



Drumbeat: August 12, 2013

Posted by [Leanan](#) on August 12, 2013 - 9:09am

[Amid Pipeline Debate, Two Costly Cleanups Forever Change Towns](#)

MARSHALL, Mich. — As the Obama administration inches closer to a decision on whether to approve construction of the much-debated Keystone XL pipeline, costly cleanup efforts in two communities stricken by oil spills portend the potential hazards of transporting heavy Canadian crude.

...“All oil spills are pretty ugly and not easy to clean up,” said Stephen K. Hamilton, a professor of aquatic ecology at Michigan State University who is advising the Environmental Protection Agency and the state on the cleanup in Marshall. “But this kind of an oil is even harder to clean up because of its tendency to stick to surfaces and its tendency to become submerged.”

[Fracking Is Just The Beginning: The Rise Of Extreme Energy](#)

With oil prices still sky high and the atmospheric carbon dioxide concentration surpassing 400 parts per million for the first time in human history this year, the facts on the ground remain grim. What has altered radically is the level of spin deployed to counter this reality, as even the pretence of action has all but evaporated. Now the focus is on the appearance of plans for action, principally through the promise of techno-fixes, such as carbon capture and storage (CCS) or geo-engineering, in the far future.

Behind all this smoke and mirrors, there is a real world not amenable to such trickery. On one side increasingly extreme weather hints at what climate change has to offer, while on the other rising energy costs mark the ongoing depletion of fossil fuels.

But fossil fuels are not like a petrol tank of a fixed size, which we are burning up and will eventually simply run out. Tar sands, Arctic drilling and fracking demonstrate that as easy-to-extract resources are depleted there is always some more difficult-to-extract resource to take their place, if you are desperate enough. These harder-to-extract fossil fuels come with additional costs beyond their carbon emissions, however.

[WTI Trades Near Four-Day High Amid Signs Europe Recession](#)

West Texas Intermediate crude traded near its highest level in four days amid estimates that the euro-area edged back to growth last quarter for the first time since 2011.

Futures fluctuated in New York before data this week that will probably show gross domestic product in the 17-nation region expanded 0.2 percent in the three months through June after shrinking for the previous six quarters, according to the median of 21 economist forecasts in a Bloomberg News survey. Iraq's North Oil Co. said it boosted supply through an export pipeline to Ceyhan in Turkey, to make up for interruptions. Bijan Namdar Zanganeh pledged to raise Iran's output if he becomes the country's oil minister.

"The worst is over for Europe but we expect growth to remain shallow rather than a return to impressive growth," said Carsten Fritsch, an analyst at Commerzbank AG in Frankfurt. "I don't see an environment for prices rising further at the moment. We need to absorb the oversupply first."

[U.S. Average Gasoline Prices Fell 7.61 Cents in Last Two Weeks](#)

The average price for regular gasoline at U.S. pumps fell 7.61 cents in the past two weeks to \$3.5985 a gallon, according to Lundberg Survey Inc.

[Saudi Arabia raised oil output to 10 million bpd in July](#)

Saudi Arabia produced around 10.0 million barrels per day (bpd) of oil in July, up from 9.6 million bpd in June, an industry source said on Saturday.

The world's largest oil exporter supplied a total of 9.99 million bpd to the domestic and export markets, he said. When Saudi output is higher than supply, the difference typically goes into storage.

[Iran's Zanganeh Plans to Boost Oil Output If Made New Minister](#)

Iran's Zanganeh Plans to Boost Oil Output If Made New Minister By Ladane Nasseri - 2013-08-11T10:01:24Z Bijan Namdar Zanganeh, a former Iranian oil minister who has been nominated by President Hassan Rohani to take over the ministry again, pledged to boost Iran's oil output should he be approved by the parliament.

"My first action will be to bring the country's oil production capacity back to 2005" levels, Zanganeh was quoted as telling Shana, the Oil Ministry's news website. At that time Iran wasn't subject to United Nations, U.S. and European Union sanctions against its nuclear program. The measures, imposed during ex-president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's time in office, have restricted international companies' ties with Iran and the country's crude exports.

