

Monica and Miro

From: Monica and Miro
Sent: Tuesday, September 10, 2019 7:01 AM
To: <benjamin.friedman@noaa.gov>
Subject: Our Daily Planet: NOAA undermines its mission, SF bids to buy its grid, and Governor calls our Trump's war with CA

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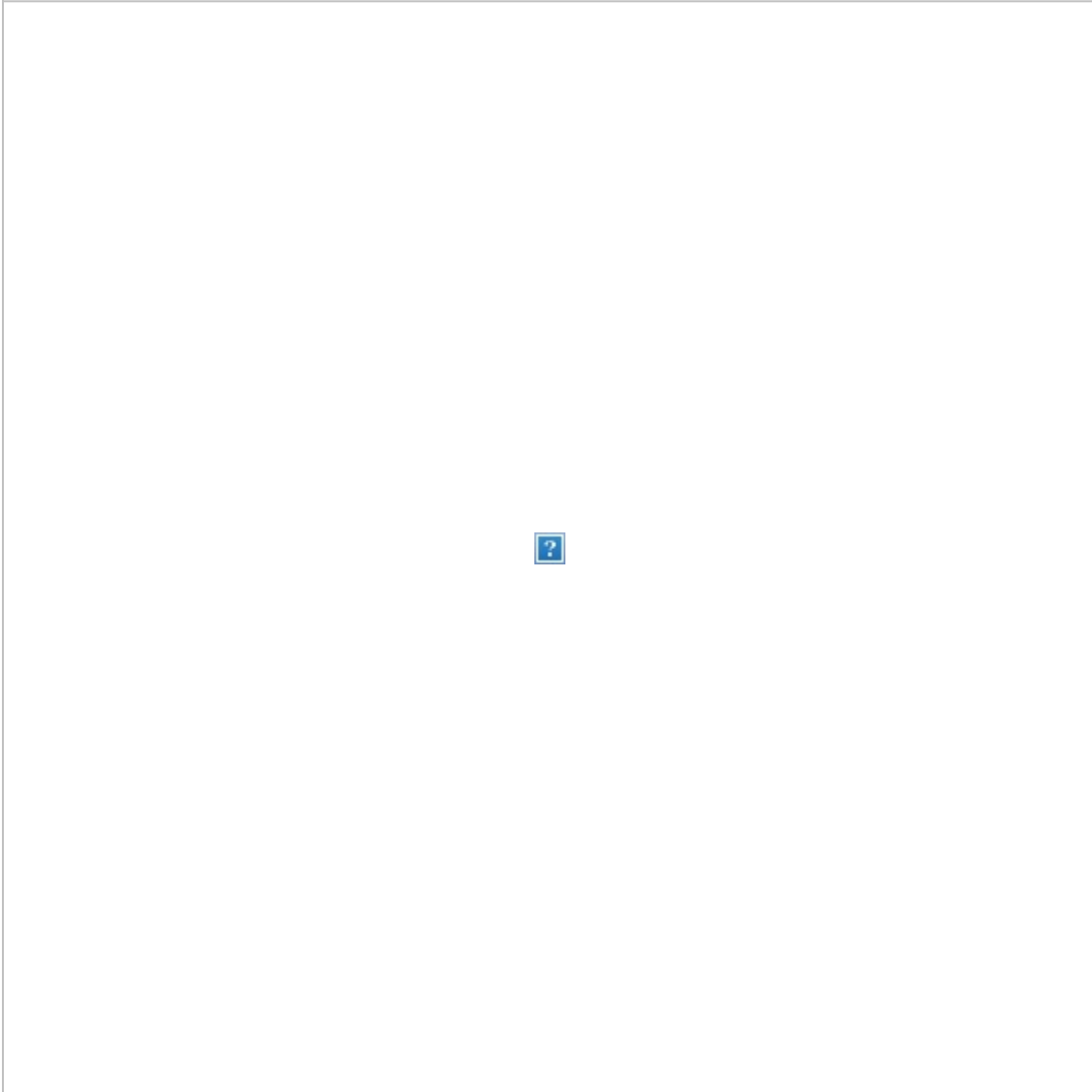


