

# Concerned Scientists' Weekly News Bulletin

## [May 24, 2021]



*Our weekly bulletin collects and digests news of the past week.*

*Contributions welcome.*

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### **NEWS ITEMS AND ARTICLES**

*New York Times:* [Nations must drop fossil fuels fast, world energy body warns](#)

*The International Energy Agency released a report stating that countries must immediately stop building new coal power plants and oil and gas fields, as well as quickly phase-out gas-powered vehicles in order to reach net zero emissions by 2050. If this level is not met, the average global temperature is expected to increase 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels, which is projected to cause significant, irreversible damage. Reports from the International Energy Agency are often used by energy companies and their investors for long-term planning.*

*The Wire Science:* [Protected areas now cover nearly a fifth of Earth's surface, UN Says](#)

*The area of protected land on Earth has increased to seven times the size of India since 2010, according to a report released May 19 by the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), bringing the world tantalizingly close to meeting one of the goals set at the 2010 Convention on Biological Diversity conference held in Japan's Aichi prefecture.*

*Swissinfo.ch:* [WHO prepares for fundamental Covid-induced reforms](#)

*The Covid-19 pandemic has raised questions about the usefulness and importance of the World Health Organization (WHO). How to reform the organization will be on the agenda of the next meeting of the World Health Assembly in Geneva.*

*InsideClimate News:* [EPA watchdog: Trump officials interfered in 2018 dicamba decision](#)

*Senior Trump Environmental Protection Agency officials changed career scientists' analyses and conclusions in order to support the re-registration of the herbicide dicamba in 2018, according to a report from a federal watchdog published Monday.*

AP News: [Senate panel advances Biden pick as WH science adviser](#)

*Eric Lander, also a mathematician, is a professor of biology at both Harvard and MIT and his work has been cited nearly half a million times in scientific literature, one of most among scientists. He has won numerous science prizes, including a MacArthur “genius” fellowship and a Breakthrough Prize, and is one of Pope Francis’ scientific advisors.*

New York Times: [What to save? Climate change forces brutal choices at national parks](#)

*The National Parks service recently published new guidance regarding the maintenance and conservation of ecosystems under the effects of climate change. The document details a plan for deciding which areas, landscapes, and species to prioritize, as well as assessing risks related to relocation. In a break from their previous mission to conserve all natural lands, the authors of the document state that “it will not be possible to safeguard all park resources, processes, assets and values in their current form or context over the long term.”*

New York Times: [Here is who’s behind the global surge in single-use plastic](#)

*130 million tons of single-use plastic was made last year. Half of this plastic was produced by 20 large companies, with Exxon Mobil and Dow producing the most. The average American throws away 110 pounds of single-use plastic every year, and production of single-use plastic is expected to increase by 30% over the next five years. The production is financed by large banks such as JPMorgan Chase and 40% of the largest single-use plastic manufacturers are partially owned by governments such as China and Saudi Arabia.*

Guardian: [Governments achieve target of protecting 17% of land globally](#)

*The UN Environment Programme and the International Union for Conservation of Nature reported that the total coverage of formal protected areas has increased 42% within the last decade, with 17% of land and inland water ecosystems and 8% of marine areas found within protected areas. Despite the dramatic increase, maintaining infrastructure and connectivity between these areas has been difficult, harming their overall effectiveness.*

Nature: [Controversial forestry experiment will be largest-ever in United States](#)

*A research forest in southwestern Oregon will be divided into 40 different sections and used to test different forest management strategies including selective logging and clear cutting. The goal of the research is to determine what constitutes a healthy balance between conservation and timber production. Additionally, the size of the forest will allow researchers to test ecological forestry at a large scale.*

Guardian: [Democrats unveil \\$30bn bill to cancel water debts and bail out utility firms](#)

*The Maintaining Access to Essential Services During the Covid Emergency Act of 2021 proposes a low-interest loans program for water, sewage, electric, and broadband providers, encouraging them to halt fines and shutoffs for their customers in response to late or missing payments. The loans would only be available to companies who cancel debts for low-income households.*

Science: [United States set to allow more facilities to produce marijuana for research](#)

*The US Drug Enforcement Administration plans to issue licenses to several growing facilities allowing research into using marijuana as a treatment for PTSD and chronic*

*pain. Up until this point, the University of Mississippi has been the sole facility allowed to supply marijuana to medical researchers. This is a large step as marijuana consumption remains a criminal offense under federal law, despite being legal for medical purposes in 36 states and recreational use in 17 states.*

*Physics World: [Scientific-journal publishers announce trans-inclusive name-change policies](#)  
Several major scientific-journal publishers have launched policies that allow scientists to easily change their name on previous publications – a move that transgender researchers have been campaigning to introduce for years. In March Elsevier introduced a name-change policy that covers its more than 2,500 journals, while similar initiatives were recently announced by IOP Publishing, which publishes *Physics World*, as well as the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the American Chemical Society, the Royal Society of Chemistry, PLOS, and Wiley.*

## **REGIONAL NEWS**

*Indiana Environmental Reporter: [Indiana senators discuss legislation to support economy, boost technology and reduce climate change impacts](#)*

