

The Week That Was: 2011-08-06 (August 6, 2011)

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The Science and Environmental Policy Project

PLEASE NOTE: The complete TWTW, including the articles, can be downloaded in an easily printable form at the SEPP web site: www.sepp.org.

Fred Singer will be traveling again, spreading the good news about the climate. Please see the tentative schedule below:

Aug 17-24 Erice (Sicily) Conference
Aug 25 Zurich Climate Debate and Interviews OPEN
Aug 26 -28 (Maria Alm, Austria)
Aug 29-30 Hamburg U. – Seminar and Interviews Aug 29 at 3pm-OPEN
Aug 31 DeBilt-KNMI Climate Debate
Sept 1-4 Brussels -- Seminars at Univ Libre and Fondation Universitaire) Sept 1 OPEN
Sept 5-8 Talks at Civitas and IEA Sept 5 OPEN (IEA at 5pm)
Climate Discussion – Imperial College, U. of London
Sept 9–12 Paris Seminars IPGP-Jussieu and at Observatory at 2pm OPEN
Sept 13-14 Paris, Return to U.S.

For additional detail please contact Ken@SEPP.org.

Quote of the Week:

“... there’s the social dominance orientation of conservatives, who see social life as following the law of the jungle. One’s choice is to dominate or be dominated, that is the natural order of things. Such folk are leery of climate change solutions premised on fairness or egalitarianism.” AGU Director Chris Mooney quoted by David Roberts in *GRIST*.

Number of the Week: 31%

THIS WEEK:

By Ken Haapala, Executive Vice President, Science and Environmental Policy Project (SEPP)

Videos from the Sixth International Conference on Climate Change (ICCC) sponsored by Heartland Institute are available on the web. Go to: <http://climateconference.heartland.org/watch-live/>

Congress: After the tiresome debt limitation negotiations, Congress departed for its month long August recess, but not without concerns. Senator James Inhofe called on the administration and EPA not to implement any new ozone (falsely labeled as smog) standards until an investigation of the two Clean Air Act Advisory science committees is conducted. As mentioned in TWTW last week, the advisor from the National Academy of Sciences has warned EPA’s science committees that they are in danger of becoming scientifically irrelevant. Inhofe sent a letter to the Inspector General of the EPA citing specific areas of concern.

Almost simultaneously, fourteen, so named, public health and medical organizations sent President Obama a letter urging immediate adaption of the proposed rules. They claim the new rules are critical for improving public health standards, based on EPA numbers. Yet, the letter cites no empirical studies supporting EPA numbers. As discussed in prior TWTWs, EPA claims of reduction of new asthma cases simply makes no sense. As with sulfur dioxide and nitrous oxide, if there is a correlation between ozone and asthma, it is negative – less ozone more asthma. Such issues need to be resolved before the EPA, in pretending to protect public health, takes actions severely damaging economic, public welfare. Please see Article # 1, and articles referenced under “The Political Games Continue,” “EPA and other Regulators on the March” and “Environmental Industry.”

Quote of the Week: Global warming alarmists have been claiming that they must communicate better with the public. Apparently, one of the ways is to try to explain why scientists “the deniers” who do not accept global warming alarmism must be conservative white males. In “Stuff white people like: denying climate change” David Roberts announces a new study to be published attempting to explain this failure of communication. The quote from Chris Mooney, a newly elected director of the American Geophysical Union, is one of several in that post. Apparently, those quoted, especially Mr. Mooney, are incapable of realizing that many people do not accept the threat of dangerous global warming because the science of the alarmists is shoddy. The alarmists fail to empirically verify their claims. [Note: the term climate change is used, even though the alarmists have failed to establish any period of stable climate.]

As if race were important, the day before Roberts posted his piece, two members of the Affordable Power Alliance, Harry Jackson and Niger Innis (Innis is a director of the pioneering equal-rights group, Congress of Racial Equality (CORE)), clearly stated why they oppose the global warming programs of the EPA and others. These programs will significantly increase the costs of electricity, thus lower the disposable income and standards of living for most Americans, particularly the poor. The programs will result in electricity shortages when demand is greatest, during the hot weather causing greater suffering. Please see Article #2 and referenced article under “Communicating Better to the Public – Make things up.”

EPA Mileage Standards: Last week’s discussion of the administration’s improbable new mileage standards prompted several interesting responses. Malcolm Ross referenced a new article stating that *The Times*, London, uncovered that a battery change in the electric Nissan Leaf would cost about 19,000 pounds (about US \$30,100 at today’s rates). But the Nissan representative said the battery should last about 10 years in London urban driving. This works out to be 1,900 pounds or \$3,010 per year. The life span of the battery used on American highways in the hot southeast or the cold north will be interesting.

Charles Schafer wondered if the new standards are designed to encourage use of automobiles running on compressed natural gas. Honda produces versions of its Civic models most designed to run on gasoline, others designed to run natural gas. The gasoline LX with automatic transmission and air conditioning has a suggested retail price of \$18,655 and is EPA rated 28 miles per gallon (mpg) city, 39 highway, and 32 combined. The natural gas GX version, comparably equipped, has a suggested price of \$25,490 and is EPA rated at surprising low 24 mpg city, 36 highway, and 28 combined. EPA mileage ratings remain a mystery, but its programs for saving consumers money will be costly to the consumer. Please see referenced article under “Questioning European Green.”

NOAA Speaks: On June 23, The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) released a draft statement of its scientific integrity policy that is “designed to ensure high quality standards in NOAA science and to promote a culture of transparency, integrity, and ethical behavior.” The sixty day public comment period on the policy closes on August 20, 2011.

On his web site, Climate Audit, Steve McIntyre noted that NOAA sponsored a sculpture titled “Pillars of Climate” at the American Meteorological Society’s Applied Climatology and Climate Change Adaptation conference in Asheville, NC. One pillar is Vandana Shiva, author of Vedic Ecology and an advisor to the Government of Bhutan on becoming an Organic Sovereign Country. A second pillar is Wangari Maathai who founded the Green Belt Movement in Africa.

A third pillar is R.K. Pachauri, the Chairman of the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. By now he should know something about climate science, transparency and integrity.

The fourth pillar is none other than Michael Mann, the originator of the infamous hockey-stick and the innovator of Climategate's "hide the decline." No doubt he exemplifies NOAA's new standards of "transparency, integrity, and ethical behavior." Please see articles referenced under NOAA.

Oil Spills: A study from the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute that intensely studied the BP blow-out and oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico is being published. The study finds that three weeks after the capping of the well, the oil plume was largely gone. It was consumed by microorganisms that feed on oil. The Gulf of Mexico has experienced oil slicks and seepages long before offshore drilling and before steaming ships were converted from coal to oil. Microorganisms have evolved to feed on oil.

