

Concerned Scientists' Weekly News Bulletin [October 12, 2020]



NEWS ITEMS AND ARTICLES

New York Times: [In reversal, White House approves stricter guidelines for vaccine makers](#)

The new recommendations, which do not carry the force of law, call for gathering comprehensive safety data in the final stage of clinical trials before an emergency authorization can be granted.

The Hill: [Harris, Pence spar over climate science, fracking, and the Green New Deal](#)

The Vice President repeatedly and falsely asserted a Biden administration plans to ban fracking and adopt the Green New Deal.

Guardian: [Trump has made fracking an election issue. Has he misjudged Pennsylvania?](#)

Support for fracking is declining in Pennsylvania, with a recent poll showing 52% of residents opposing the practice. As of 2017, there were 26,000 jobs in Pennsylvania related to oil and natural gas extraction but 150,000 people living within half a mile of the Mariner East pipeline, which has caused surface and groundwater contamination, mud spills, and sinkholes throughout the region.

InsideClimate News: [Having rolled back Obama's centerpiece climate plan, Trump defends a vastly more limited approach](#)

In a lawsuit filed by the American Lung Association and other environmental groups, 20 Democratic states and the District of Columbia seek to block Trump's limited approach on grounds that it fails to adequately safeguard public health as the Clean Air Act requires.

Guardian: [Trump's public lands chief refuses to leave his post despite judge's order](#)

A controversial environment chief in the Trump administration has said he has no intention of leaving his post after a US district court judge deemed his tenure and ongoing occupation of the position illegal.

Guardian: [Inside the climate battle quietly raging about US homes](#)

The International Code Council recently updated their baseline codes used by most state and city governments regarding new buildings. Some updates aim to make new buildings more energy efficient and suitable for future environmental changes, such as wiring enough power to garages for the possibility of charging electric cars. These changes have met opposition from many developers and gas utility companies.

Smithsonian: [California's first-ever gigafire blazes through the state, scorching more than one million acres](#)

Last week, a megafire created by 300 smaller individual fires was upgraded to a gigafire as it passed the threshold of burning over 1 million acres of land, a size greater than the state of Rhode Island. It marks California's first gigafire in ten years but comes shortly after an Australian gigafire earlier this year.

New York Times: [Nobel Prize in chemistry awarded to 2 scientists for work on genome editing](#)

The Nobel Prize in Chemistry was jointly awarded on Wednesday to Emmanuelle Charpentier and Jennifer A. Doudna for their 2012 work on Crispr-Cas9, a method to edit DNA. The announcement marks the first time the award has gone to two women.

Washington Post: [Mario Molina, Mexico chemistry Nobel winner, dies at 77](#)

He won the prize along with scientists Frank Sherwood Rowland of the United States and Paul Crutzen of the Netherlands for their research into climate change. Molina and Rowland published a paper in 1974 that saw the thinning of the ozone layer as a consequence of chlorofluorocarbons, or CFCs, chemicals used in a range of products.

American Institute of Physics: [FY21 Budget Outlook: DOE Office of Science](#)

The House proposed a small increase in the Department of Energy Office of Science's budget for 2021. Most programs within the office retained their previous budgets, while the Advanced Scientific Computing Research program saw an 4% increase. The Senate has not yet released a counterpart proposal.

American Institute of Physics: [FY21 Budget Outlook: National Science Foundation](#)

The House proposed a 3% increase in the National Science Foundation's budget for 2021, opposing the Trump Administration's suggested cut of 6%. There is no required allocation of funds in the proposal, leaving distribution up to the foundation, which will likely include the expansion of education and research programs. The Senate has not yet released a counterpart proposal.

Nature: [US civil-rights group offers support to researchers facing China scrutiny](#)

The Asian Americans Advancing Justice organization plans to support and provide legal resources to Chinese and Chinese American scientists in the US subject to law enforcement investigations regarding ties to the Chinese government and espionage charges.

Science Blog: [In U.S., broad bipartisan support for a stronger focus on science](#)

The bipartisan support for science stands in sharp contradiction to the disturbing slippage in our nation's global scientific leadership. According to a recent report, the U.S. has fallen to tenth place among OECD nations in the share of investments in research and development.

