

Concerned Scientists' Weekly News Bulletin

[November 22, 2021]



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

Contributions welcome.

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NEWS ITEMS AND ARTICLES

New York Times: [House passes the largest expenditure on climate in U.S. history](#)

The United States took a major step toward fighting climate change Friday with passage through the House of Representatives of a \$2.2 trillion spending bill that includes the largest expenditures ever made by the federal government to slow global warming. The bill faces an uncertain path through the Senate and negotiations between the two chambers may change its form.

The Guardian: [Nasa to slam spacecraft into asteroid in mission to avoid future Armageddon](#)

On Wednesday, Nasa will launch a mission to deliberately slam a spacecraft into an asteroid to try to alter its orbit--the first time humanity has tried to interfere in the gravitational dance of the solar system. The aim is to test drive a planetary defense system that could prevent us from going the same way as the dinosaurs, providing the first real data about what it would take to deflect an Armageddon-inducing asteroid away from Earth.

AIP: [Budget tensions compounding in high energy physics](#)

Department of Energy officials recently reported that U.S. contributions to upgrades at CERN's Large Hadron Collider may face a shortfall this year and that the department is pursuing a "conservative" approach to funding the flagship LBNF/DUNE (Deep Underground Neutrino Experiment) project, which has experienced major cost increases.

AgClips: [Biden administration acts to restore clean-water safeguards](#)

The Biden administration took action Thursday to restore federal protections for hundreds of thousands of small streams, wetlands and other waterways, undoing a Trump-era rule that was considered one of that administration's hallmark environmental rollbacks. The announcement by the Environmental Protection Agency and the Army

reinstates a rule in place before 2015 while the Biden administration arrives at its own, which is expected to be next year.

Physics World: [Learned societies propose “International Year of Quantum Science and Technology” in 2025](#)

Physicists around the world are drawing up plans for a year-long celebration of quantum science and technology in 2025. The campaign is being led by the American Physical Society and the German Physical Society, which hope to persuade the United Nations (UN) to make 2025 the UNESCO International Year of Quantum Science and Technology. If approved, the year would involve workshops, conferences, festivals, and activities in schools, coordinated by national nodes across the world.

REGIONAL NEWS

Indiana Environmental Reporter: [IDEM commissioner to step down, assume role in EPA](#)

Bruno Pigott, who was appointed IDEM commissioner by Gov. Eric Holcomb in 2017, will step down Dec. 3 and become the deputy assistant administrator in the EPA's Office of Water. His replacement will be named later.

Indiana Environmental Reporter: [EPA Inspector General finds IDEM air compliance monitoring dropped by 28% during pandemic](#)

The Indiana Department of Environmental Management pointed to social distancing requirements and stay at home orders to explain the decrease in compliance monitoring. Most US states saw a decrease in monitoring, but only 10 states and territories had a 25% or more decline during the pandemic.

IndyStar: [South Korean life-science firm to open plant in Fishers with 210 jobs](#)

List Biotherapeutics will be the third life-science business to open in the area of 126th Street and Cumberland Road, which Fishers officials now calls the Life Science & Innovation Park. The company will produce drugs for late-stage clinical trials and commercial use.

OPINION AND ANALYSIS

Bulletin of Atomic Scientists: [Thanksgiving advice, 2021: How to deal with climate change-denying Uncle Pete](#)

Deciding to do nothing about climate change is like deciding not to have serious elective surgery, such as declining a coronary artery bypass operation that your cardiologist recommends. The operation will involve risks and costs. But declining it will also involve risks and costs, including the risk of a fatal heart attack.

Salon: [One surprising winner in Biden's infrastructure bill: Biodiversity](#)

By passing the bipartisan infrastructure bill, U.S. policymakers took an important step toward stemming the loss of the nation's species and, perhaps, initiated a shift in the way the country considers the natural world. The bill doesn't use the word "biodiversity" explicitly, but it will put \$40 billion into pots of funding that will go toward projects related to natural infrastructure and conservation. Not all the money allocated toward these projects will benefit biodiversity, but a lot of it is aimed at more carefully managing the natural world and protecting habitats.

Grist: [Climate change deniers are over attacking the science. Now they attack the solutions](#)

Today, only about 10 percent of arguments from conservative think tanks in North America challenge the scientific consensus around global warming or question models and data. (For the record, 99.9 percent of scientists agree that human activity is heating up the planet.) Instead, the most common arguments are that scientists and climate advocates simply can't be trusted, and that proposed solutions won't work.

Popular Science: [Gender equity and climate change are intertwined](#)

Women and girls are more likely to be exposed to climate issues. In addition, globally women are often kept out of the discussion on how to prepare for a changing world. Women are also less likely to be formally educated and therefore less likely to have access to a formal education, a UN report highlighted, meaning less opportunities for financial stability down the line.

Anthropocene: [The public prefers climate carrots to climate sticks](#)

Two new studies are published in the *Journal of Environmental Psychology* and *Environmental Science and Policy* suggest that people prefer climate policies aimed at developing alternative energy sources rather than ones that try to reduce energy use or improve efficiency. The public also prefers climate policies that make use of incentives like tax breaks or rebates to those that involve disincentives like a tax on high energy users. However, the preference for incentives is more pronounced when policies target individuals—that is, people are more willing to support disincentives applied to businesses.

Physics Today: [AIP marks 90 years of advancing the physical sciences](#)

In 1931, as a response to the financial crisis of the Great Depression, leaders within the American physics community formed a corporation for the “advancement and diffusion of knowledge of the science of physics and its application to human welfare.” The new American Institute of Physics (AIP) comprised five societies with a combined membership of 4000; nine decades later, AIP consists of 10 member societies with a collective 110,000 members, and an additional 27 affiliated societies.

TAKE ACTION AND RESOURCES FOR ACTIVISTS

United Nations: [Outcomes of the Glasgow Climate Change Conference](#)

Review the decisions taken last week at the Glasgow Climate Change Conference. After two weeks of negotiations, over 190 countries finalized the Paris Agreement and took other measures towards climate care.

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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 CSIU member Christoph Irmscher of IU's Department of

English and by ASIU member and biology sophomore Rose Schnabel, an aspiring science writer. 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.

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