

GOP Confronts Obama Over EPA

GOP Vows To 'Rein In' Obama On EPA Rules, Global Warming

BY MATTHEW DALY
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Obama administration says a new federal rule regulating small streams and wetlands will protect the drinking water of more than 117 million people in the country.

Not so, insist Republicans. They say the rule is a massive government overreach that could even subject puddles and ditches to regulation.

Sen. Shelley Moore Capito, R-W.Va., is promising to "rein in" the govern-

ment through legislation or other means.

It's a threat with a familiar ring. What else are Capito and other Republicans pledging to try to block?

- the administration's plan to curb carbon pollution from coal-fired power plants.
- its proposal for stricter limits on smog-forming pollution linked to asthma and respiratory illness
- a separate rule setting the first national standards for waste generated from coal burned for electricity.

The rules are among a host of regulations that majority Republicans

have targeted for repeal or delay as they confront President Barack Obama on a second-term priority: his environmental legacy, especially his efforts to reduce the pollution linked to global warming.

Last June, Obama rolled out a plan to cut earth-warming pollution from power plants by 30 percent by 2030, setting in motion one of the most significant U.S. actions ever to address global warming. Once completed this summer, the rule will set the first national limits on carbon dioxide from existing power plants, the largest source of greenhouse gases in the U.S.

The administration says the rule is expected to raise electricity prices by about 4.9 percent by 2020 and spur a wave of retirements of coal-fired power plants.

The administration also has moved forward on other rules, including the water plan announced last Wednesday. Officials say it will provide much-needed clarity for landowners about which small waterways and tributaries must be protected against pollution and development.

The head of the Environmental Protection Agency, Gina McCarthy, said the rule only would affect waters with a "direct and significant" connection to larger bodies of water downstream that already are protected.

The administration has proposed stricter emissions limits on smog-forming pollution linked to asthma and respiratory illness. Rather than settling on a firm new ozone limit, the EPA is proposing a range of allowable ozone levels that cut the existing level

but do not go as far as environmental and public health groups want. The rule is expected to be completed later this year.

In December, the administration set the first national standards for waste generated from coal burned for electricity, treating it more like household garbage than a hazardous material. Environmentalists had pushed for the hazardous classification, citing hundreds of cases nationwide in which coal ash waste has tainted waterways or underground aquifers, in many cases legally.

The coal industry wanted the less stringent classification, arguing that coal ash is not dangerous, and that a hazardous label would hinder recycling. About 40 percent of coal ash is reused.

Qatar Extends Ban On Ex-Gitmo Prisoners

WASHINGTON (AP) — Qatar has agreed to temporarily extend travel bans on five senior Taliban leaders released last year from the prison at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, in exchange for Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl, a senior U.S. official said on Sunday.

The official said the ban would remain in place until diplomatic talks for a longer-term solution are completed. The restrictions had been due to expire on Monday under a May 2014 exchange for Bergdahl. U.S. officials said Friday the Obama administration was closing in on an agreement with Qatar to extend the restrictions for six months that could be announced this weekend. It was not immediately clear why that agreement had not been finalized.

The official said the U.S. remains in "close contact" with Qatari authorities "to make sure these individuals do not pose a threat to the United States." As a result of the talks to date, Qatar "has agreed to maintain the current restrictive conditions on these individuals as we continue these discussions," the official said.

The official said the former detainees are all currently in Qatar and remain subject to the travel ban and extensive monitoring. The official spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to publicly speak to the matter.

Under the terms of the exchange, the five detainees were sent to Qatar, where government officials agreed to monitor their activities and prevent them from traveling out of the country for one year. In return, Bergdahl, who had been held captive by the Taliban for nearly five years after walking away from his Army post in Afghanistan, was released to the U.S. military. He recently was charged with desertion.

Study: Patients May Be Spared radiation

CHICAGO (AP) — A major study could change care for many of the hundreds of thousands of people each year who have cancer that spreads to the brain from other sites. Contrary to conventional wisdom, radiation therapy to the whole brain did not improve survival, and it harmed memory, speech and thinking skills, doctors found.