REGIONAL NEWS

Indy Star: [Energy, rollbacks and climate change: Where Holcomb and Myers differ on environmental issues](#)

As the gubernatorial race heads into its final month, Republican Gov. Eric Holcomb and Democratic challenger Dr. Woody Myers have mapped out strikingly different strategies to grow jobs while protecting the health and environment of Hoosiers.

CBS Chicago: [Indiana's COVID surge continues with 1,581 new cases, third highest total so far](#)

COVID-19 cases in Indiana continue to swell, as public health officials reported 1,581 new confirmed coronavirus cases on Monday, the third highest daily total during the pandemic. The Indiana State Department of Health also announced six new COVID-19 deaths.

OPINION AND ANALYSIS

Civil Eats: [12 Native-owned food businesses to support on Indigenous Peoples' Day](#)

Food is the ultimate connection between humans and the land, and many of these entrepreneurs are continuing their traditions, just as their ancestors have done before them.

Washington Post: [The GOP has a long history of ignoring science. Trump turned it into policy](#)

In the pandemic, we are not witnessing just one man's unhinged actions. We're seeing the apotheosis of a history of science denialism: a frontal attack on the very idea of scientific legitimacy.

Scientific American: [How to get through this election](#)

The biggest threat we face in this moment is voter suppression. So rather than "muting" friends and family members when they post conspiracy theories on Facebook, start a conversation about the serious damage that rumors and falsehoods are doing to our lives, our health, our relationships, and our communities.

Scientific American: [Yes, science is political](#)

When the government ignores scientists, the consequences can be fatal, disproportionately so for Black, brown, and Indigenous communities. Americans are suffering from wildfire-induced poor air quality. More than 200,000 Americans have died from COVID-19. Yet, as our nation grapples with the pandemic, our current administration believes that "science shouldn't stand in the way" of business as usual.

Nature: [Why Nature needs to cover politics now more than ever](#)

Nature plans to publish more politics research, commentary, and news starting in the upcoming weeks, partially in response to the coronavirus thrusting the relationship between science and politics into the public spotlight. They also cite degrading scholarly autonomy and political interference in scientific integrity, as well as many world leaders ignoring scientific findings and consensus on politically charged issues as reasons for this decision. "The conventions that have guided the relationship between science and politics are under threat, and Nature cannot stand by in silence."

Washington Post: [The New England Journal of Medicine avoided politics for 208 years. Now it's urging voters to oust Trump](#)

The respected journal broke the nonpartisan position it has held since 1812 with an editorial titled, "Dying in a Leadership Vacuum," which urged voters to oust Trump over his administration's failures.

Science Daily: [Most nations failing to protect nature in COVID-19 pandemic recovery plans](#)

The COVID-19 pandemic provides an opportunity to reset the global economy and reverse decades of ecosystem and species losses, but most countries are failing to invest in nature-related economic reforms or investments, according to a Rutgers-led paper.

Nature: [Ending hunger: science must stop neglecting smallholder farmers](#)

Smallholders are more likely to adopt new approaches—specifically, planting climate-resilient crops—when they are supported by technical advice, input, and ideas, collectively known as extension services.

The Narwhal: [Can Canada stymie the Trump administration's plan to open an Arctic refuge to oil drilling?](#)

Whether or not industrial development goes ahead in a 1.6 million-acre parcel of the treasured Alaskan refuge, which provides important calving grounds for the threatened transboundary Porcupine caribou herd, could also come down to Canada. In 1987, Canada and the U.S. signed a treaty to ensure the Porcupine caribou herd and its habitat is protected by minimizing possible long-term impacts while balancing subsistence harvesting.

TAKE ACTION

UCS: [On Children's Environmental Health Day: A checklist for defending science and protecting kids](#)

The Center for Science and Democracy has issued recommendations for government decision makers on how to improve scientific integrity, transparency, public participation, and equity in policy. Here are some ways that we can push for action to improve the lives of children and future generations.

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>.

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 Irmischer 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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