*Sens. Mike Braun and Todd Young, along with Rep. Trey Hollingsworth, spoke on Thursday to the Nature Conservancy in Indiana about four bipartisan bills they introduced to Congress. The Growing Climate Solutions Act, Conservation and Innovative Climate Partnership Act, Hydrogen Utilization and Sustainability Act, and the Endless Frontier Act each tackle a different part of climate change and aim to provide a scientific and economic framework for the kind of climate change policy that Hoosiers demand.*

*IndyStar: [Abortion rights groups sue Indiana over law regarding “abortion reversal” drug](#)  
All Options Pregnancy Resource Center and a coalition of other health-care providers filed a lawsuit Tuesday over House Bill 1577, which mandates that health care providers must share information about an “abortion reversal” drug to patients seeking an abortion. The new law is set to go into effect on July 1<sup>st</sup>. Opponents assert that the bill has no medical backing and that it could lead to the dangerous misinformation of patients.*

*Pharmacy Practice News: [Manufacturers’ 340B restrictions on contract pharmacies draw ire](#)  
Several drug manufacturers, including Eli Lilly, announced they would no longer extend 340B drug pricing to contract pharmacies. Pharmacies and patients alike are feeling the effects of the change, with the price of insulin rising steeply without the 340B discount. Jahred Washington, 340B program coordinator at UCSF (University of California San Francisco) Medical Center, says that patients “either had to pay much more [for insulin] or change to potentially less effective regimens from other manufacturers that do not have these restrictions.”*

*Indiana Environmental Reporter: [Martinsville group encouraging residents to have homes tested for toxic gases](#)*

*A Community Action Group in Martinsville is encouraging residents to allow the EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) to test their homes for tetrachloroethylene, or PCE, and trichloroethylene, or TCE following a spill from a now-closed dry-cleaning business.*

## **OPINION AND ANALYSIS**

**BBC:** [“Science should be at the center of all policy making”](#)

*Global challenges transcend governments, international boundaries, leadership boards, short-term agendas and traditional siloes. Therefore, if science that incorporates an understanding of people is one of the keys to making breakthroughs in these critical global challenges we face, we need to have scientists incorporated into decision-making teams and leadership bodies.*

**The Guardian:** [The climate crisis requires a new culture and politics, not just new tech](#)

*Even if the technologies on which we pin our hopes for the future deliver as expected and do not lead to much collateral damage – both of which are huge assumptions – they will not have fixed our mindsets. This is a crisis of culture and politics, not of science and technology. To believe that we can innovate and engineer ourselves out of this mess is to miss the key lesson of the Anthropocene – that dealing with planetary-scale processes calls for humility, not arrogance.*

**The Conversation:** [China finances most coal plants built today it’s a climate problem and why US-China talks are essential](#)

*China currently operates 1,058 coal plants, roughly half of all coal plants worldwide. To meet even its modest climate goals, it will have to shut down more than half of them, according to a recent analysis by TransitionZero, a U.S.-based thinktank.*

**ZME Science:** [We can’t “plant our way” out of the climate crisis, researchers argue](#)

*Researchers are advising countries to manage forests proactively for the vegetation changes that can be anticipated, instead of trying to maintain forests as they were decades ago. This means more aggressive thinning of forests to reduce the buildup of fuels that increase wildfires and replacing trees that aren’t in optimal climate zones.*

**Morning AgClips:** [Carbon storage offers hope for climate, cash for farmers](#)

*Farmers increasingly have been growing offseason cereals and grasses to prevent erosion and improve soil. Now, they’re gaining currency as weapons against climate change. Experts believe keeping ground covered year-round rather than bare in winter is among practices that could reduce emissions of planet-warming gases while boosting the agricultural economy, if used far more widely.*

## **TAKE ACTION AND RESOURCES FOR ACTIVISTS**

**UCS:** [Give farmers the tools they need to build resilience and adapt to the climate crisis](#)

*We know soil is the literal foundation of our farming system, making most of our food supply possible. But healthy, spongy soil can also make other important things possible—such as clean water and flood control. That means soil is vital infrastructure for our climate future. Right now, Congress is debating legislation that represents one of the best opportunities in decades to incorporate the science behind soil into our national climate solutions—but they need to hear from constituents. Tell Congress to prioritize soil health and resilience in comprehensive infrastructure and climate legislation.*

NRDC: [Tell President Biden that protecting U.S. lands, waters, and ocean can't wait](#)

*President Biden has committed to protecting at least 30 percent of our lands, waters, and ocean by 2030. This “30x30” plan will preserve natural places that filter out pollution so that we can breathe clean air and drink clean water, help prevent mass wildlife extinctions, fight climate change, and protect us from its worst effects. Sign NRDC’s petition asking President Biden to follow through on his promise and act quickly to protect 30 percent of U.S. lands, waters, and ocean by 2030.*

*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 CSIU member Christoph Irmscher of IU’s Department of English and by ASIU member Emma Hand, a rising senior majoring in biology. **We are delighted to welcome ASIU member and rising sophomore Rose Schnabel, an aspiring science writer, to our team!** 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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