"This is the classic question: Which is worse, the disease or the treatment?" said one study leader, Dr. Jan Buckner of the Mayo Clinic. Radiation helped control the cancer, "but at the cost of cognitive decline."

For patients, the study is not necessarily the bad news it may seem. It shows that, in this case, quality of life is better with less treatment, and many people can be spared the expense and side effects of futile care.

It was one of three studies discussed Sunday at an American Society of Clinical Oncology conference in Chicago that question longstanding ways that patients are treated. A study found that removing lymph nodes when oral cancers are first diagnosed — not routinely done now — dramatically improves survival. Another found the opposite was true for people with the skin cancer melanoma that had spread to a few lymph nodes.

The first study affects the most patients by far. An estimated 400,000 patients in the United States alone each year have cancer that spreads to the brain, usually from the lungs, breast or other sites.

Kerry Breaks His Leg In Bicycle Crash

GENEVA (AP) — U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry has delayed his trip back to the United States to stay in a Swiss hospital overnight after breaking his leg in a bicycle crash Sunday.

That from State Department spokesman John Kirby, who said after further consultation that it was sensible for him to remain in the hospital for observation overnight for precautionary reasons.

Kerry had to scrap the rest of a four-nation trip that included an international conference on combating the Islamic State group.

Former Nazis Paid \$20.2M In Benefits

WASHINGTON (AP) — Elfriede Rinkel's past as a Nazi concentration camp guard didn't keep her from collecting nearly \$120,000 in American Social Security benefits.

Rinkel admitted to being stationed at the Ravensbrueck camp during World War II, where she worked with an attack dog trained by the SS, according to U.S. Justice Department records. She immigrated to California and married a German-born Jew whose parents had been killed in the Holocaust.

She agreed to leave the U.S. in 2006 and remains the only woman the Justice Department's Nazi-hunting unit ever initiated deportation proceedings against. Yet after Rinkel departed, the U.S. Social Security Administration kept paying her widow benefits, which began after her husband died, because there was no legal basis for stopping them until late last year.

Rinkel is among 133 suspected Nazi war criminals, SS guards, and others that may have participated in the Third Reich's atrocities who received \$20.2 million in Social Security benefits, according to a report to be released later this week by the inspector general of the Social Security Administration. AP obtained a copy of the report.



Former Baltimore mayor and Maryland governor Martin O'Malley announces his decision to seek the Democratic nomination for the presidency, at Federal Hill in Baltimore on Saturday.

O'Malley Vows To Campaign Hard In New Hampshire

BY KATHLEEN RONAYNE
Associated Press

HANOVER, N.H. — A day after jumping into the presidential race, Democrat Martin O'Malley vowed Sunday to fight hard in New Hampshire, home of the first presidential primary and a stronghold for Hillary Rodham Clinton.

"I'm used to tough fights, I've always been drawn to them," O'Malley told reporters after greeting voters at a diner.

O'Malley kicked off his presidential bid Saturday and is making trips to the early voting states of Iowa and New Hampshire. He is the third Democrat to enter the race, behind Clinton and Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders, and still remains unknown by many voters. He has campaigned frequently alongside New Hampshire candidates in past elections, but is struggling to gain traction in a state where the Clintons have long been popular.

Clinton won the 2008 New Hampshire primary, and many of the state's influential Democrats are already actively backing her 2016 candidacy.

O'Malley supported Clinton in 2008 and has been hesitant to attack her directly. But he

is drawing a contrast with Clinton on the issue of Wall Street reform and says Democratic voters are hungry for an alternative.

"I did support her in 2008, I thought she was one of the best candidates for those times — but times change," O'Malley said. "One of the big challenges that we have yet to address in this country is reining in reckless behavior on Wall Street, and I believe we need new leadership to do that."

At an event at Dartmouth College, a student asked O'Malley whether Clinton had been a good secretary of state. O'Malley did not offer specific criticism but did say the country needs a "new foreign policy" focused more on building regional alliances and creating stability after dictators are toppled.

