

# Concerned Scientists' Weekly News Bulletin [November 2, 2020] Pre-Election Issue



## **NEWS ITEMS AND ARTICLES**

Washington Post: [The U.S. will leave the Paris climate accord on Nov. 4. But voters will decide for how long](#)

*A second Trump term would make clear that an international effort to slow the Earth's warming will not include the U.S. government. Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden, meanwhile, has vowed to rejoin the Paris accord as soon as he is inaugurated, and to make the United States a global leader on climate action.*

New York Times: [As election nears, Trump makes a final push against climate science](#)

*Newly appointed NOAA chief of staff Erik Noble removed chief scientist Craig McLean following a message from McLean to new appointees asking them to adhere to the agency's scientific integrity policy. His replacement, Ryan Maue, has previously criticized climate scientists' predictions as "unnecessarily dire." The position of deputy assistant secretary was recently created and then filled by David Legates, a geography professor who has previously questioned human-caused climate change. Scientists worry these new appointments are an attempt to threaten the National Climate Assessment.*

Guardian: [Trump's environment agency seems to be at war with the environment, say ex-officials](#)

*The Trump Administration has removed rules that will result in "serious and measurable consequences, especially for already overburdened low-income communities and communities of color," according to a report by the Environmental Protection Network. However, the problem extends beyond the Trump Administration. The EPA has struggled to hold its own against industrial impact on the environment, facing insufficient budget and staffing for decades.*

Politico.com: [White House science office takes credit for "ending" pandemic as infections mount](#)

*The White House's science policy office on Tuesday ranked "ending the Covid-19 pandemic" atop the list of President Donald Trump's top first-term accomplishments, even as the country registers record amounts of infections and hospitals fill up again.*

Stanford News: [Academic freedom questions arise on campus over COVID-19 strategy conflicts](#)

*A group of 98 Stanford physicians and researchers with expertise in infectious diseases, epidemiology, and health policy published a public letter that said Scott Atlas, a Stanford neuroradiologist and special coronavirus advisor to President Trump, fosters "falsehoods and misrepresentations of science." Atlas, in turn, threatened to sue.*

Science: [“Another piece of populist propaganda”: Critics slam the Brazilian government’s new COVID-19 drug](#)

*The Brazilian government’s recent announcement about the effectiveness of nitazoxanide, an antiviral drug, at treating COVID-19 has been met with skepticism from the scientific community. Nitazoxanide is an antiparasitic drug that is cheap and easy to produce, and readily available at pharmacies. However, its usefulness against COVID-19 relies on a study of 392 patients with mild cases of the virus. There was no significant difference in symptoms or hospitalization rates of participants after five days, but the experimental group did have lower viral loads than the control group.*

LiveScience: [COVID-19 household transmission is way higher than we thought](#)

*Studies in other countries may have had lower secondary infection rates because people in those countries were quicker to wear face masks inside their own home when another household member was sick. (Mask use when sick has not traditionally been part of American culture).*

NPR: [As biotech crops lose their power, scientists push for new restrictions](#)

*Genetically modified Bt corn and cotton plants are no longer as effective at pest resistance compared to their first introduction in the 1990s. Using a bacteria found in the soil that is poisonous to several major pests in their larval stages, the use of Bt crops allowed farmers to significantly decrease their insecticide use and thus protect the health of pollinators and other organisms, including humans, consuming the products. Their overuse has allowed pest communities to evolve tolerance to the crops, causing scientists to call on the EPA to tighten restrictions on their usage and mandate that larger areas of non-Bt crops be implemented alongside Bt ones.*

Guardian: [Trump administration ends gray wolf’s endangered species protections](#)

*The Trump Administration’s removal of endangered species protections from gray wolves appears premature to many conservationists and scientists, who argue that though population numbers have increased to 6,000 since their initial protection in the 1970s, the animals still occupy only a fraction of their previous range. Farmers argue that wolves pose a threat to their livestock and hunters dislike the competition for deer and other game. 500 wolves have already been killed in the year since protections were lifted in Idaho, Wyoming, and Montana.*

## **REGIONAL NEWS**

IndyStar: [8 things you should know if you're voting with the environment in mind](#)

*Voters want action on climate change and the environment, both in Indiana and across the country. State level surveys show that seven in 10 Hoosiers want their government to do more. And polling across the country shows the majority of voters support a transition to renewable energy.*

IndyStar: [“Farming is in a funny place politically”: Will farmers still vote for Trump after 4 tough years?](#)

*IndyStar recently interviewed 15 farmers across Indiana about this year's election —men and women, new and seasoned farmers, and a variety of operations including traditional row crops, regenerative agriculture, dairy, specialty crops and livestock. The majority remains undecided.*

Indiana Environmental Reporter: [Environmental priorities](#)

*The Indiana Environmental Reporter asked the leaders of several environmental organizations what they hoped would be the environmental priorities for the next four years.*

## **OPINION AND ANALYSIS**

The Japan Times: [Make Science Great Again: U.S. researchers dream of life after Trump](#)

*Dozens of U.S.-based climate scientists who have left the country after Trump's election hope for a return to the days when the United States was viewed as the best place on earth to do their jobs.*

Grist.org: [Could this “army of environmental super voters” sway swing states?](#)

*According to data from the nonpartisan Environmental Voter Project provided exclusively to Grist, 20 percent of early ballots cast in key battleground states like Arizona and North Carolina come from eco-conscious voters, those identified as likely to choose climate or the environment as a top priority.*

Science: [Trump catalyzed the March for Science. Where is it now?](#)

*The March for Science might no longer draw headlines, outside observers say. But it has become part of an evolving science advocacy ecosystem.*

Scientific American: [Seven ways the election will shape the future of science, health, and the environment](#)

*The election's outcome—not just who wins the White House but who controls Congress—will determine what laws get passed, how budgets are allocated and what direction key science-related agencies (such as NASA and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration) will take. Scientific American takes a look at how the election could shape a few key scientific issues, depending on who wins.*

EOS: [How scientists can engage to solve the climate crisis](#)

*The active engagement of scientists will be critical for thoughtful advancement of climate policy, including advancement of policy recommendations put forward in the June 2020 report of the Select Committee on the Climate Crisis established by the U.S. House of Representatives.*

Scientific American: [New activism by scientists can lead to partisan backlash](#)

*One way to combat the politicization of science is to spark Americans' interest in, and curiosity about, scientific research. Studies find that people who take an interest in science—irrespective of whether they consider themselves to be Democrats, Republicans, or independents—are more likely to hold positive views toward the scientific community and support federal funding for scientific research.*

Smithsonian: [To prevent future pandemics, protect nature](#)

*A new report by the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) shows how human degradation of the environment through deforestation, wildlife trade, and climate change has led to the last six pandemics and makes future ones more likely. The report outlines several steps leaders should take in combatting this risk, including establishing an intergovernmental panel dedicated to pandemic prevention, making high-disease risk species illegal to trade, considering potential health impacts of development projects, and incorporating indigenous knowledge into these strategies.*

## **TAKE ACTION**

Scientific American: [On November 3, vote for science](#)

*Instead of thinking about whether to vote Democratic or Republican in the upcoming U.S. election, think about voting to protect science instead of destroying it.*

Columbia Law School: [Consult Columbia University's Silencing Science Tracker](#)

*A joint initiative of the Sabin Center for Climate Change Law and the Climate Science Legal Defense Fund, the tracker lists government attempts to restrict or prohibit scientific research, education or discussion, or the publication or use of scientific information since the November 2016 election.*

*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 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](mailto:cirmsche@indiana.edu).*

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