[Mexico aims for NAFTA-style growth boost from energy reform](#)

Mexico's plans to break a 75-year state monopoly on energy could boost flagging growth and double foreign investment, potentially providing the biggest leg-up to its economy since the North American Free Trade Agreement two decades ago.

The government is finalizing proposals to lure private investors into the oil, gas and electricity industries in order to boost production and lower energy costs for manufacturers, which are up to twice as high as those paid by U.S. companies.

[Oil minnow GS Energy has become a player in Abu Dhabi's coveted fields](#)

Yet this minnow among South Korea's chaebol, as the nation's family-controlled conglomerates are called, has managed to lay its hand on some of the world's most coveted oilfields in Abu Dhabi.

Last year the company signed an exploration agreement, together with its partner Korea National Oil Corporation (Knoc), for three blocks in the emirate - a landmark deal in a place where the last new country to gain a concession in the emirate was Japan in 1968.

[DOE warns Forum Energy on drilling near disputed waters](#)

MANILA - Energy Secretary Jericho Petilla cautioned an exploration company from proceeding with drilling operations after getting the nod of the Palawan Council for Sustainable Development to explore 880,000 hectares of seas, 80 nautical miles from Palawan for oil and natural gas.

[OPEC Governor: Iran's Crude Oil Exports Exceeding Envisaged Figures](#)

TEHRAN (FNA)- Iran's OPEC Governor Mohammad Ali Khatibi underlined ineffectiveness of the US-led sanctions against Tehran, and said Iran's crude export has exceeded the figures envisioned in the country's budget bill.

[India's MRPL to receive Iranian cargo after 4-month gap](#)

(Reuters) - India's Mangalore Refinery and Petrochemicals Ltd said on Monday it expects to receive an Iranian oil cargo by the end of this week, the firm's first purchase from the sanctions-hit nation since April.

[Gunmen kill 5 Yemeni troops guarding LNG plant-official](#)

ADEN (Reuters) - Suspected al Qaeda militants killed four Yemeni soldiers in their sleep early on Sunday in an attack on forces guarding the country's only liquefied natural gas (LNG) export terminal, a local official said.

The assault follows an escalating campaign of drone strikes by the United States over the past two weeks and warnings of militant attacks that prompted Washington to close embassies across the Middle East and evacuate some staff from Yemen.

[Libya's two largest oil export terminals closed again](#)

LONDON (Reuters) - Striking security guards again halted loadings at Libya's two largest crude oil export terminals, Es Sider and Ras Lanuf, after operations had resumed briefly following a two-week outage, trading and shipping sources said on Monday.

The port outages, coupled with strikes and protests at other oil installations, have caused the worst disruption to the North African OPEC member's oil industry since the civil war in 2011.

[Venezuelan refinery ablaze after lightning strike](#)

(CNN) -- Firefighters were battling a blaze at a Venezuelan refinery Sunday after a lightning strike, a top official in the country's state oil company said.

Lightning struck Sunday afternoon at a Petroleos de Venezuela refinery in the northern city of Puerto La Cruz, causing an explosion and subsequent fire, company Vice President Asdrubal Chavez said.

[Irving Oil's plans for land worry environmentalist](#)

A Saint John environmentalist is worried about Irving Oil Ltd.'s plan for thousands of acres of land in east Saint John.

Clean air activist Gordon Dalzell suspects at least some of the estimated 4,000 acres could be used to build a marine terminal if TransCanada Corp.'s west-east pipeline project goes ahead.

[Disgraced British ex-energy minister lands job with US firm](#)

(Reuters) - Former British minister Chris Huhne has taken up a senior job at a U.S. renewable energy firm, less than three months after he was released from prison where he was serving time for lying to the authorities about a speeding offence.