As discussed in the April 23, 2011 TWTW, one year after the blow-out and the spill, the total number of major dead animals discovered with visible oil, was strikingly small. The ecological damage from the blow out has been greatly exaggerated, though some traces will remain for years to come.

Some components of the hydrocarbons remain, so every effort must be made to cap any ruptured well as quickly as possible. Over the past year, the industry has created such a fast response team and stated it is willing to maintain it with resources, containment lines, etc, dedicated for such purposes. It should be held accountable to do so.

There is no practical reason for the administration to continue to withhold permits for deep water drilling in the Gulf of Mexico. According to Senator David Vitter, already ten major drilling rigs have left the Gulf to work in Egypt, Congo, Nigeria, Brazil, etc. These rigs are very expensive to build and operate. They will not come back any time soon. There is no clearer example of exporting jobs to foreign countries than the administration's policy on drilling in the Gulf of Mexico. Please see referenced articles under "Oil Spills and Consequences."

Exxon-Mobil Pipeline Spill: During the heavy spring floods, an Exxon-Mobil pipeline crossing the Yellowstone River spilled about 1000 barrels of oil before it was shut off. This event is being used by the environmental industry to oppose the building of a very large new pipeline, called the Keystone XL, which will bring heavy oil, from tar sands in Alberta, Canada, to Texas refineries that are designed to process it. Now the refineries are processing heavy oil from Venezuela.

According to reports, the Yellowstone pipeline leak was caused by sand and gravel scouring the pipeline during turbulent action caused by heavy flows of the river. Such scouring is difficult to detect, even during the normal, or low, flows, and it remains virtually impossible to predict.

The pipeline was built with the old technology: dig a trench in the riverbed, lay the pipe, and cover it up with at least four feet of fill. The technology disturbed the riverbed, and even if the fill was heavy rock, it changed the fluid dynamics of the river. The technology may work fine in a river with many dams and little turbulent flow, except during floods; but not the free flowing Yellowstone which has no dams.

The new technology for crossing a river with a pipeline is to apply the techniques of directional drilling for oil and gas wells thereby placing the pipeline beneath the river to a depth of fifteen to fifty feet below the riverbed. The technology does not disturb the riverbed nor create changes in turbulence. For Keystone XL, it would be important to have the pipeline river crossings drilled, particularly at free-flowing rivers. Please see Article # 3.

Controversial Challenges: Last week, TWTW discussed the new, upcoming paper by Roy Spencer and Danny Braswell that estimates the models used by the IPCC greatly underestimate the energy loss to space during warming periods. This week, various blogs discussed a possible upcoming paper by atmospheric physicist Murry Salby of Macquarie University who challenges the generally accepted view

on the carbon cycle. Since the paper has not been published, it is difficult to comment beyond Judith Curry's comments, except to say that the chant, Science Is Settled, has a new, disturbing note. Please see referenced article under "Questioning the Orthodoxy."

Number of the Week: 31% According to the calculations of Lubos Motl, Reference Frame, 31% of the stations used by Hadley Center - Climate Research Unit (HadCRUT3), the standard for surface temperatures, have shown a temperature decline since 1979. This should not be surprising for those who are familiar with the temperature trends over the same period posted by John Christy and Roy Spencer at the University of Alabama, Huntsville. The warming has not been uniform, or global, as alarmist suggest. These calculations further demonstrate that any use of global models to project regional climate variation is not scientific. Please see articles under "Models v. Observations" and "Measurement Issues."

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ARTICLES:

For the numbered articles below please see: www.sepp.org.

1. The Cost of Lisa Jackson

Why the EPA doesn't consider job losses when it creates new rules.

Editorial, WSJ, Aug, 3, 2011

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052702303661904576453893688343246.html?mod=ITP_opinion_2

2. NAACP and EPA Inflict Heat Prostration and Death

By Harry Jackson with Niger Innis, Townhall, Aug 1, 2011

http://townhall.com/columnists/harryjacksonjr/2011/08/01/naacp_and_epa_inflict_heat_prostration_and_death

3. Chance of Oil Spill Rises With Floodwaters

Displaced Sediment Leaves Pipelines Beneath Riverbeds Exposed to Dangers

By Jack Nicas, WSJ, Aug 4, 2011

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424053111904292504576484720922432398.html?mod=WSJ_Energy_leftHeadlines

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NEWS YOU CAN USE:

Climategate Continued

A Couple of CRU Stations

By Steve McIntyre, Climate Audit, Aug 1, 2011

<http://climateaudit.org/2011/08/01/a-couple-of-cru-stations/#more-14364>

Challenging the Orthodoxy

A Step in the Right Direction: Backing off of Anthropocentrism in Climate Research

By Roy Spencer, His Blog, Aug 5, 2011

<http://www.drroyspencer.com/2011/08/a-step-in-the-right-direction-backing-off-of-anthropocentrism-in-climate-research/>

Defending the Orthodoxy - NOAA

NOAA's Draft Integrity Policy Applauded by International Scientific Organization

By Staff Writers, SPX, Aug 02, 2011

http://www.terradaily.com/reports/NOAAs_Draft_Integrity_Policy_Applauded_by_International_Scientific_Organization_999.html

NOAA scientific integrity

NOAA, Updated Jul 11, 2011

<http://www.noaa.gov/scientificintegrity/>

NOAA's Pillars of Climate

By Steve McIntyre, Climate Audit, Jul 30, 2011 [H/t WUWT]

<http://climateaudit.org/2011/07/30/noaas-pillars-of-climate/>

[SEPP Comment: McIntyre's sarcasm is appropriately biting.]

NOAA's Climate Office: Precursor to Cap and Trade

By Mike Johnson, American Thinker, Aug 1, 2011

http://www.americanthinker.com/2011/08/noaas_climate_office_precursor_to_cap_and_trade.html

Defending the Orthodoxy - Others

Extreme Weather and Climate Change

Understanding the Link, Managing the Risk

By Daniel G. Huber and Jay Gullede, Ph.D., Pew Center for Climate Change, June 2011 [H/t Eric Gottshall]

http://www.pewclimate.org/publications/extreme-weather-and-climate-change?utm_source=Pew+Center+on+Global+Climate+Change+newsletter+list&utm_campaign=231cbf7e58-July_2011_Extreme_Weather_Newsletter&utm_medium=email

Questioning the Orthodoxy

The Current Wisdom: The Lack of Recent Warming and the State of Peer Review

By Patrick Michaels, Cato, Aug 3, 2011 [H/t WUWT]

http://www.cato.org/pub_display.php?pub_id=13510

Carbon cycle questions

By Judith Curry, Her Blog, Aug 4, 2011

<http://judithcurry.com/2011/08/04/carbon-cycle-questions/#more-4382>

Questioning European Green

As Germany Cools, Projections Of Warming Heat Up

By P Gosselin, No Tricks Zone, Jul 31, 2011 [H/t Marc Morano, Climate Depot]

<http://notrickszone.com/2011/07/31/as-germany-cools-predictions-of-warming-heat-up/>

Chemical industry: Government underestimating impact of policies on manufacturers

The Engineer, UK, Aug 3, 2011 [H/t GWPF]

<http://www.theengineer.co.uk/channels/process-engineering/chemical-industry-slams-uks-energy-cost-hike-estimates/1009540.article>

Green taxes are crippling the recovery

By Harry Phibbs, Daily Mail, Aug 3, 2011 [H/t GWPF]

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/debate/article-2021900/Green-taxes-crippling-recovery.html>

Manufacturers want £470m relief from green tax pain

Manufacturers are lobbying for more than £470m in compensation from the taxpayer for having to swallow four green levies by the end of the decade.

