated with McConnell, not with Trump, according to a Republican source.

The [Washington Post](#) (8/24, Rucker, Paletta) reports that the tweets “escalate a feud” between Trump and congressional leaders, though [Politico](#) (8/24, Cheney, Kim) indicates that that President “is working to convene a meeting with McConnell and Ryan” as well as Senate Minority Leader Schumer and House Minority Leader Pelosi, but “it could be an awkward meeting” given Trump’s Twitter attacks. The [Los Angeles Times](#) (8/24, Mascaro) writes, “Trump, in tweet after scalding tweet, has turned on McConnell...and at times” Ryan, “in a relentless barrage that continued Thursday, long after each sides’ offices had tried to put the matter to rest by pledging to work together on shared GOP priorities.” The Times says “the outbursts from the president have not only driven a wedge between the White House and its Capitol Hill allies, they have also exposed the limits of the president’s understanding of how to interact with Congress and how the legislative branch works.”

[The Hill](#) (8/24, Lillis) writes that because of the tweets, “the difficult task of raising the debt ceiling just got tougher.” Still, [Roll Call](#) (8/24, McPherson) reports that Ryan told CNBC on Thursday that “he didn’t regard” the tweet “as an attack.” Ryan said, “I don’t really take it as going after me.” Ryan said on [CNBC’s Closing Bell](#) (8/24), “I am really not worried about this. We have plenty of options ahead of us. ... We will pass a debt limit increase before we hit the debt limit.”

The [Washington Times](#) (8/24, Persons) reports that Sen. Lindsey Graham “commented on the president’s negative tweets” during an appearance on Hugh Hewitt’s syndicated radio show, “explaining that the remarks come out of frustration with a lack of progress.” Graham said, “We’re all dealing with President Trump the best way we can, and he is frustrated about not fulfilling promises. So am I.”

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (8/24) editorializes under the headline “Trump Divorces The GOP Congress” that Trump’s attacks will not help him pass his agenda, but if there is a strategy behind it, it is that Trump may be trying to distance himself from a legislature that has achieved little. The Journal says congressional Republicans must start to treat Trump as an independent, not as a member of their party. Ex-Sen. John Danforth writes in the [Washington Post](#) (8/24, Danforth), “The fundamental reason Trump isn’t a Republican is far bigger than words or policies. He stands in opposition to the founding principle of our party – that of a united country.” Danforth writes, “We Republicans must disassociate ourselves from Trump by expressing our opposition to his divisive tactics and by clearly and strongly insisting that he does not represent what it means to be a Republican.”

[Reuters](#) (8/24, Alexander, Brice, Rascoe), the [Washington Times](#) (8/24, Persons), and [Roll Call](#) (8/24, Bennett) also have reports.

Poll: McConnell Has Lowest Favorability Rating Of Any Major US Elected Official. [The Hill](#) (8/24, Easley) reported that McConnell “has the lowest favorability rating of any elected official with a national profile, according to a new Harvard-Harris” nationwide survey of 2,263 US voters, taken Aug. 17-22. McConnell’s favorable rating stands at 18%, with 49% viewing him unfavorably. Trump’s favorable rating stands at 41%, with 55% viewing him unfavorably. And Ryan’s favorable rating stands at 33%, with 47% viewing him unfavorably.

Flake: Trump’s Governing Approach “Inviting” A 2020 Primary Challenge. On its website, [CNN](#) (8/24, Kaczynski) reported that during an appearance on Georgia Public Broadcasting’s “Political Rewind” program, Sen. Jeff Flake (R-AZ) “said Wednesday that President Donald Trump is inviting a primary challenge in 2020 with his style of governing.” Asked about the possibility of Trump facing a primary challenge, Flake replied, “I think that certainly depends on him. I think he could govern in a way that he wouldn’t. But, I think that the way that – the direction he’s headed right now, just kinda drilling down on the base rather than trying to expand the base – I think he’s inviting one.” Flake, who faces reelection next year, “has been a frequent critic of Trump.” The President, meanwhile, has publicly criticized Flake and praised the senator’s GOP primary challenger, ex-state Sen. Kelli Ward (R).