SEPTEMBER 10, 2019

By [Monica Medina](#) and [Miro Korenha](#)

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[Climate Forum Next Week Will Highlight Importance of Storm Preparedness](#)

We started the official countdown to the [#ClimateForum2020](#) yesterday morning - we are now less than 10 days away -- with [a visit to MSNBC's Morning Joe](#) to talk about why accurate weather forecasts are more important than ever given the increasing intensity of storms like Hurricane Dorian. One of the Forum's moderators, MSNBC's Ali Velshi reported last week from the areas in the U.S. where the storm had the greatest impact -- South Carolina and North Carolina (and not Alabama). And yesterday he visited the devastation on Abaco Island of the Bahamas, [and in this report](#), he described the rubble and the "smell of death" and "absolute destruction." So we will

certainly spend time at the Forum talking about the close connection between the rise of severe weather, hurricanes, droughts, and floods, and climate change, and what the candidates intend to do about it. And in one more bit of Forum news, yesterday Representative Tulsi Gabbard confirmed that she will attend. We will bring you a preview every day from now until the Forum, which takes place September 19-20 at Georgetown University, with MSNBC's Ali Velshi and Chris Hayes moderating.



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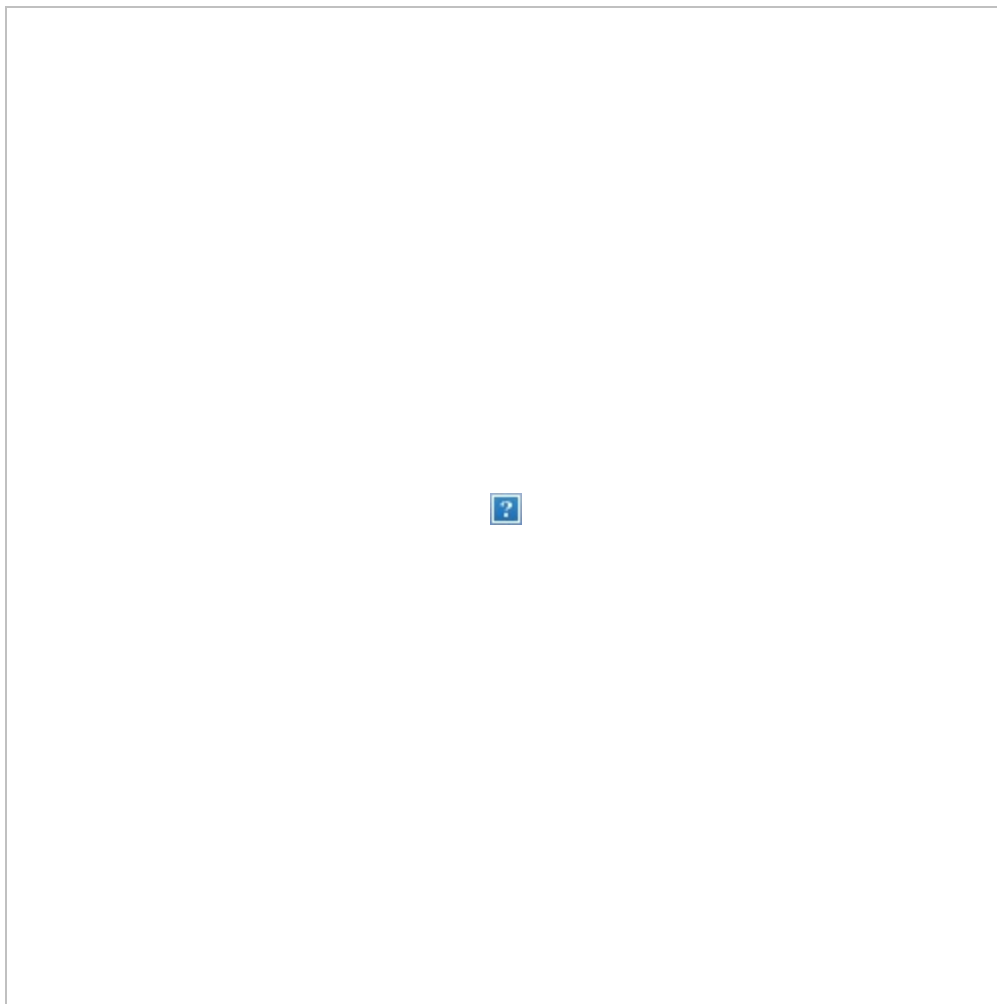
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Weather