By Rowena Mason, Telegraph, UK, Aug 2, 2011 [H/t GWPF]

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/newsbysector/energy/8675772/Manufacturers-want-470m-relief-from-green-tax-pain.html>

Electric car owners may face £19,000 battery charge

Electric car owners face a bill of up to £19,000 to replace the battery, a report has found.

Only 680 electric cars have been bought so far this year despite 2011 being declared Britain's 'year of the electric car'

By Staff Writer, Telegraph, UK, Aug 1, 2011 [H/t Malcolm Ross]

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/motoring/news/8674273/Electric-car-owners-may-face-19000-battery-charge.html>

Green taxes to pay subsidies 'will cost up to 30,000 jobs'

By Tim Shipman, Daily Mail, Aug 5, 2011 [H/t GWPF]

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2022647/Green-taxes-pay-subsidies-cost-30-000-jobs-reports-warn.html>

Climate Change Money Should Go to Armed Services

By Ann Widdecombe, Express, UK, Aug 5, 2011 [H/t GWPF]

<http://www.express.co.uk/ourcomments/view/262765>

Expanding the Orthodoxy

U.S. Education Dep't Pushes Man-Made Global Warming, Saving the Earth at Children's Reading Event

By Penny Starr, CNS News, Aug 2, 2011

<http://cnsnews.com/news/article/us-education-dep-t-pushes-man-made-globa>

Bureaucrats offer up green misinformation

Is an old briefing being wielded as a cudgel to indict Tories over climate?

By Peter Foster, Financial Post, Aug 2, 2011

<http://opinion.financialpost.com/2011/08/02/peter-foster-bureaucrats-offer-up-green-%C2%ADmisinformation/>

Communicating Better to the Public – Exaggerate?

69% Say It's Likely Scientists Have Falsified Global Warming Research

By Staff Writers, Rasmussen Reports, Aug 3, 2011 [H/t Tom Sheahan]

http://www.rasmussenreports.com/public_content/politics/current_events/environment_energy/69_say_it_s_likely_scientists_have_falsified_global_warming_research

[SEPP Comment: Exaggeration comes with costs.]

Global Warming Credibility Problem

By Logan Penza, The Moderate Voice, Aug 4, 2011 [H/t GWPF]

<http://themoderatevoice.com/118655/global-warming-credibility-problem/>

All 50 States See Record Highs in July

By Staff Writers, Live Science, Aug 1, 2011 [H/t Gordon Fulks]

<http://news.yahoo.com/50-states-see-record-highs-july-173203227.html>

[SEPP Comment: Gordon Fulks wonders if the cold Pacific Northwest is still part of the US. One must remember that the historic record has been altered by dropping out many rural stations.]

Communicating Better to the Public – Make things up.

Stuff white people like: denying climate change

By David Roberts, Grist, Aug 2, 2011

<http://www.grist.org/climate-skeptics/2011-08-02-stuff-white-people-like-denying-climate-change>

Models v. Observations

A Waste Of Money By NSF and NCAR? Are They Studying The Predictability Of Climate On Decadal Time Scales, Or Are They Just Providing Unverified Predictions To The Impacts Community?

By Roger Pielke, Sr, Pielke Climate Science, Aug 5, 2011

<http://pielkeclimatesci.wordpress.com/2011/08/05/a-waste-of-money-by-nsf-and-ncar-are-they-studying-the-predictability-of-climate-on-decadal-time-scales-or-are-they-just-providing-unverified-prediction>

Measurement Issues

HadCRUT3: 30% of stations recorded a cooling trend in their whole history

By Lubos Motl, Reference Frame, Jul 30, 2011 [H/t WUWT]

<http://motls.blogspot.com/2011/07/hadcrut3-30-of-stations-recorded.html>

HadCRUT3: 31% of stations saw cooling since 1979

By Lubos Motl, Reference Frame, Aug 4, 2011

<http://motls.blogspot.com/2011/08/hadcrut3-31-of-stations-saw-cooling.html>

Changing Weather

East Coast next wild weather target - though not Emily

By Joseph D'Aleo, ICECAP, Aug 3, 2011

http://icecap.us/index.php/go/new-and-cool/east_coast_next_wild_weather_target_though_not_emily/

MSU researcher discovers link between Montana weather, ocean near Peru

By Evelyn Boswell, MSU News Service, Jul 20, 2011 [H/t WUWT]

<http://www.montana.edu/cpa/news/nwview.php?article=10002>

Changing Climate

La Ninas distant effects in East Africa

Droughts and floods are remote-controlled climate effects

By F. Ossing, Eurek Alert, Aug 4, 2011

http://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2011-08/haog-ln080411.php

Changing Seas

Ancient tides different from today – some dramatically higher

Press Release, Oregon State U. College of Engineering, Jul 29, 2011 [H/t WUWT]

<http://oregonstate.edu/ua/ncs/archives/2011/jul/ancient-tides-different-today-%E2%80%93-some-dramatically-higher>

[SEPP Comment: Calls into question the study that extrapolated changes in sea levels from changes in North Carolina's coastal marsh lands.]

Sea level rise less from Greenland, more from Antarctica

By Staff Writers, SPX, Aug 04, 2011

http://www.terradaily.com/reports/Sea_level_rise_less_from_Greenland_more_from_Antarctica_999.htm
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“During the last prolonged warm spell on Earth, the oceans were at least four meters - and possibly as much as 6.5 meters, or about 20 feet - higher than they are now.”

Large variations in Arctic sea ice

By Svend Funder, Centre for Geogenetics, Natural History Museum of Denmark, Aug 2, 2011

http://news.ku.dk/all_news/2011/2010.8/arctic_sea_ice/

“For the last 10,000 years, summer sea ice in the Arctic Ocean has been far from constant. For several thousand years, there was much less sea ice in the Arctic Ocean – probably less than half of current amounts.”