Flake said on [Fox News’ Fox & Friends](#) (8/24), “I will work and vote with the President

when I believe he's right and challenge him when I believe he's wrong. That's what I've done with every President, Republican or Democrat. I didn't always vote with George W. Bush. I voted against the prescription drug benefit or No Child Left Behind but I worked with him on most things. I think that's what Arizona voters expect me to do."

On its website, [CNN](#) (8/24, Diaz) reported that during his appearance on Fox News, Flake was asked about "why Trump is not his biggest fan." Flake replied, "I don't know. I want to work with the President when I think that he's right, and I'll challenge him when I think that he's wrong." [Politico](#) (8/24, Siu) reported on Flake's remarks on Trump "inviting" a primary challenge, then added that the GOP lawmaker "took a friendlier tone toward Trump in interviews Thursday, even inviting the president to look at portions of the Arizona-Mexico border together."

White House Seeks "Clean" Debt Ceiling Increase. The [Washington Times](#) (8/24, Miller) reports, "President Trump wants Congress to pass a 'clean' bill to raise the government's debt ceiling, the White House said Thursday, conceding for the first time to a demand from Democrats to extend the country's credit limit." White House press secretary Sarah Sanders said, "It's our job to inform Congress of the debt ceiling and it's their job they raise it. We need to make sure we pay our debts. We're still committed to making sure that gets raised."

Rep. Charlie Dent (R-PA) said on [CNBC's Closing Bell](#) (8/24), "I agree with the Speaker that we will, in fact, raise the debt limit. We have no choice. A default would be catastrophic." However, [McClatchy](#) (8/24, Douglas) reports that "hardcore conservatives on Capitol Hill and allied outside groups are insisting that no measure to raise the debt ceiling should pass without provisions to curb government spending," and are "warning that unless they get some concessions, other White House agenda items, such as overhauling the tax code, could lose conservative support."

Pelosi: Debt Ceiling Increase Is GOP's Responsibility. The [Washington Times](#) (8/24, Dinan) reports, "Democrats hinted Thursday that they won't be too eager to help the GOP raise the government's debt ceiling." Pelosi said, "With the White House, House, and Senate under one party control, the American people expect and deserve a plan from Republicans to avert a catastrophic default and ensure the full faith and credit of the United States. With so much at risk for hard-working families, Republicans need to stop the chaos and sort themselves out in a hurry."

Investors Appear To Be Taking Default Threat Seriously. James Mackintosh of the [Wall Street Journal](#) (8/24, Mackintosh) writes that there are indications in the bond markets that investors see the risk of default as substantial, and are acting accordingly.

Trump To Kick Off Tax Reform Push With Visit To Missouri.

[Bloomberg News](#) (8/24, Talev) cites "an administration official familiar with the plans" who said President Trump "will kick off a campaign to overhaul U.S. tax policy next week with a visit to Missouri." Trump's Wednesday visit to Springfield "was expected to be the first of several presidential stops around the country in the coming weeks, said the official," who added that the President "is not expected to set forth his own plan or many specifics." Rather, Trump "sees his role as leading a public campaign to rally support as a group of House, Senate and administration officials seek to develop a unified approach."

[Politico](#) (8/24, Wilhelm) reports that White House officials said in July that President Trump would use the month of August "to lay the groundwork for tax reform before administration and congressional negotiators wrapped up their high-level work in September." However, with Congress set to return in less than two weeks, "and Republican leaders hoping to launch a major push to get tax legislation to the president's desk by the end of the year, Trump has barely mentioned the subject." White House press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders "said at a press briefing Thursday that tax reform could be a public focus for the White House as soon as next week."

Under the headline, "White House yielding to Congress on tax details," [Politico](#) (8/24, White) says the White House will not "release its own version of a tax reform plan and will instead leave that to the congressional leadership and the major tax-writing committees, a senior administration official said Thursday." [Bloomberg News](#) (8/24, Kapur) says the Administration "has sent mixed signals about how many details to expect as Congress returns from its monthlong recess next month," and with her statement Thursday, Sanders "provided no new specifics on how Trump plans to push for tax legislation." Congressional leaders see a July statement from the so-called Big Six group of White House officials and congressional leaders involved in tax negotiations "as having built the four walls of the house and believe it's the job of congressional tax writers to furnish it, according to one of the people."