[Insight: California aims to 'bottle sunlight' in energy storage push](#)

(Reuters) - California, whose green ambitions helped the solar and wind industries take

root, is taking an essential next step by proposing a sharp rise in energy storage to better integrate renewable power with the rest of the grid.

Power from sun and wind fluctuates dramatically, so capturing it for later use makes the supply more predictable.

"We can't just rely on sunlight," Governor Jerry Brown told the Intersolar conference in San Francisco last month. "We've got to bottle the sunlight."

[Albany, Long Buried in Paper, Resolves to Save a Small Forest](#)

In June, after years of inaction even as other states moved to reduce legislative paper consumption, New York lawmakers gave their final approval to a measure that would allow the Legislature to publish bills electronically, rather than on paper.

However, nothing in Albany is ever simple. An obscure provision in the State Constitution requires that bills "shall have been printed and upon the desks of the members" for three days before a vote can be taken. So delivering bills to lawmakers on tablets or laptop computers, as it turns out, requires a constitutional amendment, which the Legislature will put before voters on the statewide ballot next year.

[Using the Law to Battle Zebra Mussels and Other Unwanted Pests](#)

One way zebra mussels are introduced to new waterways is by boats that are not cleaned properly. Legislation passed this spring aims to increase awareness among Texas boaters about how to prevent the spread of the mussels and other invasive species.

To be certified to use a boat in Texas, people must take a Texas Parks and Wildlife Department boating education course. The department certifies about 12,000 boaters a year. The new legislation adds test questions to existing courses on preventing the spread of invasive species.

[On Fate of Wild Horses, Stars and Indians Spar](#)

Free-roaming horses cost the Navajos \$200,000 a year in damage to property and range, said Ben Shelly, the Navajo president. There is a gap between reality and romance when, he said, "outsiders" like Mr. Redford — who counts gunslinger, sheriff's deputy and horse whisperer among his movie roles — interpret the struggles of American Indians.

"Maybe Robert Redford can come and see what he can do to help us out," Mr. Shelly said in an interview. "I'm ready to go in the direction to keep the horses alive and give them to somebody else, but right now the best alternative is having some sort of slaughter facility to come and do it."

[Investors in agriculture ignore environmental risks at their peril](#)

A new report on the environmental risks faced by agriculture spells out risk factors for investors and food companies.

[Oil-Sands Industry Turns to Algae to Appease Obama](#)

Canada's response to President Barack Obama's challenge to reduce emissions of global-warming gases from the oil sands starts with sewage and algae.

The paste-like crude extracted from oil sands is softened by heat and steam to make it flow through pipelines. Burning natural gas to process the fuel creates carbon dioxide that researchers say can be mixed with waste water and fed to algae, which can be processed into cattle feed and other products.

[A Very Short History of How Americans Use Energy at Home](#)

Let's take a quick tour of how Americans use energy at home. Per capita energy consumption has stayed fairly stable over the past thirty years, but how we use energy has changed.

Insulation improvements and efficiency gains in heating and cooling have made the task of temperature management less energy-intensive. And these improvements have been offset by the proliferation of electronic appliances and gadgets.

While appliances and electronics have grown in their share of total energy consumption, the single biggest energy drain remains heating, as well as cooling in warmer climes.

[Enviros not happy with Calif. carbon offsets](#)

SACRAMENTO, Calif. -- A component of California's landmark offensive against greenhouse gas emissions is not sitting well with some environmental groups.

[Areas of Sacramento will be inundated as sea rises over the years, study says](#)

It could take a few hundred years – or even 2,000 – but the eventual, permanent flooding of low-lying areas in Sacramento is guaranteed if greenhouse gases are not deeply reduced, according to new research.

A rising sea level due to climate change is expected to dramatically alter the future landscape of many of the world's coastal areas around the world. A new study shows that the largest U.S. cities highly threatened by future sea level rise are Miami, Virginia Beach, Va., Jacksonville, Fla., and Sacramento.

While Sacramento is not a coastal city like the others, its numerous waterways make it particularly vulnerable.



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