



Concerned Scientists' Weekly News Bulletin [July 6, 2020]

NEWS ITEMS AND ARTICLES

New York Times: [The fullest look yet at the racial inequity of Coronavirus](#)

Latino and African-American residents of the United States have been three times as likely to become infected as their white neighbors, according to the new data, which provides detailed characteristics of 640,000 infections detected in nearly 1,000 U.S. counties. And Black and Latino people have been nearly twice as likely to die from the virus as white people, the data shows.

Bloomberg: [Dakota access oil line to be shut by court in blow for Trump](#)

The decision, which shuts the pipeline during a court-ordered environmental review that's expected to extend into 2021, is a momentous win for American Indian tribes that have opposed the Energy Transfer LP project for years. It comes just a day after Dominion Energy Inc. and Duke Energy Corp. scuttled another project, the Atlantic Coast natural gas pipeline, after years of legal delays.

Yale Climate Connections: [House Democrats eye 2021 with comprehensive climate action plan](#)

The House Select Committee on the Climate Crisis released a 500-page plan that aims to help the US reach net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by emphasizing clean energy infrastructure, as well as focusing on worker assistance, environmental justice, and public health. New approaches to transportation, electricity, and agriculture are specifically addressed.

Science: [New White House rules restrict use of grant funding to deal with COVID-19 impacts](#)

The White House Office of Management and Budget is not renewing the exceptions made in the Spring to how federal grant money could be spent in wake of the pandemic. Additional money from Congress is needed to make up grant money used in these exceptions, such as paying researchers and reimbursing planned travel during the widespread campus closures. Congress is currently divided over approving a relief package.

The Guardian: [Revealed: legislators' pro-pipeline letters ghostwritten by fossil fuel company](#)

North Dakota's governor sent a letter to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission in support of the North Bakken Expansion Project. The project entails building a 61.9-mile natural gas pipeline and has received backlash from environmentalists and indigenous communities. The letter was modeled off a template provided by MDU Resources, which is a subsidiary to WBI Energy, a powerful fossil fuel company.

Science: [Amid protests against racism, scientists move to strip offensive names from journals, prizes, and more](#)

Many renaming initiatives are taking place across the US and UK. University buildings, academic programs, streets, journals, awards, and species named in honor of scientists who held and perpetuated racist views are being widely reevaluated and renamed.

Science: [U.K. buys stake in satellite company that could spoil astronomy](#)

OneWeb intends to launch 42,000 internet-providing satellites into low orbits after receiving a \$1 billion investment from the U.K. government and the Indian cellphone operator Bharti Global. The project has received backlash from astronomers, since the satellites will severely interfere with surveying telescopes, leaving bright trails across images taken all through the night.

REGIONAL NEWS

News at IU: [Committee appointed to review Jordan namings on IU Bloomington campus](#)

The views on race and eugenics by David Starr Jordan, statements and views have come under scrutiny and criticism recently. A number of requests have now been made to remove his name from the building that houses IU Bloomington's Department of Biology and from other locations on the Bloomington campus. The Jordan Committee will conduct its review and submit a report with recommendations for any actions to the president, provost and Naming Committee by Sept. 1.

WTHR: [Marion County to require face masks in public spaces starting July 9](#)

Marion County becomes the fourth Indiana county to make masks mandatory, joining LaGrange, Elkhart and St. Joseph counties. "I don't have sympathy for those who may argue in coming days that this simple, science-driven policy is an unjust burden," Mayor Joe Hogsett said.

OPINION AND ANALYSIS

The Guardian: [Love of science, not Trump's ignorance, will make America great again](#)

Ted Widmer on the odd paradox that a country so technologically advanced as the U.S. should have become so hostile to the science that lifted it so high. "It will be a challenge for future historians to explain how a country that gained so much from science suddenly abandoned its faith in the facts. But a reckoning is surely coming."

Union of Concerned Scientists: [Policy during a Pandemic: How to make research accessible for policymakers during the COVID-19 pandemic](#)

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of effective science communication – in particular, the vital importance of making research accessible for policymakers. UCS presents our top tips for researchers on how to write for policymakers.

EOS.org: [When natural disasters cross the path of COVID-19](#)

Natural hazards are intersecting with the coronavirus pandemic in India, and researchers will need to model both to inform the public health response.

Grist.org: [Republican lawmakers' familiar blame game hangs COVID's spread on young people](#)

Taking no responsibility for coronavirus infections raging to new records amid the rash reopenings of businesses, beaches and bars, the White House and governors are now playing the role of Aristotle: They blame the young for bringing us down.

Nature: [Fewer than 20 extinctions a year: does the world need a single target for biodiversity?](#)

A team of researchers proposed a goal of keeping global extinctions below 20 known species each year. Though there are many ways to look at, measure, and preserve biodiversity, they

hope it will provide “a simple, measurable goal that can be understood by the public and politicians alike.”

The Brussels Times: [Moving beyond Greta: the future of climate politics](#)

Far from being a disaster for the climate movement, the coronavirus outbreak may very well prove to be an opportunity—to break free from some of the tired strictures and illusions of climate politics of recent years, and to move the policy discussion onto a more responsible plane—one that can sustain the long time horizon that will be needed to get a grip on the climate problem, one that recaptures a sense of hope and optimism about the future, and one that enables the messy process of our democratic politics the time and space to hash out the tricky ethical and distributional questions that climate change poses.

Climate Home News: [US climate activists confront the movement’s whiteness problem](#)

“The need for racial and economic justice to be at the heart of our work has been obvious for communities of color for a long time,” Keya Chatterjee, executive director of the US Climate Action Network, told CHN. “The climate movement being mostly white has been a hindrance in making progress. We cannot win in this way.”

The Guardian: [Trump wants to put a rightwing zealot in charge of public land. Here's why it matters](#)

Pendley is linked to two little-known but very dangerous political movements: the so-called Wise Use movement and the anti-government extremists sometimes called constitutionalists or sovereign citizens.

Scientific American: [Speech recognition tech is yet another example of bias](#)

All five programs from leading technology companies like Apple and Microsoft showed significant race disparities; they were twice as likely to incorrectly transcribe audio from Black speakers as opposed to white speakers.

TAKE ACTION

NRDC.org: [Help prevent future pandemics by ending wildlife trade](#)

By capturing, trading, and slaughtering wildlife, humans are capable of igniting devastating global pandemics like the one we are living through today. Irresponsible wildlife trade isn't just a problem in other countries—the United States accounts for a quarter of the global wildlife market, including importing 224 million live animals every year. Tell the Trump administration to ban wildlife trade and help prevent another worldwide health crisis.

Center for Biological Diversity: [Sign the petition to ban “cyanide bombs”](#)

The EPA just reauthorized the use of barbaric M-44 “cyanide bombs” to kill wildlife. Earlier this year 99.9% of people commenting on the EPA proposal to bring back M-44s demanded a ban instead—yet the Trump administration just decided to reauthorize their use.

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.

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