White House Willing To Compromise On State, Local, Property Tax Deductions. The [New York Post](#) (8/24, Schultz) cites a "senior White House official" who said the Administration "is willing to compromise on a proposal to eliminate deductions on federal tax returns for state, local and property taxes – which would clobber high-tax states like New York." Rep. Tom Reed is "floating a compromise option to create a tax credit for state and local taxes – rather than a deduction," and a "senior White House official who is working on tax reform said the White House is open to this solution." The official said, "We were there to put the framework together and if committee members decide they want to do a credit and that's what we need to move this forward, then so be it."

Ryan: Tax Legislation Won't Include Temporary Cuts For Businesses. [Reuters](#) (8/24, Morgan, Zargham) reports that House Speaker Ryan on Thursday "rejected speculation that future tax legislation could include temporary tax cuts for businesses, saying macro-economic elements of tax reform including rates must be permanent." Ryan told [CNBC](#) (8/24), "We very passionately believe that permanence is very, very important. So the big decision-making provisions in the tax code? – That stuff's got to be permanent. ... There are other things you can do that can have time dates on it, to make sure that the numbers work. But the big macro-economic policies – the rates and things like that – that stuff has to be made permanent." Ryan added that Republicans "intend to keep a popular homeowner deduction for mortgage interest payments," but "indicated the deduction could change." Ryan said, "We recognize, acknowledge and believe you need to maintain the mortgage interest deduction. Whether it can be improved and how it works, that's a discussion we'll have on an ongoing basis."

USA Today Analysis: Trump Racking Up Victories On Energy Agenda.

[USA Today](#) (8/24, Collins) reports that since being inaugurated, President Trump has "signed executive orders opening the door for construction of the controversial Dakota Access and Keystone XL pipelines"; discontinued "a moratorium on coal leasing on federal land; blocked regulations on power-plant carbon emissions; overturned a ban on oil and gas drilling in the Arctic Ocean; delayed rules intended to prevent methane leaks from oil and gas wells; and announced plans for the US to pull out of the Paris climate agreement." USA Today adds that while Trump's vow "to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act suffered a stunning defeat in Congress, and the prospects for his tax-reform pledge" remain uncertain, "when it comes to energy policy, the administration has managed to forge ahead on numerous initiatives aimed at not only making the US energy independent but turning it into a dominant energy force."

DOE Report: Government Should Make It "Easier And Cheaper" To Run Power Plants. The [AP](#) (8/23, Koenig) said that a report on the electric grid released Wednesday by the US Energy Department says "government should make it easier and cheaper to operate power plants, including coal and nuclear plants, to strengthen the nation's electric grid." The report finds that "the closure of many plants that once formed the backbone of the grid has raised the risk that consumers might not have reliable electricity." The AP said a "key recommendation" of the report "urges the federal government to make licensing and permitting faster and cheaper for facilities 'such as nuclear, hydro, coal, advanced generation technologies, and transmission.'"

[Bloomberg News](#) (8/23, Polson) said that the "long-anticipated" report "makes the case for rescuing the nation's coal industry from widespread plant shutdowns," but does not amount to "an assault on renewable power." [Reuters](#) (8/24, Volcovici) reports that Energy Secretary Rick Perry "commissioned the study in April to evaluate whether 'regulatory burdens' imposed by past administrations, including that of former President Barack Obama, had hurt the grid by forcing shutdowns of baseload plants, which provide nonstop power, like those fired by coal and nuclear fuel."

Administration Scraps Obama-Era Rule On Public Works Projects.

The [New York Times](#) (8/24, Hsu) reports that the Trump Administration is "abandoning" an Obama-era initiative, "killing a plan to allow cities to set aside work for local residents on federally funded public works projects." The Transportation Department gave no reason for it's "withdrawal of the plan, set to take effect on Friday." The Times adds that the future of "a related pilot program, which gave case-by-case approval for local hiring provisions on selected transportation and construction projects, is now in doubt."