Pause in upper ocean warming explained

By Staff Writers, Met Office, Aug 4, 2011

<http://www.metoffice.gov.uk/news/releases/archive/2011/ocean-warming>

Agriculture Issues & Fear of Famine

USDA Scientists Study Effects of Rising Carbon Dioxide on Rangelands

By Don Comis, USDA, August 3, 2011 [H/t WUWT]

<http://www.ars.usda.gov/is/pr/2011/110803.htm>

“Rising carbon dioxide (CO₂) levels can reverse the drying effects of predicted higher temperatures on semi-arid rangelands.”

The Political Games Continue

Inhofe Calls on Obama EPA to Halt Ozone Standard Announcement Given Scientific Integrity Concerns

By Senator James Inhofe, EPW, Aug 5, 2011 [H/t ICECAP]

http://icecap.us/index.php/go/political-climate/inhofe_calls_on_obama_epa_to_halt_ozone_standard_announcement_given_scienti/

Climate change department for chop: Hockey

By Sid Maher, The Australian, Aug 4, 2011 [H/t GWPF]

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/climate/climate-change-department-for-chop-hockey/story-e6frg6xf-1226108027421>

Cap-and-Trade and Carbon Taxes

British PM praises Australia's carbon plan: report

By Staff Writers, AFP, Jul 31, 2011

http://www.terradaily.com/reports/British_PM_praises_Australias_carbon_plan_report_999.html

[SEPP Comment: The British program in creating energy poverty is so successful, Australians must intensify it.]

Subsidies and Mandates Forever

Mandated mischief: Obama's 54.5 MPG Standard

More deaths, less choice, pricier cars. And of course, no upside

By Marlo Lewis, Pajamas Media, Jul 29, 2011

<http://pajamasmedia.com/blog/mandated-mischief-obama%E2%80%99s-54-5-mpg-standard/?singlepage=true>

The Coming Autopocalypse

The Obama administration's proposed CAFE rules declare a war on cars
Shikha Dalmia, Reason, July 26, 2011
<http://reason.com/archives/2011/07/26/the-coming-autopocalypse>

EPA and other Regulators on the March

Rogue EPA Targets Ozone – And Jobs

Editorial, IBD, Aug 3, 2011

<http://www.investors.com/NewsAndAnalysis/Article.aspx?id=580419&p=1>

End of the Line

Why the EPA Train Wreck Must be Stopped

By James Hammerton, Freedom Works, Jul 21, 2011

<http://www.freedomworks.org/publications/end-of-the-line>

A Big Welcome to EPA Motors

Editorial, IBD, Jul 29, 2011

<http://www.investors.com/NewsAndAnalysis/Article/579998/201107291854/A-Big-Welcome-To-EPA-Motors.htm>

The EPA Nation-Killing Machine

By Alan Caruba, Warning Signs, Aug 3, 2011

<http://factsnotfantasy.blogspot.com/2011/08/epa-nation-killing-machine.html>

Australian state government bans mining 'forever'

By Staff Writers, World Nuclear News, 26 July 2011

<http://www.world-nuclear-news.org/newsarticle.aspx?id=30470>

Energy Issues

Our fossil fuel legacy

By John Dawson, Quadrant, Jul 31, 2011

<http://www.quadrant.org.au/blogs/doomed-planet/2011/07/our-fossil-fuel-legacy>

Nuclear Fears & Responses

Blue Ribbon Commission: Nuclear Waste Program at an Impasse

By Staff Writers, POWERnews, Aug 3, 2011

http://www.powermag.com/POWERnews/3917.html?hq_e=el&hq_m=2255469&hq_l=4&hq_v=5e660500d0

Temperature drops in Fukushima used fuel pool

By Staff Writers, World Nuclear, News Aug 1, 2011

http://www.world-nuclear-news.org/RS-Temperature_drops_in_Fukushima_used_fuel_pool-0108114.html

Oil and Natural Gas – the Future or the Past?

Grow Our Way Out

Editorial, IBD, Jul 29, 2011

<http://www.investors.com/NewsAndAnalysis/Article.aspx?id=579999&p=1>

A West Texas Lizard vs. Oil and Gas Production (Controversial government evidence with consequences)

By Vance Ginn, Master Resource, August 5, 2011

<http://www.masterresource.org/2011/08/lizard-vs-oil-and-gas-production/#more-16181>

Colorado announces water-sampling effort to fight fracking fears

By Eunice Bridges, Platts, Aug 2, 2011 [H/t Paul Chesser]

<http://www.platts.com/RSSFeedDetailedNews/RSSFeed/NaturalGas/6339937>

EPA petition heralds escalation of gas 'fracking' battle

By Ben Geman and Andrew Restuccia, The Hill Aug 3, 2011

<http://thehill.com/blogs/e2-wire/677-e2-wire/175299-overnight-energy-gas-fracking-battle-escalates-with-epa-petition>

Gas 'fracking' foes weigh toxics lawsuit if EPA petition fails

By Ben Geman, The Hill, Aug 4, 2011

<http://thehill.com/blogs/e2-wire/677-e2-wire/175491-gas-fracking-foes-weigh-toxics-lawsuit-if-epa-petition-fails>

[SEPP Comment: *If you do not obey, we will sue.*]

Oil Spills & Consequences

Microbes Consumed Oil in Gulf Slick at Unexpected Rates, Study Finds

By Staff Writers, Science Daily, Aug 1, 2011 [H/t Catherine French]

<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2011/08/110801111752.htm>

“They found that bacterial microbes inside the slick degraded the oil at a rate five times faster than microbes outside the slick -- accounting in large part for the disappearance of the slick some three weeks after Deepwater Horizon's Macondo well was shut off.”

WHOI Scientists Find Ancient Asphalt Domes Off California Coast

By Staff Writers, SPX, Apr 27, 2010 [H/t Catherine French]

http://www.terraviva.com/reports/WHOI_Scientists_Find_Ancient_Asphalt_Domes_Off_California_Coast_999.html

Administration Control of Fossil Fuels

Ten Oil Rigs Have Exited Gulf Since Obama Moratorium Went Into Effect

“Political uncertainty” bedevils Gulf region and discourages business investment

By Kevin Mooney, Pelican Post, Jul 20, 2011

http://www.thepelicanpost.org/2011/07/20/ten-oil-rigs-have-exited-gulf-since-obama-moratorium-went-into-effect/?utm_source=Newsletter&utm_medium=Email&utm_campaign=Morning%2BBell

Blame the Washington Bureaucracy for High Gas Prices

By Rob Bluey, Morning Bell, Aug 4, 2011

http://blog.heritage.org/2011/08/04/morning-bell-blame-the-washington-bureaucracy-for-high-gas-prices/?utm_source=Newsletter&utm_medium=Email&utm_campaign=Morning%252BBell

Shell Oil's Arctic drilling plan gets tentative approval

By Richard Mauer, The Anchorage Daily News, Aug. 5, 2011 [H/t Cooler Heads Digest]

<http://www.sacbee.com/2011/08/05/3818771/shell-oils-arctic-drilling-plan.html>

Alternative, Green (“Clean”) Energy

Government Report Confirms that Federal Energy-Related Subsidies Have increased 108 Percent in 3 Years; Wind Subsidies Increased 10-fold

By John Mavretich, Institute for Energy Research, Aug 2, 2011

<http://www.instituteforenergyresearch.org/2011/08/02/government-report-confirms-that-federal-energy-related-subsidies-have-increased-108-percent-in-3-years-wind-subsidies-increased-10-fold/>

[SEPP Comment: The stimulus bill had massive subsidies to wind and alternative energy. But they are limited unless the industries can persuade Washington to include such subsidies in an annual budget.]