[Directors of NOAA Research and National Weather Service Push Back](#)

The Sharpie-Gate saga continued yesterday when [The Washington Post](#) [obtained](#) an internal email from the Chief Scientist at NOAA, Craig McLean, who wrote his colleagues that he "is investigating whether the agency's

response to President Trump's Hurricane Dorian tweets constituted a violation of NOAA policies and ethics." In addition, the [head of the National Weather Service "broke with NOAA leadership"](#) over its handling of Trump's Hurricane Dorian misinformation tweets and statements. And finally, The [NY Times late yesterday afternoon reported](#) that the Secretary of Commerce, Wilbur Ross, threatened to fire the political leadership at the agency if the official NOAA Statement criticizing the Birmingham forecast office did not go out and that the Department's own Inspector General would also now investigate the matter.

Why This Matters: The National Weather Service Forecast Offices and the National Hurricane Center have the most up to date information about storms and severe weather -- they issue the definitive weather forecasts to the entire weather forecasting public-private enterprise and to emergency managers at every level. This is a system that has served the public well for decades. It is good that the career public servants are willing to stand up and defend the actions of their employees -- they were just doing what we need them to do to keep us safe and should not fear for their jobs or careers. And when there is a violation of agency policy, it should be looked at by leadership to make sure they know why and how to do better the next time.

- **All of what the career agency employees are doing is routine and standard. They should be allowed to do their jobs without political interference.**
- **But now the President's supporters may believe those civil servants have "taken sides" against him.**

This is tragic and yet may have been inevitable once he took out that sharpie.

Craig McLean's Memo To Agency Staff [Read more...](#)



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People



Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos Image: Reuters

Amazon Employees Join Global Climate Strike

You may have seen that young climate activists are planning a massive climate strike next week in the lead up to the UN Secretary-General's Climate Action Summit on Monday, September 23rd. As The [Daily Kos explained](#) "[Greta] Thunberg and the movement she started organized a global climate strike March 15. Some [1.4 million people in 2,200 cities in 128 countries](#) worldwide joined the effort that day. Now, with even more groups taking part, organizers expect even bigger crowds for another global climate strike on Sept. 20." And now, Amazon's employees can be added to the list of strikers. [Wired reported that](#) **"over 900 Amazon employees have signed an internal petition pledging to walk out over their employer's lack of action**

on [climate change](#)."

Why This Matters: Amazon's employees called out their CEO **Jeff Bezos** for talking the climate talk in saying that *"It's hard to find an issue that is more important than climate change. The science is super compelling on this: there's no doubt about it"* but not walking the climate walk. As [The New Republic pointed out](#), no one knows much about Amazon's emissions because Bezos has ignored requests from the nonprofit [Carbon Disclosure Project](#), which collects the carbon footprint data of large corporations. Additionally, Amazon's servers use exorbitant amounts of energy for computing power and also to keep themselves cool, Greenpeace has explained that most of this energy is [derived from coal](#). This all comes as Jeff Bezos plans to invest \$1 trillion into a [space program](#) to help humans escape Earth once we make it uninhabitable....wouldn't that money be better spent on climate mitigation? Amazon's employees likely agree!

Want to get involved in the climate strike? Sign up [here](#).