Editorial Wrap-Up

New York Times.

“Say No To Sheriff Joe Arpaio, Mr. Trump.” The [New York Times](#) (8/24) editorializes, “It would be difficult for President Trump, who has insulted judges and tried to interfere with a federal investigation, to show much more disrespect for the rule of law. But if he makes good on his implicit vow to pardon” former Sheriff Joe Arpaio, the President “would be scorning the Constitution itself.” The Times argues that in refusing to stop practices that a federal judge found to be unconstitutional, Arpaio placed himself “above the law and the Constitution that he had sworn to uphold.”

“The Slaughter Of Children In Yemen.” In an editorial, the [New York Times](#) (8/25) writes that Saudi Arabia should not be able to again change a United Nations draft report to keep its coalition in the Yemen conflict “off the list of armies that kill and maim children.” While the Times acknowledges “no side is innocent of atrocities,” the Saudi coalition “and its American enablers,” the Times argues, “cannot be allowed to continue killing civilians and destroying what little is left of Yemen.” To stop it, the Times calls for publicly identifying “the unconscionable slaughter of innocents for what it is” in the “hope that this will shame Saudi Arabia and its American backers to search for a humane end to Yemen’s hell.”

Washington Post.

“Don’t Play Down A Sinister Attack On Diplomats In Cuba.” In an editorial, the [Washington Post](#) (8/24, Board) lamenting the “dismal” results of the restoration of relations with Cuba, argues that the “small, highly disciplined police state where next to nothing goes unobserved by the regime” is most likely the cause of the injuries and that “sonic attacks would be in keeping with, if an escalation of, harassment that U.S. diplomats have long suffered in Havana, including constant surveillance and home and vehicle break-ins.” The Post concludes that perhaps the State Department should not be giving Cuba “the benefit of the doubt” on this issue.

“What Could Have Prevented Tragedy In Charlottesville.” In an editorial, the [Washington Post](#) (8/24, Board) criticizes Virginia state and local law enforcement agencies for their planning in advance of the violent protests in Charlottesville, arguing that while “things could have been much worse,” with “better planning and execution...the tragedy in Charlottesville might have been contained or avoided.”

“Don’t Believe The Hype: The Justice Department Isn’t Cracking Down On Anti-Trump Dissent.” The [Washington Post](#) (8/24) editorializes that prosecutors “are investigating serious violations of public order that cannot be considered legitimate dissent in a rule-of-law society,” and argues that “unlike other controversial episodes that have raised concerns about electronic privacy, the government is not operating in secret or behind the back of the judiciary.” While the Post concedes that “courts must avoid chilling free speech and free association with overbroad warrants that discourage people from visiting protest websites for fear their data will be revealed and misused,” prosecutors have “appropriately narrowed and clarified” their request for information, “assuring that” they “would seal away any data it collected that is irrelevant to the criminal investigation.”

Wall Street Journal.

“Trump Divorces The GOP Congress.” In an editorial, the [Wall Street Journal](#) (8/24) says that President Trump is effectively governing as an independent – and that the Capitol Hill GOP should treat him as one.

“The Park Service’s Botched Bottle Ban.” In an editorial, the [Wall Street Journal](#) (8/24) writes that the Administration’s recent reversal of an Obama Administration ban on bottled water in national parks highlights what the Journal calls a teachable moment in the unintended consequences of environmental policy. Despite the National Park Service’s desire to reduce plastic waste by banning bottled water, studies found that bottled beverage consumption did not decrease, as park-goers switched to drinking bottled sodas, which use more plastic.

“Macron’s Test For France.” In an editorial, the [Wall Street Journal](#) (8/23) writes that French President Emmanuel Macron’s falling approval ratings continue despite Macron’s attempts to fulfill his campaign promise to pursue economic reform – starting with a cut in housing benefits. The Journal argues that Macron received a mandate when he won to cut government jobs, reduce corporate taxes, and slash labor and pension regulations, and the Journal concludes wondering whether French voters ever intended him to fulfill his promises for supply-side reforms.

Big Picture

Headlines From Today's Front Pages.

