

# Concerned Scientists' Weekly News Bulletin

## [March 29, 2021]



*Our weekly bulletin collects and digests news of the past week.  
Contributions welcome.*

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### **NEWS ITEMS AND ARTICLES**

*Guardian: [Climate talks will test Biden's pledge to make global heating a priority](#)*

*Biden invited Vladimir Putin, Xi Jinping, and 38 other global leaders to the Leaders Summit on Climate Talks at the end of April. The summit aims to show the US's renewed commitment to fighting the climate crisis, after the departure with the previous administration, and encourage other countries to outline their plans for combatting climate change.*

*InsideClimate News: [Biden takes aim at reducing emissions of super-polluting methane gas, with or without the Republicans](#)*

*The president wants to put pipefitters and miners to work capping "orphaned" gas wells as part of his forthcoming \$3 trillion infrastructure plan.*

*Bloomberg Law: [EPA Chief says enforcement starts with science-based rules](#)*

*EPA Administrator Michael Regan previewed his enforcement philosophy on Tuesday, saying the agency must have science-based environmental regulations in place if it wants to chase individual companies that flout them. "It's more about focusing on the importance and the integrity of the intent of our programs—and enforcement and accountability guides that—than it is to say we're focused on the polluters themselves," Regan said.*

*Science: [House panel offers its plan to double NSF budget and create technology directorate](#)*

*The House science committee proposed a bill that would increase the NSF budget from \$8.5 billion to \$18.3 billion by 2026, aiming to grow its seven current research and education objectives and add a new directorate entitled Science and Engineering Solutions, which would focus on creating new technologies. The bill is an alternative to the Endless Frontier Act, which was critiqued for emphasizing competition with China.*

New York Times: [Should we block the sun? Scientists say the time has come to study it](#)

*The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine released a report expressing the need for research into solar geoengineering, saying the government should spend at least \$100 million researching the technology, which involves various methods of blocking sunlight from reaching the Earth's surface to cool the planet. Risks associated with geoengineering techniques include changing regional weather patterns and reducing incentives to lower greenhouse gas emissions.*

Politico: ["It's a pipe dream": Green groups blast plastic makers' recycling push](#)

*The Break Free from Plastics Pollution Act would ban plastic bags, takeout containers, and other items, require consumer brands to fund waste and recycling programs, and prohibit the construction of new plastic manufacturing plants until the federal government conducts a study into the health impacts of plastics on low-income citizens and communities of color. Plastic industry representatives argue that these measures would hurt the industries, slowing their investment in advanced recycling practices and new technology that could allow the incorporation of more recycled materials into their products.*

NPR: [Once imperiled, America's bald eagle populations are soaring](#)

*Despite severe declines in bird populations across the country, the population of bald eagles in the US has quadrupled over the last dozen years, recently reaching over 316,000. The banning of DDT in 1972 and their inclusion on the Endangered Species Act in 1973 helped grow their population from under 500 breeding pairs to over 70,000, and they were removed from the endangered species list in 2007.*

Smithsonian: [The Amazon rainforest now emits more greenhouse gases than it absorbs](#)

*A recent study showed that increases in nitrous oxide emissions and black carbon are helping tip the scale towards net positive emissions in the Amazon Rainforest. Nitrous oxides are released when extensive logging creates dried wetlands and compacted soils, while black carbon is released as soot from fires. These byproducts are in addition to the decrease in the uptake of carbon dioxide resulting from clearing large swaths of forest.*

## **REGIONAL NEWS**

Indiana Business Journal: [Indianapolis to continue mask mandate, capacity restrictions](#)

*The city of Indianapolis will keep in place its mask mandate and other existing restrictions tied to the pandemic indefinitely, Mayor Joe Hogsett's proclamation followed Indiana Gov. Eric Holcomb's announcement on Tuesday that he would lift similar statewide restrictions in early April.*

## **OPINION AND ANALYSIS**

UCS: [The science policy community's responsibility to address anti-Asian xenophobia](#)

*The scientific community must also go beyond condemning overt racism to recognize the more insidious role that science and technology policy has played in perpetuating anti-Asian sentiments. There are direct implications for Asian Americans in the policy space.*

Brookings: [Are federal disaster policies making the harmful impacts of climate change even worse?](#)

*Even where municipalities know they are in harm's way, they can readily borrow money for future infrastructure because the market knows that if climate-related disasters happen, the city or county will be bailed out. If true, this is a costly path. Not only will climate change hurt our welfare, but the practice of federal bailouts will amplify those dangers.*

Grist: [Why authors are saying the “natural world” no longer exists](#)

*We've subdued the natural world, something we once regarded with deep-rooted terror, with resounding success. Now that it's disappearing, we want it back. As climate change forces a moment of global reckoning of all that we've lost, a growing cadre of environmental journalists are picking up a line of thinking first percolated by environmental writers like Alexander von Humboldt: “leaving nature alone” is impossible, in no small part because we ourselves are a part of it.*

## **TAKE ACTION AND RESOURCES FOR ACTIVISTS**

Greenpeace: [Tell President Biden: Ban new oil and gas permits on public lands and waters](#)

*Fossil fuels extracted from federal lands account for nearly one-quarter of carbon emissions in the U.S. Stopping coal, oil, and gas production on public lands and waters and supporting workers and communities in the transition to a renewable future will go a long way to tackling the climate crisis. It will also be protecting farmers, Indigenous Peoples, and vulnerable communities — Black, Brown, White, rural, urban, and working-class — in the Gulf South, Western states, Alaska, and across the country.*

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Our CSIU news bulletin is intended to provide a brief update on recent news, editorials, as well as action items related to science integrity and science policy. Note that editorial pieces and action items are assembled from a variety of sources and organizations; they do not necessarily reflect the opinions or policy priorities of Concerned Scientists @ IU. This week's news bulletin was compiled by ASIU and IU biology major Emma Hand and CSIU member Christoph Irmscher of IU's Department of English. We're looking for volunteers! If you'd like to volunteer—or if you have additional links you'd like to share for future bulletins, send them to Christoph at [cirmsche@indiana.edu](mailto:cirmsche@indiana.edu).

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