State [MA]: Report on turbines' health effects in works

By O'Ryan Johnson, Boston Herald, Jul 29, 2011 [H/t Catherine French]

http://www.bostonherald.com/news/regional/view.bg?articleid=1354859&utm_source=Enews&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=SECTION_news_DATE_07-29-2011--07.04

Neb. mine find to challenge China's dominance of vital rare minerals

Elements coveted for high-tech uses

By Claire Courchane, Washington Times, Aug 3, 2011

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2011/aug/2/rush-for-rare-earth-may-create-nebraska-boomtown/>

Carbon Schemes

What's Really Killing Carbon Capture and Storage?

By Paul Driessen, Townhall, Aug 1, 2011 [H/t Deke Forbes]

http://townhall.com/columnists/pauldriessen/2011/07/31/whats_really_killing_carbon_capture_and_storage

California Dreaming

The dark side of solar and wind power projects

Building and maintaining solar and wind power projects can be hazardous, and industry watchdogs worry that the push for more green energy places more workers and bystanders in harm's way.

By Tiffany Hsu, LA Times, Aug 3, 2011

<http://www.latimes.com/business/la-fi-green-safety-20110803,0,2524795.story>

Federal officials investigate eagle deaths at DWP wind farm

Pine Tree facility in the Tehachapi Mountains faces scrutiny over the deaths of at least six golden eagles, which are protected under federal law. Prosecution would be a major blow to the booming industry.

By Louis Sahagun, LA Times, Aug 3, 2011

<http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-wind-eagles-20110803,0,2891547.story>

Review of Recent Scientific Articles by NIPCC

For a full list of articles see www.NIPCCreport.org

Which is responsible for more U.S. deaths – Excessive Heat or Excessive Cold?

Reference: US Global Change Research Program (USGCRP). 2009. *Global Climate Change Impacts in the United States*. Cambridge University Press.

<http://www.nipccreport.org/articles/2011/aug/3aug2011a4.html>

[SEPP Comment: A review of the data bases used for such studies.]

Pre-Industrial Climate Change and Human Population

Reference: Zhang, D.D., Lee, H.F., Wang, C., Li, B., Zhang, J., Pei, Q. and Chen, J. 2011. Climate change and large-scale human population collapses in the pre-industrial era. *Global Ecology and Biogeography* 20: 520-531.

<http://www.nipccreport.org/articles/2011/aug/3aug2011a3.html>

Storms of Southeast Australia

Reference: Alexander, L.V., Wang, X.L., Wan, H. and Trewin, B. 2011. Significant decline in storminess over southeast Australia since the late 19th century. *Australian Meteorological and Oceanographic Journal* 61: 23-30.

<http://www.nipccreport.org/articles/2011/aug/3aug2011a2.html>

A Multi-Century History of Forest Fires in Central Siberia

Reference: Wallenius, T., Larjavaara, M., Heikkinen, J. and Shibistova, O. 2011. Declining fires in Larix-dominated forests in northern Irkutsk district. *International Journal of Wildland Fire* 20: 248-254.

<http://www.nipccreport.org/articles/2011/aug/2aug2011a5.html>

Health, Energy, and Climate

Postscript to a Panic

New findings about bisphenol-A (BPA) will not redeem it.

Editorial, WSJ, Aug 3, 2011

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424053111903341404576483743247350456.html?mod=googlenews_wsj

[SEPP Comment: May be behind a pay wall.]

Environmental Industry

Letter to President Obama

By Public Health and Medical Organizations, Aug 3, 2011

<http://thehill.com/images/stories/blogs/energy/healthzone.pdf>

[SEPP Comment: The only reference to public health benefits of the regulation is that produced by EPA. There is no independent verification of EPA numbers.]

Medical groups to Obama: Finalize smog rule ‘immediately’

By Ben Geman, The Hill, Aug 3, 2011

<http://thehill.com/blogs/e2-wire/677-e2-wire/175257-medical-groups-to-obama-finalize-smog-rule-immediately>

[SEPP Comment: See above.]

Is the American Lung Association EPA's chief lobbyist?

By: Ron Arnold Washington Examiner, Aug 4, 2011

<http://washingtonexaminer.com/opinion/columnists/2011/08/american-lung-association-epas-chief-lobbyist>

Pew, What's That Smell

By Donna Laframboise, No Frakking Consensus, Aug 4, 2011 [H/t GWPF]

<http://nofrackingconsensus.com/2011/08/04/pew-whats-that-smell/>

Other Scientific News

Polar Bear Population Higher than in 20th Century: Is Something Fishy about Extinction Fears?

By Amrutha Gayathri, International Business Times, Aug 2, 2011 [H/t GWPF]

<http://www.ibtimes.com/articles/190805/20110802/polar-bear-global-warming-extinction-climate-change-research-world-wide-fund-wwf-geological-survey-s.htm>

Other News that May Be of Interest

Peer Review and Scepticism

By Martin Livermore, Scientific Alliance, Aug 4, 2011

<http://www.scientific-alliance.org/scientific-alliance-newsletter/peer-review-and-scepticism>

Truth, evidence and belief

By Martin Livermore, Scientific Alliance, Jul 28, 2011

<http://www.scientific-alliance.org/scientific-alliance-newsletter/truth-evidence-and-belief>

Enlightened Activist Scientists Dim Society

By Anthony J. Sadar, American Thinker, Aug 5, 2011

http://www.americanthinker.com/2011/08/enlightened_activist_scientists_dim_society.html

Environmentalist Wisdom: Shoot One Owl to Save The Other

The feds take sides in the battle between spotted owls and barred owls.

By James Huffman, WSJ, Jul 30, 2011

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424053111903554904576458421294580328.html?mod=ITP_opinion_0

[SEPP Comment: *May be behind a pay wall.*]

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BELOW THE BOTTOM LINE:

Atomic experiments may land Swede in jail

Richard Handl had kept a blog about his attempts to split atoms in his kitchen, including a small nuclear meltdown on his stove. When he thought to check with authorities, they sent the police.