Wall Street Journal:

[Markets Eye Debt Ceiling With Unease](#)

[Amazon Clobbers Grocers' Stocks With Price Cuts At Whole Foods](#)

[Tesla's Self-Driving Push Sparked Dissent Among Its Engineers](#)

[Pakistan's Fear Of India Fuels Afghan War](#)

New York Times:

[Graphic: Even With Affirmative Action, Blacks And Hispanics Are More Underrepresented At Top Colleges Than 35 Years Ago](#)

[Hunting A Killer: Sex, Drugs And The Return Of Syphilis](#)

[Bridge Of Grand Ambitions Is Set To Open At The Tappan Zee](#)

[Is McGregor Safe Fighting Mayweather? Ringside Physicians Say No](#)

[Amazon Plans To Lower Some Prices At Whole Foods](#)

[Trump's Afghan Gamble Now Rests On General He Doubted](#)

Washington Post:

[Trump Distances Himself From GOP](#)

[Interior Urges Shrinking 3 National Monuments](#)

[Acapulco's Deadly Descent](#)

['Astounding' Hurricane Catches Texas Off Guard](#)

[Pompeo's Close Ties To Trump Prompt What-Ifs Inside CIA](#)

Financial Times:

[Net Migration To UK Falls As Brexit Breeds Uncertainty](#)

[Mattis Offers Support To Kiev On Independence Day Visit](#)

[Qatar Set To Inflamm Regional Tensions By Restoring Diplomatic Ties With Iran](#)

Washington Times:

[Trump Wants 'Clean' Debt Ceiling Increase](#)

[Iran Boast On Uranium Enrichment Serves As Warning To Trump](#)

[U.S. Catfish Producers Harmed By Rules Meant To Slow Foreign Market](#)

[Family Businesses In Germany Find It Harder To Pass On Legacy](#)

['Angry Birds' IPO To Test Economic Durability Of Digital Game Industry](#)

[Conservatives Of Color Frustrated By 'White Supremacist' Label After Charlottesville](#)

Story Lineup From Last Night's Network News:

ABC: Weather Forecast; Severe Weather-Hurricane Harvey; Charleston-Restaurant Hostage Situation; Trump-Border Wall Funding; Baltimore Police-Evidence Tampering; USS John McCain-Search Suspended; Denver Cheerleading Camp-Abuse Allegations; Santa Fe-Prison Guard Attack; Texas Parking Garage-Cable Barrier Lawsuit; Amazon To Close Whole Foods Deal.

CBS: Severe Weather-Hurricane Harvey; Weather Forecast; Trump-McConnell Relationship; ISIS Propaganda-American Child; USS John McCain-Search Suspended; Bakari Henderson Death-Parents Interviewed; Virginia Priest Reveals KKK History; Denver Cheerleading Camp-Abuse Allegations.

NBC: Severe Weather-Hurricane Harvey; Weather Forecast; Trump-Border Wall Funding; USS John McCain-Search Suspended; Charleston-Restaurant Hostage Situation; Amazon To Close Whole Foods Deal; NFL-Kaepernick Controversy; Virginia Priest Reveals KKK History; Denver Cheerleading Camp-Abuse Allegations.

Network TV At A Glance:

Severe Weather-Hurricane Harvey – 8 minutes, 35 seconds

Trump-Border Wall Funding – 5 minutes, 20 seconds

Denver Cheerleading Camp-Abuse Allegations – 5 minutes, 15 seconds

Virginia Priest Reveals KKK History – 4 minutes, 20 seconds

Weather Forecast – 4 minutes, 10 seconds

Charleston-Restaurant Hostage Situation – 2 minutes

USS John McCain-Search Suspended – 1 minute, 50 seconds

Amazon To Close Whole Foods Deal – 35 seconds

Story Lineup From This Morning's Radio News Broadcasts:

ABC: Severe Weather-Hurricane Harvey; Weather Forecast; Trump-McConnell Relationship; California-Upcoming Rallies.

CBS: Severe Weather-Hurricane Harvey; Harvey Impact-Oil, Gas Prices; Florida-Lethal Injection Execution; Charleston-Restaurant Hostage Situation; Trump-McConnell Relationship; Wall Street.

