



Concerned Scientists' Weekly News Bulletin [July 27, 2020]

NEWS ITEMS AND ARTICLES

The Guardian: [Air pollution remains worst in US communities of color despite progress](#)

Fine particle pollution, which can travel into the lungs, brain, and bloodstream and contribute to the development of lung cancer and heart disease, has decreased by an average of 70% over the last four decades. However, a study published in Science showed that the most polluted census tracts in 1981 were still the most polluted in 2016, with disadvantaged communities having worse air quality than average.

The New York Times: [Rising seas could menace millions beyond shorelines, study finds](#)

A recent study calculated that up to 171 million people living today are at risk from coastal flooding and storm surges due to climate change. It warns that an increase in sea level of 1 to 2 feet would increase the amount of coastal land at risk of flooding by one-third. NOAA released an analysis showing high-tide flooding has already increased 5x the levels of those in 2000 along the Atlantic and Gulf Coast.

The New York Times: [Contact tracing is failing in many states. Here's why.](#)

Many states with large surges in coronavirus cases have been giving up on contact tracing. The virus's rapid transmission between individuals and major lags in testing and test results have severely hindered contact tracing efforts across the country. Some public health officials feel the money and resources going towards contact tracing efforts could be better spent improving testing or educating the public about mask wearing.

Science Times: [US Senate passes sustainable chemistry legislation](#)

Tagged the Sustainable Chemistry Research and Development Act (S.999), the now-bipartisan-supported bill (S.4049) aims to allot military spending for the fiscal year 2021, starting October 1 this year. Within the bill, provisions direct federal agencies to include sustainable chemistry research and application in their work, coordinated by the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP).

Science: [Antiabortion ethicists and scientists dominate Trump's fetal tissue review board](#)

Last summer, the Trump administration clamped down on federally funded fetal tissue research by requiring that such projects go through an ethics review by a new advisory board. At least 10 of the 15 members of the new NIH Human Fetal Tissue Research Ethics Advisory Board oppose abortion, and several have publicly stated positions against the funding of fetal tissue research.

The Hill: [EPA looks to other statutes to expand scope of coming "secret science" rule](#)

Speaking at a Heritage Foundation event, EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler said the agency would apply the rule to the Clean Water Act, the Clean Air Act and other major environmental

protection statutes through a series of implementing regulations the agency will issue through 2023.

Science Times: [Indigenous people are teaching researchers about the environment](#)

A recent study from Rutgers University highlights the important role that Indigenous people play in environmental studies. Indigenous communities such as the Amazon's "uncontacted tribes" who live in extreme isolation know the forests best. They can help scientists map and monitor changes in the ecology of the forest through time.

The Guardian: [Nasa astronauts aboard SpaceX capsule make first splashdown in 45 years](#)

The return of two astronauts from the SpaceX shuttle that launched two months ago marks the completion of NASA's first crewed mission from the US in nine years. SpaceX is the first private company to have transported astronauts to and from orbit.

American Institute of Physics: [US ramps up planning for space nuclear technology](#)

A new working group between NASA and the Department of Energy aims to research new space technologies, including surface power and propulsion methods using nuclear fission instead of radioactive decay. There is also debate over the potential use of highly enriched uranium, which can also be used in nuclear weapons technology.

Ag Clips: [Study examines methane-inhibiting additive in dairy cow feed](#)

The optimum amount of a methane-inhibiting supplement in dairy cattle feed has been determined by an international team of researchers, indicating that widespread use of the compound could be an affordable climate change-battling strategy, if farmers embrace it.

REGIONAL NEWS

The Indiana Gazette: [Struzzi introduces environmental legislation](#)

With three Democratic and three Republican co-sponsors, state Rep. Jim Struzzi, R-Indiana, has introduced legislation establishing an Office of Compliance Assistance and Pollution Prevention within the state Department of Environmental Protection. As detailed in House Bill 2742, the office would work with small and medium-sized businesses to help them determine applicable environmental statutes, regulations, and policies.

Indy Star: ["Food is more important right now": COVID-19 forces some to struggle paying energy bills](#)

In recent months, the pandemic shut down industries and spiked unemployment rates as high as 17.5%, all while forcing residents into their homes for weeks on end, using up more energy. By summertime, hundreds of thousands of Hoosiers had fallen more than two months behind on their bills.

WBIW.com: [Indiana churches can apply for solar grants to reduce energy use and free up funds](#)

The Indiana not-for-profit that will disburse the grants, Creation Care Partners, will provide technical support so that the churches can serve as prominent models in their regions and denominations of stewardship of the earth.

OPINION AND ANALYSIS

Forbes: [You must not "do your own research" when it comes to science](#)

The techniques that most of us use to navigate most of our decisions in life — gathering information, evaluating it based on what we know, and choosing a course of action — can lead to spectacular failures when it comes to a scientific matter. Unless we start valuing the actual expertise that legitimate experts have spent lifetimes developing, "doing our own research" could lead to immeasurable, unnecessary suffering.

ProPublica/New York Times Magazine: [Where will everyone go?](#)

ProPublica and The New York Times Magazine, with support from the Pulitzer Center, have for the first time modeled how climate refugees might move across international borders. Abraham Lustgarten reports on the results.

New York Times Magazine: [Destroying a way of life to save Louisiana](#)

Louisiana's Coastal Master Plan will not only test the limits of our species' capacity to engineer our environment; it will also test the government's capacity for compelling even a small, relatively powerless group of people, against their will, to suffer in the name of climate policy. Should the master plan succeed, it would benefit the many. It would also harm the few.

The Guardian: [How the global climate fight could be lost if Trump is re-elected](#)

Another four years of a Trump administration uninterested in the climate crisis could set back global emissions cuts by a decade, according to one published analysis, making the chances of meeting the goals of Paris near to impossible.

Christian Science Monitor: [Tracking the anti-science wave: Commentary on the roots of distrust](#)

Scientists need to be more actively and openly involved in policy debates. That may make it harder for officials to cherry-pick, and more difficult for the public to accept junk theories.

Science: [The pandemic is hitting scientist parents hard, and some solutions may backfire](#)

Scientist parents who had children 5 years of age or younger suffered a 17% larger decline in research hours than those who did not, according to a study of about 4500 U.S. and European principal investigators surveyed this spring, published this month in Nature Human Behavior.

Science Daily: [Indigenous people vital for understanding environmental change](#)

Grassroots knowledge from indigenous people can help to map and monitor ecological changes and improve scientific studies, according to new research. The study shows the importance of indigenous and local knowledge for monitoring ecosystem changes and managing ecosystems.

TAKE ACTION

NRDC.org: [Tell the EPA to stop undermining clean air protections during COVID-19](#)

Against the advice of the EPA's own scientists, agency leaders just decided NOT to strengthen critical safeguards protecting us from dangerous particulate and ozone air pollution. Failing to strengthen these protections will cause up to 12,500 more premature deaths per year. And people in low-income communities and communities of color—who are already suffering the most from the COVID-19 crisis—will suffer a disproportionate share of the air pollution burden.

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.

The CSIU Weekly News Bulletin is now available on the web. To view this page online go to <https://csiub.org/weekly-news-bulletins>. To view archives of past bulletins, see <https://csiub.org/bulletin-archives>.

To join our listserv, send an email to csiu-l-suscribe@list.indiana.edu, with the following message in the email body: SUBscribe csiu. To unsubscribe from this list, send an email to csiu-l-unsubscribe@indiana.edu. You can leave the subject line and message blank.