By Staff Writers, AP, Aug 4, 2011

<http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-fg-sweden-atom-20110804,0,6654876.story>

Carbon hitches a ride from field to market

Frances White, PNNL, Aug 3, 2011 [H/t WUWT]

<http://www.pnl.gov/news/release.aspx?id=880>

[SEPP Comment: *The National Crop Carbon Budget, another bureaucratic fantasy.*]

Will Oil Replace Coal in our Furnaces?

Here Are the First accurate Facts showing Advantages and Disadvantages of Converting the Dirty and Costly Coal Furnaces in Our Homes into Oil Burners Such as Are Now Heating Skyscrapers

By F.A. Platte, Popular Science, Jan 1923

<http://books.google.com/books?id=kiDAAAAMBAJ&pg=PA67&lpg=PA67&dq=oil+replacing+coal+in+ships&source=bl&ots=2z7xatQ9OO&sig=JtxPr1z1q17KTIWaiWTengWqTYs&hl=en&ei=vTk5TvOeAs->

[ItgeYjZnrAg&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=3&sqi=2&ved=0CE0Q6AEwAg#v=onepage&q=oil%20replacing%20coal%20in%20ships&f=false](http://books.google.com/books?id=kiDAAAAMBAJ&pg=PA67&lpg=PA67&dq=oil+replacing+coal+in+ships&source=bl&ots=2z7xatQ9OO&sig=JtxPr1z1q17KTIWaiWTengWqTYs&hl=en&ei=vTk5TvOeAs-)

[SEPP Comment: *A 1923 read for our times – to realize how lucky we are that oil, electricity, and natural gas replaced wood and coal in heating our homes. The magazine also contains an article on how the French, devastated by WWI, were building homes with straw.*]

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ARTICLES:

1. The Cost of Lisa Jackson

Why the EPA doesn't consider job losses when it creates new rules.

Editorial, WSJ, Aug, 3, 2011

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052702303661904576453893688343246.html?mod=ITP_opinion_2

The White House lookback on "excessive" regulation has concluded and—breaking news—there's more work left to do. So let's commend those in Congress trying to force the Administration to conduct a credible cost-benefit test.

Last month the House Energy Committee passed a bill that reforms the Environmental Protection Agency's process for creating new rules and mandates, which it has been doing with a special fervor under administrator Lisa Jackson. Known by the acronym the Train Act, the bill would help expose some of the true costs that the agency is trying to hide.

One major improvement is that the Train Act broadens the definition of costs. Under the status quo, the EPA can define almost anything as a benefit, and does. But the EPA rarely considers more tangible economic consequences, like its effects on employment, the price and reliability of energy, or the competitiveness of U.S. companies.

The Train Act would also require the EPA at least to gesture at the costs of its larger agenda. The agency is now tightening nearly every eco-regulation in existence, abusing in particular traditional air pollutant laws to shut down coal-fired power plants. This cluster of overlapping rules will cause far more cumulative damage than merely one or another rule would by itself.

A utility, for instance, might be able to comply with a single new rule, but under the EPA firehose it might be forced to retire some of its operations. Beyond the direct costs to the utility, plant closures would lead to job losses and higher prices for consumers and business, with their own knock-on effects.

This cost-benefit bias may explain why Ms. Jackson could claim at a "green jobs" conference in February that under the Clean Air Act, "For every \$1 we have spent, we have gotten \$40 of benefits in return. So you can say what you want about EPA's business sense. We know how to get a return on our investment."

Ponder that insight into the bureaucratic mind. What Ms. Jackson means by "spent" are merely the direct costs that she or her predecessors have imposed on the private economy. Ms. Jackson went on to call the EPA "one of the most economically successful programs in American history." No wonder her EPA won't do genuine cost-benefit analysis. She thinks all regulatory costs are benefits. This certainly helps explain the weak recovery.

The Train Act is not a cure-all, and one weakness is that it applies only to the EPA, rather than applying the same cost-benefit approach across the government. But it does provide more information about regulation. Republican sponsor John Sullivan of Oklahoma has worked to build support among moderate Democrats; the bill passed committee 33 to 13, with five Democratic votes.

In a recent Joan of Arc interview with the New York Times, Ms. Jackson said that "The only thing worse than no EPA is an EPA that exists and doesn't do its job." Try that one on the people who don't have a job because of Ms. Jackson's grandiose view of hers.

2. NAACP and EPA Inflict Heat Prostration and Death

By Harry Jackson with Niger Innis, Townhall, Aug 1, 2011

<http://townhall.com/columnists/harryrjacksonjr/2011/08/01/naACP and epa inflict heat prostration and death>

From New York, Washington and Atlanta to Chicago, St. Louis and Dallas, America is baking in a furnace. As millions swelter and gasp, they thank their lucky stars for air-conditioned cars, homes, offices and other places of refuge. And for the reliable, affordable electricity that makes AC possible.

Previous generations weren't so fortunate. When a record heat wave slammed the nation in July 1936, Midwest temperatures hit 100-107 for a week. With most homes and businesses lacking even fans in this pre-AC era, millions suffered heat prostration. In Wisconsin, 449 died. Nationwide, thousands perished.

Now the EPA and NAACP want to send America back to the "good old days." Under a perverse notion of "environmental justice," they are promoting tough new air quality rules that would shut down dozens of coal-fired power plants that make affordable AC possible for millions of poor and minority families.

According to them, coal-based electricity is "racist." Minorities are more at risk because they often live near "dangerous," older, more polluting power plants.

There is no excuse for the ridiculous "racism" and "justice" rhetoric, or the way EPA used cherry-picked data and computer models to conjure up health risks and benefits that exist only in virtual worlds. (Visit www.AffordablePowerAlliance.org for details.) Worse, the agency refused to consider the disastrous effects its draconian regulations will impose on families and businesses, due to skyrocketing electricity prices.

EPA's rules will reduce electricity availability and send costs soaring 12% to 60% by 2015 – especially in the 26 states that depend on coal for 48-98% of their electricity. Families and businesses in those states currently pay less than half as much per kilowatt hour as those in low-coal, high-tax, hyper-regulated states. That means jobs, profits, balanced budgets – and protection against life-threatening heat and cold.

Under EPA/NAACP rules, all that would end. Power plant closures will cause deadly electricity shortages during periods of peak demand. Millions of poor and minority families will be unable to afford air conditioning when electricity is available. Our elderly will be particularly at risk, especially in inner cities, because energy costs hit them disproportionately and they are least able to survive heat and heatstroke.

This summer's blistering heat wave is a forecast for what lies ahead. Dozens have already died, including a Kansas man who had air conditioning but was concerned about paying his electricity bill, and so didn't turn it on. How many more will face this life-or-death choice, after the EPA and NAACP succeed in closing power plants and driving electricity prices through the roof, no one can say. But in Chicago, a 1995 heat wave killed 700 people – and local papers predict a 40-60% price hike by 2015.