FOX: Severe Weather-Hurricane Harvey; Interior Secretary-National Monuments; Lottery-Powerball Jackpot; North Dakota-Baby Found In Missing Woman's Apartment; Jay Thomas-Death; Wall Street; Boxing-Mayweather, McGregor Fight; Former Thai PM-Arrest Warrant Issued.

NPR: Severe Weather-Hurricane Harvey; Interior Secretary-National Monuments; Florida-Lethal Injection Execution; Charleston-Restaurant Hostage Situation; Cuba-Possible Sonic Attack; Brazil-Commuter Boat Accident.

Washington Schedule

Today's Events In Washington.

White House:

PRESIDENT TRUMP — Receives his daily intelligence briefing; meets with Secretary of State Rex Tillerson; departs the White House en route to Camp David; arrives at Camp David.

VICE PRESIDENT PENCE — No scheduled public events.

US Senate: 11:30 AM Senate convenes for pro forma session * Senate on recess from 3 Aug – 5 Sep. Location: TBD <http://www.senate.gov/>. Contacts: Senate 1 202 224 3121.

US House: 11:00 AM House of Representatives convenes for pro forma session * House on recess from 28 Jul – 5 Sep. Location: TBD <http://www.house.gov/>. Contacts: House of Representatives Press Gallery 1 202 225 3945.

Other: 10:00 AM Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Awards – 2017 Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award ceremony, for the highest honor given by the DoD to employers for support of National Guard and Reserve employees, presented by Deputy Secretary of Defense Pat Shanahan. 2017 recipients are Accordia Urgent Care & Family Practice, Boston Scientific, Cargill, Inc., Comcast NBC Universal, CSI Aviation, Hensel Phelps Construction Company, Howard County Fire & Rescue, Indianapolis Fire Department, Johnson & Johnson, Mesa Natural Gas Solutions, Office of the District Attorney Eighteenth Judicial District, Renown Health, Salt River Project, Tesoro and Zapata, Inc. * Awards established under the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve office. Location: Pentagon, Arlington, VA <http://www.FreedomAward.mil> [#SecDefFreedomAward](https://twitter.com/DeptofDefense). Contacts: DoD press 1 703 697 5131. Journalists who do not regularly cover the Pentagon should RSVP by 1 p.m. EDT, Thursday, Aug. 24, by contacting Defense Press Operations at 703-697-5131. Foreign journalists without a Pentagon building pass must plan on being escorted from the River Entrance Pedestrian Bridge only, or, if arriving at the Pentagon Metro Entrance Facility, must contact 703-697-5131 a minimum of one hour prior to your arrival. Please arrive no later than 1 hour before the briefing if coming by Metro. US journalists without a Pentagon building pass will be picked up at the River Entrance Pedestrian Bridge or the Pentagon Metro Visitors Entrance only. If arriving by Metro, please contact 703-697-5131 a minimum of one hour prior to your arrival, and plan to arrive no later than 45 minutes before the event; have proof of affiliation and photo identification. Please call 703-697-5131 for escort into the building.

Last Laughs

Late Night Political Humor.

Trevor Noah: [On Hillary Clinton's new book] "Oh, snap! Hillary going hard on Donald Trump, and she's smart, too. She's doing it in the one place he'll never find her – a book."

Trevor Noah: [On Clinton's new book] "I'm excited to read this book because all through the campaign, half of the time I'm wondering, 'I wonder what's going through Hillary's mind now.' It doesn't happen with Trump. It's, like, could you stop telling us what's going through your mind now?"

Trevor Noah: [On Clinton's new book] "Trump is not saving anything for the book. He'll be the first president whose memoirs will be like a pop-up book."

Trevor Noah: [On Trump's speeches] "Every day this week, we have seen a wildly different Donald Trump address the nation, right? ... Trump is like a Japanese toilet – too many settings to figure out."

Trevor Noah: [On Trump's speeches] "Serious Trump, somber Trump, free-style Trump. Personally, I'm waiting for the first appearance of reggae Trump. That's what I'm waiting for."

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