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Energy



Image: KPIX

[San Francisco Makes an Offer to Buy Back Its Power Grid from PG&E](#)

California's largest utility, PG&E, has seen its fair share of woes in recent years. Not only did its transmission lines [spark the deadly Camp Fire](#) but this past January it [filed for bankruptcy](#) as a result of its mounting legal claims. This bankruptcy has sparked questions about the future of utilities and if more localized (or [distributed](#)) energy is the solution for the future of our energy needs. Now, **the City of San Francisco has offered \$2.5 billion to buy out PG&E's electrical grid that serves the city, a potential first step toward separating from the giant utility.**

The Problem With Utilities: Utilities are often seen as the bad guys as they [stymie renewable energy projects](#) and in the case of PG&E have less than stellar media stories about [lying to regulators](#). Vox explained this [really well](#) a couple of years ago:

"US power utilities almost universally operate under what is called cost-of-service regulation (COSR). In a nutshell, they make money by building stuff. The thinking behind COSR is pretty simple. Utilities are state-protected monopolies, so we can't have them profiting off their main product. By law, they have to sell power to ratepayers without any markup. Yet to provide service to their customers, they need investment money to build out new substations, transformers, meters, and power lines. How can we induce private investors to put up money for public capital investments? We offer them — utility shareholders — a safe and predictable rate of return on those investments."

Why This Matters: San Francisco believes that municipalizing its utility (changing ownership of the utility from investor-owned to public) can help bring cheaper prices to customers and drive more transparency. This is a noteworthy story to watch as we move further into the 2020 election. Senator Bernie Sanders outlined in his recently-released [climate plan](#) a [massive public takeover](#) of the nation's utility grid--this part of his plan got a lot of buzz and it will be interesting to see how this point gets discussed in down-ballot races heading into 2020.

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Climate Change



Map: S&P Global Market Intelligence, Sierra Club, Rocky Mountain Institute, USA TODAY research

[New Study Shows Natural Gas Power Plants Are A "Bridge" That Goes Too Far](#)

A [new study by the Rocky Mountain Institute](#) published yesterday makes the case that the U.S. may be making too big an investment in natural gas power infrastructure -- power plants and pipelines -- the life of those plants go out past 2050 and are more than just a "bridge" to renewable power. Not only is this uneconomic -- renewable power will be much cheaper -- but [according to the Union of Concerned Scientists](#), "[i]f the currently planned gas plants and pipelines were built, it would make decarbonizing the power sector by 2050 nearly impossible." **The bottom line is "Continued investments in these power plants will present stranded cost risk for customers,**

shareholders, and society, while locking in 100 million tons of CO₂ emissions each year." Yikes.

Why This Matters: We must not lock ourselves into a future of natural gas energy infrastructure that does provide the greatest economic or climate benefits. We cannot afford either one. Natural gas is cheap right now because it is plentiful, but it still results in significantly more greenhouse gas emissions than totally clean renewables like solar and wind power, and [according to the study](#) 90% of that natural gas power will be more expensive than renewable energy, particularly after 2035.

- While natural gas emits 50-60% less CO₂ than coal, [as the Union of Concerned Scientists explains](#), "Emissions from smokestacks and tailpipes, however, do not tell the full story."
- There are significant emissions associated with flaring of methane from natural gas wells, which is why there is such an uproar over the Trump Administration planned [methane gas rule rollbacks](#).
- And there are significant natural gas [pipeline safety issues](#) as well as the [damage caused by fracking and drilling](#) to groundwater and surface water. **We need a real climate change and clean energy plan now.**

Fast Growth of Natural Gas Power [Read more...](#)



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Arnold Schwarzenegger: Clean Air in California is a Conservative Legacy

Former California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger wrote an [op-ed in the Washington Post](#) arguing that the Trump Administration's effort to undermine California's Clean Air standards is un-American and "an affront to long-standing conservative principles." We recommend you read this piece as it was refreshing to hear a conservative voice speak truth to power when it comes to the actions of the Trump administration on clean air issues. You can [read here our coverage](#) of the attacks by the Trump Administration on the state of California and what this could mean for clean air and clean cars across the country.



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