



Concerned Scientists' Weekly News Bulletin [August 24, 2020]

NEWS ITEMS AND ARTICLES

Guardian: [Earth has lost 28 trillion tons of ice in less than 30 years](#)

Stunned scientists – based at Leeds and Edinburgh universities and University College London – describe the level of ice loss as “staggering” and warn that their analysis indicates that sea level rises, triggered by melting glaciers and ice sheets, could reach a meter by the end of the century.

E & E News: [Faster flames: Climate trademark of deadly Calif. Wildfires](#)

The amount of land burned last week is more than the total burned in all of 2018, and more than double the amount burned in 2017, according to data released by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection.

New York Times: [Trump administration finalizes plan to open Arctic Refuge trilling](#)

The plan will allow oil and gas development in part of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska. The refuge is largest remaining stretch of wilderness in the US, home to polar bears and migrating caribou, as well as potentially billions of barrels of oil. The Interior Department hopes to sell drilling leases by the end of the year, but environmentalists and some Alaska Native groups are expected to file lawsuits in response.

Politico: [Trump set to block controversial Alaska gold mine](#)

The about-face by the administration likely signals more about issues with this specific mine than a sea change in Trump's overall support for big development projects.

New York Times: [Defying Trump, 5 automakers lock in a deal on greenhouse gas pollution](#)

BMW, Ford, Honda, Volkswagen, and Volvo signed a legal settlement with the California State government restricting levels of tail-pipe emissions. The agreement requires the companies to increase their average fuel economy from today's 30mpg to 51mpg by 2026. Thirteen other states intend to adopt and enforce California's standards. It is seen as a response to the Trump Administration's relaxation of national fuel efficiency standards.

American Institute of Physics: [Public health and “Industries of the Future” top R&D priorities update](#)

The 2022 budget request produced by the Office of Science and Technology Policy and Office of Management and Budget focuses on artificial intelligence, quantum information science, advanced communications networks, advanced manufacturing, and biotechnology, as well as prioritizing public health. It also mentions support for ocean, Arctic, and space exploration and research.

Washington Post: [Trump fetal tissue ethics board urges rejection of nearly all research proposals](#)

An advisory board was recently created to review the ethics of proposed fetal tissue research grants. Two-thirds of the board members are outspoken opponents of fetal tissue research and/or abortion. The board recommended that the NIH withhold funds from 13 of the 14 reviewed research proposals

Guardian: [Coronavirus: Trump authorizes plasma treatment amid attacks on FDA](#)

Trump recently announced an emergency authorization of convalescent plasma. Plasma has been used to treat the flu and measles but has been administered to 64,000 coronavirus patients with no solid evidence that it fights the disease. Trump asserted that the FDA, along with the 'deep-state', are intentionally slowing down treatment and vaccine releases until after the November election.

Nature: [Evidence lags behind excitement over blood plasma as a coronavirus treatment](#)

While some US hospitals offer blood plasma as a treatment in special cases, there has so far been little evidence it helps coronavirus patients. Researchers worry the push to use it as a widespread treatment could undermine clinical trials used to determine its actual effectiveness.

Science: [NIH imposes "outrageous" conditions on resuming coronavirus grant targeted by Trump](#)

In April, NIH cancelled a grant to the EcoHealth Alliance, which involved researchers at China's Wuhan Institute of Virology, following Trump's unfounded claim that the coronavirus escaped from the Wuhan Institute of Virology. The grant cancellation received criticism across the scientific community, and the NIH released plans to reinstate the grant if specific conditions were met, including an investigation into whether the institute was in possession of the virus prior to December 2019.

Nature: [China's research-misconduct rules target "paper mills" that churn out fake studies](#)

China's science ministry is set to introduce its most comprehensive rules so far for dealing with research misconduct. The measures, which come into effect next month, outline what constitute violations and appropriate punishments.

REGIONAL NEWS

Hoosier Environmental Council: [Save the Dates: Greening the Statehouse](#)

Greening the Statehouse (GTS) is the largest annual gathering of environmentally-minded Hoosiers. It is the year's best chance to learn about upcoming legislative issues, engage with environmental public policy experts, and network with environmental-minded Hoosiers and green-minded businesses from across the state. HEC's 13th and first virtual GTS will take place from November 20 to November 21, 2020.

OPINION AND ANALYSIS

E & E News: [With "rich talent pool," who might lead a Biden EPA?](#)

In interviews, former EPA administrators and officials, current and former lawmakers, Democratic consultants, and environmental activists said whoever leads EPA in a potential Biden administration will have to know the agency inside and out. The person's resume may include time as a regional administrator at EPA, head of a state environmental agency or even a governor.

New York Times: [Why does California have so many wildfires?](#)

There are four key ingredients to the disastrous wildfire seasons in the West, and climate change figures prominently.

DER SPIEGEL: ["Helpless Means You Can't Do Anything. There's a Lot We Can Do."](#)

In an interview with DER SPIEGEL, Dr. Anthony Fauci, Donald Trump's pandemic adviser, discusses the anger of his opponents, his relationship with the president, mistakes made in the effort to contain the spread of COVID-19 and his cautious optimism that a vaccine will be available soon.

Grist.org: [The DNC virtual roll call was also a cry for climate action](#)

At the Democratic convention, the climate crisis has generally taken a back seat to the problems of systemic racism, economic collapse, and the slow-moving disaster of the coronavirus pandemic. The roll call, however, demonstrated that other members of the Democratic Party are ready and willing to act on climate, especially if it aligns with other left-leaning priorities.

Yale Environment 360: [North American biomes are losing their resilience, with risks for mass extinctions](#)

The resilience of North America's plant biomes is declining — indicating that today's landscapes are "primed to herald a major extinction event" not seen since the retreat of glaciers and arrival of humans 13,000 years ago, scientists reported in a new study published in the journal Global Change Biology.

The Intercept: [Tilting at windmills: The FBI chased imagined eco-activist enemies, documents reveal](#)

More than a dozen documents collected and disseminated by law enforcement fusion centers and reviewed by The Intercept describe the wild speculation, threat inflation, and close collaboration with the private sector inherent in law enforcement's pursuit of eco-activists branded as extremists.

TAKE ACTION

NRDC.org: [Tell big banks to stop investing in climate-busting coal plants](#)

The U.N. has called for countries around the world to phase out the use of coal-fired power plants to help stave off climate catastrophe. Yet, the world's three biggest private lenders for coal-fired power plants are pushing ahead with disastrous coal projects that could lock us into higher carbon emissions for decades.

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.