Speaking about his path to victory, O'Malley vowed to campaign in New Hampshire frequently and said he plans to engage directly with voters. O'Malley took press questions at all three of his stops Sunday. Clinton has faced criticism on the trail for not taking reporters' questions on a regular basis.

"If you offer yourself as a candidate, you should be willing to answer as many questions as you possibly can, as best as you can possibly answer them," O'Malley said.

Ribfest

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given Ribfest was moving from downtown — where the crowds number into the low thousands — to a larger space at Memorial Park, she added.

"We didn't really know what to expect, it was all new to us," Wyland said.

Vendors will open their stands at 11 a.m. Saturday, with music to begin at noon, capped off by an 8:30 p.m. performance by Hairball, which received rave reviews after last summer's show.

With the increase in the number of vendors comes additional food selections, Wyland said. Eight vendors will sell items ranging from corn, funnel cakes and turkey legs — items that would be more suitable to kids, Wyland said.

Other events at Ribfest will include the Amateur Rib

Contest (with cash prizes totaling \$900), a Coed Sand Volleyball Tournament, and other booths set up on-site.

Two other changes for this year's event are directly tied into audience viewing. Rather than having two stages, the Ribfest committee was able to upgrade to one stage that will be able to boast improved sound and lighting. The second change is the addition of a 12-by-20-foot LED screen that will stand 40 feet in the air, which will allow spectators to see the action from around the park.

"I'm really excited about that," Wyland said of the new display. "It gives our big sponsors an opportunity to have a short commercial or logo, and we'll have a camera that pans the crowd."

Budweiser is also bringing in a 30-by-50-foot trailer to provide tours and demonstrations of how the company makes its beer.

Wine will also be available for sale at Ribfest, another addition this year.

Five musical acts will take the stage throughout the day: The Mitigators begin the day at noon, followed by Mrs. Begley and The Boys at 2 p.m., The Austin Buescher Band at 4 p.m., Go Figure at 6:30 p.m. and Hairball at 8:30 p.m.

Hairball, a 1980s tribute band, has proven to be a popular attraction across the region because of its high-energy performances, Wyland said.

"That brought a lot of people here last year. They've got a good following," she said. "Next year, we'll find somebody just as good."

"We don't want to be stagnant with our bands."

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Biden's Son Dies Of Brain Cancer

BY DARLENE SUPERVILLE
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Beau Biden, who followed his father, Vice President Joe Biden, into politics and was twice elected attorney general of Delaware, died Saturday of brain cancer less than two years after he was diagnosed. Beau Biden was 46.

The younger Biden, who suffered a series of health problems in recent years, was hospitalized this month at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Washington for then-undisclosed reasons. He suffered a mild stroke in 2010 and three years later underwent surgery at a Texas cancer center to remove what was describe as a small lesion.

He announced last year that he would not seek a third term as attorney general and planned to run for governor in 2016.

"It is with broken hearts that Hallie, Hunter, Ashley, Jill and I announce the passing of our husband, brother and son, Beau, after he battled brain cancer with the same integrity, courage and strength he demonstrated every day of his life," the vice president said late Saturday in announcing the death of his second child. An infant daughter was killed in a car accident more than four decades ago.

"The entire Biden family is saddened beyond words. We know that Beau's spirit will live on in all of us — especially through his brave wife, Hallie, and two remarkable children," he said.

President Barack Obama said he and his wife, Michelle, were grieving alongside the Biden family.

"Michelle and I humbly pray for the good Lord to watch over Beau Biden, and to protect and comfort his family here on Earth," Obama said in a separate statement. The Obamas visited the vice president and his family at their official residence, the Naval Observatory, on Sunday afternoon.

The vice president said his son had dedicated his life to serving others during stints as a lawyer, a major in the Delaware National Guard and as state attorney general. Beau Biden served a yearlong deployment in Iraq and was awarded a Bronze Star.

He most recently was with the Wilmington, Delaware, law firm Grant & Eisenhofer, where he focused on securities litigation and whistle-blower cases.

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