Shops, restaurants, groceries, dry cleaners and bakeries will see electric bills soar by thousands a year. Hospitals, school districts, internet providers, hotels and factories will be forced to pay tens or hundreds of thousands, even millions in added electricity costs. Factories that now pay \$1 million for electricity could see an extra \$600,000 added to their annual operating costs.

Each \$30,000 increment is equal to another entry-level job that won't be "created or saved."

Chicago public schools will need an extra \$2.7 million a year for electricity by 2014, the Chicago Tribune has reported. That translates into dozens of terminated sports programs, teachers and administrators.

Steel and paper mills, aluminum and petroleum refineries, car and aircraft factories will see annual electricity costs soar by millions of dollars. That could mean massive layoffs and entire operations shuttered or moved overseas. Management Information Services calculates that EPA's rules will cost six Midwestern manufacturing states a combined 3.5 million jobs and \$42-82 billion in annual GDP.

Do the EPA and NAACP suppose their rules will end heat waves? Or that unemployed workers and their families will be better able to afford air conditioning the next time temperatures climb above 100 degrees? Or that newly impoverished state and local governments will be better able to provide energy welfare – perhaps via another \$1 trillion in federal debt?

Power plant emissions have been falling for decades. They have hardly morphed into a health-threatening crisis that suddenly justifies this EPA power grab and power plant shutdown. There is no basis for imposing stratospheric electricity costs that will kill millions more jobs – and put millions more people at risk from heat stroke and other ravages of government-inflicted poverty.

It would be nice if we could wave a magic wand and find billions of dollars to tear down and replace older power plants – or retrofit them with new pollution control and monitoring equipment, cover the extra annual operating and maintenance expenses, pay for “stranded investments” from facilities that will be shuttered long before the end of their useful life, and build or upgrade transmission lines from new power plants, wind farms and solar arrays.

It would be wonderful if wind and solar facilities could actually replace the NAACP and EPA’s detested coal-burning power plants – without needing billions in federal subsidies, duplicative gas-fired backup generators, thousands of miles of new transmission lines, hundreds of thousands of acres, and millions of tons of concrete, steel, copper, fiberglass and rare earth metals.

It would be fabulous if they actually generated electricity anywhere near their rated capacity and worked 24/7/365, instead of maybe 8/5/300 – and their electricity didn’t cost three times the coal-based alternative.

It would be incredible if EPA permit quagmires and environmentalist lawsuits did not stymie virtually every proposal for new coal, gas and nuclear power plants, transmission lines, natural gas drilling, and even wind farms and photovoltaic arrays, to replace coal-fired generators.

But that is not the world we live in.

Instead, we remain bogged down in an interminable recession, with intractable unemployment. We have incurred monumental debt. We have created a morass of legislation, regulation and litigation that ensures old power plants will be gone, replacements won’t be built anytime soon, and “smart meters” will let bureaucrats shut off AC power anytime electricity demand exceeds supply. We are killing jobs, businesses, investment and innovation – and will soon be killing our own citizens.

America’s workers, poor and minorities now face the prospect of skyrocketing energy prices and even more unemployment – accompanied by recurrent blackouts, rolling brownouts, misery, heatstroke, and unnecessary deaths during future heat waves.

One shudders to think that NAACP is so misguided, so ideologically hidebound, so beholden to government grants that it cannot recognize this – or realize it is the *NAACP and EPA* that are inflicting “energy racism” and “environmental injustice” on our nation’s most vulnerable citizens.

Reliable, affordable energy is the foundation for jobs, modern living standards, health, opportunity and civil rights progress. The NAACP needs to join the Affordable Power Alliance and Congress of Racial Equality in protecting Americans against further job losses and future heat waves.

Bishop Harry Jackson is chairman of the High Impact Leadership Coalition and senior pastor of Hope Christian Church in Beltsville, MD, and co-authored, Personal Faith, Public Policy [FrontLine; March 2008] with Tony Perkins, president of the Family Research Council.

3. Chance of Oil Spill Rises With Floodwaters

Displaced Sediment Leaves Pipelines Beneath Riverbeds Exposed to Dangers

By Jack Nicas, WSJ, Aug 4, 2011

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424053111904292504576484720922432398.html?mod=WSJ_Energy_leftHeadlines

Exxon Mobil Corp. thought its Silvertip oil pipeline was resting securely five to eight feet beneath the bed of the flooded Yellowstone River in Montana.

Then, last month, the pipeline broke, leaking 1,000 barrels of crude.

The likely cause of the spill was an effect called scouring, which can expose pipelines to passing debris and potential rupture. The greater weight and speed of an overflowing river can shave dozens of feet off its bed by carrying sediment downstream.

Now, regulators are warning pipeline operators up and down the flooded Missouri River that they could face similar dangers. With reservoirs swollen from heavy rains and snowmelt, officials released record volumes of water for most of the summer. They began easing back on releases this week, but flooding on the Missouri is expected to continue into September.

Meanwhile, the 2,300-mile-long river is digging into its bed, and at least a dozen oil and gas pipelines lie within reach of dangerous exposure. Several factors determine vulnerability, such as the location and composition of the riverbed.

Near Bismarck, N.D., last month, state officials found scouring about 30 feet deep in at least eight places. Downstream, at least 23 pipelines lie 20 feet or less below the riverbed. Federal rules require that pipelines be buried only four feet below the riverbed—a requirement many experts feel is out of date.

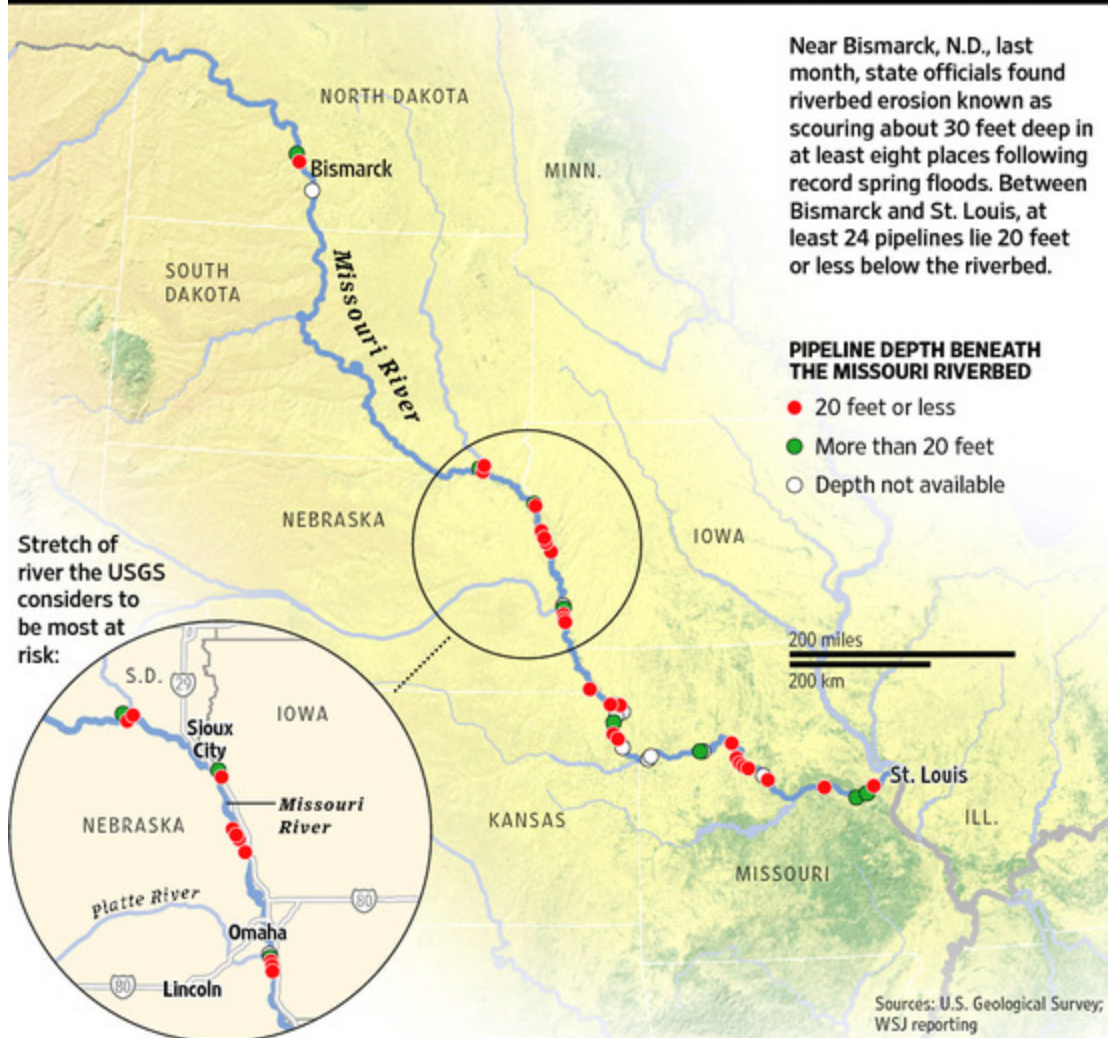
"In some cases, you don't know if something's endangered until it breaks," said David T. Williams, a consultant who holds a Ph.D. in river mechanics and has designed 10 to 20 pipeline river crossings. "Some of the pipes might already be exposed."

Federal officials oversee a half-million-mile network of gas and hazardous-liquid pipelines that cross rivers, streams and lakes more than 35,000 times, including most of the lines that cross the Missouri. State agencies oversee another two million miles of distribution pipelines.

All rivers are susceptible to scouring. In 1993, scouring caused at least two pipeline breaks in Iowa and Nebraska. A year later, a flash flood on the San Jacinto River near Houston caused scouring that exposed 37 pipelines. Eight broke, spilling more than 35,000 barrels of oil and oil products. Scouring has been a suspected culprit in many pipeline breaks since.

In Montana, workers continue to clean up oil from the July 1 spill in the Yellowstone. The U.S. Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration, the federal agency that oversees pipeline safety, is investigating the rupture of the 20-year-old crossing. Exxon is cooperating with the probe.

Exposed | Rushing waters can strip away layers of earth protecting pipelines



Last month, PHMSA issued an advisory bulletin on the danger that flooding poses to underground pipelines. The agency urged operators to "determine if flooding has exposed or undermined pipelines as a result of...erosion or scouring."

Scientists with the U.S. Geological Survey surveyed the Missouri riverbed last month near five clusters of pipelines. Officials released results only for Bismarck, where scouring appeared to have gouged two 40-foot holes in the riverbed, according to federal and state data.

From Bismarck to St. Louis, a 1,314-mile stretch of river, 41 underground pipelines cross the Missouri. But since scouring is erratic, experts said, the potential danger is difficult to assess.

"There's certainly risk around every corner," said Mike Sauer, senior scientist for North Dakota's water quality office, which also surveyed the holes near Bismarck.

Pipeline companies say they are monitoring crossings via aerial and ground patrols and are confident of their safety.

Sonar scans of the riverbed above five NuStar Energy LP crossings are being analyzed. The lines carry ammonia and petroleum products. "Everyone is being proactive," said Todd Denton, vice president of

pipeline operations. "If we felt it was in danger, yes, we'd shut it down." Two NuStar lines installed in 1959 and 1963 lie seven to 10 feet below the riverbed in Yankton, S.D. Another, on the Nebraska-Iowa border, is buried at 10 feet.

Upon learning of the NuStar pipeline depths, Robert Jacobson, chief of river studies for the U.S. Geological Survey in Missouri, said, "Oh boy. The river is certainly capable of 10 feet of scour."

NuStar said USGS surveys showed its pipelines in Yankton were safe. Federal officials said they couldn't confirm that.

About 25 miles north of Kansas City, Enterprise Product Partners LP pumps liquid natural gas through two pipelines that lie four feet below the Missouri riverbed in places. The company is monitoring the pipelines' pressure and patrolling them from the air weekly. "We do what we can," Enterprise spokesman Rick Rainey said.

At least 16 pipelines that cross the Missouri were built between 1941 and 1970 by digging a ditch, laying the pipe and covering it—as Exxon installed its Silvertip line. The method is more susceptible to scouring than today's industry standard: horizontally drilling a hole 15 to 50 feet beneath the riverbed.

Federal guidelines still allow the dig-and-bury method. Although operators are required to protect pipes from any external threat, they require inspections of crossings only once every five years, and a four-foot minimum depth beneath the riverbed.

"That's dangerous policy...scour depths can exceed four feet easily," said Howard Chang, a professor emeritus of river engineering at San Diego State University. He and other experts say pipeline placement and depth should be determined on a case-by-case basis. Lawmakers, too, have expressed concern recently over gaps in pipeline oversight.

PHMSA said the four-foot minimum, which went into effect around 1970, was modeled after original American Society of Mechanical Engineers standards and "has been found to be sufficient."

Following the Silvertip spill, PHMSA ordered Exxon to horizontally drill before restarting the pipeline "to avoid future scour."

Though the Yellowstone has recorded higher peak velocities than the Missouri this summer, its riverbed is jacketed with tenacious gravel. The Missouri is largely sand, "and that means it's relatively easy to scour," said Mr. Jacobson of the USGS.

The stretch that is most at risk runs from Yankton, S.D., to Plattsmouth, Neb., and is crossed by 14 pipelines, half of which are buried at 16 feet or shallower.

"For that part of the river, this is an unprecedented event," said Mr. Jacobson, who grew up on the Missouri and has studied it for two decades. "So what sort of scour happens up there, well, that's a good question."

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