

Message

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Subject: Fwd: Morning Energy: Plans for deep federal workforce cuts unveiled — How U.S. demands blew up G7 energy statement — D.C. Circuit puts ozone challenge on ice — More groups urge U.S. to stick with Paris

Redacted - First Amendment

From: POLITICO Pro Energy <[REDACTED]@politicopro.com>
Date: April 12, 2017 at 5:45:37 AM EDT
To: <[REDACTED]@bp.com>
Subject: Morning Energy: Plans for deep federal workforce cuts unveiled — How U.S. demands blew up G7 energy statement — D.C. Circuit puts ozone challenge on ice — More groups urge U.S. to stick with Paris
Reply-To: POLITICO subscriptions <[REDACTED]@politicoemail.com>

By Anthony Adragna | 04/12/2017 05:41 AM EDT

With help from Esther Whieldon, Eric Wolff, Alex Guillén, Annie Snider, Ben Lefebvre and Darius Dixon

TRUMP TAKES AIM AT FEDERAL WORKFORCE: President Donald Trump's administration today will send a 14-page memorandum to federal agency heads ordering them to begin taking steps toward making deep personnel cuts over the next year, POLITICO's Ian Kullgren and Matthew Nussbaum [report](#). Specifics of the cuts were not mentioned, but Trump's budget chief Mick Mulvaney did single out EPA as a particular target. "Everybody acknowledges, given the proposed reductions to the Environmental Protection Agency in the budget, they would have to reduce the size of their workforce," he said. "And it's just sort of up to them to come up with ideas on how to do that effectively." Not all of the staffing cuts will be achieved through layoffs, with the guidance suggesting any vacant posts judged unnecessary can be eliminated immediately.

Curtains for EPA regions? Mulvaney declined to comment on the budget's instructions for EPA to identify two regional offices for closure by June 15, saying many agencies may decide to reduce their national footprints, and the decision will be up to EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt. Critics of the plan argue those divisions are often the ones that work most closely with states, in the cooperative style Pruitt has advocated, and that shuttering them would hinder that effort.

Here's an idea: Mulvaney said the administration is looking for ideas from the public on how best to structure government. Here's one from now-citizen Barack Obama: Move NOAA to the Interior Department, rather than its current Commerce Department home, where it was placed in the '70s by a vindictive Richard Nixon.

Mulling a Pentagon takeover of nukes? Mulvaney also outlined the limits of what government reorganizations can take place without help from Congress, highlighting the Energy Department's nuclear weapons program as something it can't move without new laws. While he went to great lengths to distance the administration from taking that DOE idea seriously (yet), Mulvaney nevertheless said: "We may decide — emphasis on may — does that really make sense anymore? We know why it happened in the '40s and the '50s, but today would it make sense maybe to have that in the Department of Defense? That would take some type of congressional authority to do that."

This isn't a new vision for DOE, considering that at least two Energy secretaries and many lawmakers have suggested something similar in the past. But the whole thing is a can of worms, and there are two central reasons why the idea has never taken off. First, in the same way that the U.S. military is fundamentally a tool of civilian government, nuclear weapons have been deemed so awesome that they should be in civilian hands as well. Part of the logic within the nonproliferation world is that thorough safety controls and nonproliferation checks are best conducted by the civilians who aren't charged with turning the keys. (And for what it's worth, Russia and most other nuclear powers also don't house their nukes with their armed forces.)

Then there's the logistical challenge. DOE's weapons maintenance and Cold War cleanup programs are about \$20 billion per year. That's about two-thirds of DOE's budget but less than 4 percent of DOD's. If people can agree that nuclear weapons programs ought to have Cabinet-level representation, making them a small fish in a big DOD pond doesn't bring much comfort. It's also unclear how you break up the national labs, which have some mission overlap — but tremendous home state support.

P.S.: We'll try not to read anything into whether the White House wants to take nuclear weapons away from Rick Perry.

WELCOME TO WEDNESDAY! I'm your host Anthony Adragna, and Adam Jorde from Rep. Kevin Cramer's office was first to pick La Paz, Bolivia as the world's highest capital (though it's the de facto and not constitutional capital of that country). For today: How many states have never had a female governor? Send your tips, energy gossip and comments to [REDACTED]@politico.com, or follow us on Twitter @ [REDACTED] and @ [REDACTED]

(FOSSIL) FUELING AN INTERNATIONAL DISAGREEMENT: A weeks-long behind-the-scenes fight between the Trump administration and other G-7 countries burst onto the scene this week over U.S. insistence on the inclusion stronger pro-coal, pro-nuclear language in a proposed joint statement on energy policy, Pro's Andrew Restuccia reports. G-7 officials, led by the Europeans, refused to agree to stronger language touting fossil fuels without assurances from the United States that it would stay in the Paris climate change agreement, but U.S. demands proved too difficult to overcome and the statement was eventually abandoned.

The draft joint statement obtained by POLITICO shows the U.S. suggested inserting stronger language touting coal and nuclear energies throughout the document. And officials briefed on the discussions told Andrew that while administration officials asked foreign officials not to pack the joint statement with mentions of renewable energy and climate change in the run-up to the meeting, early drafts of the document included frequent mentions of the topics. Tensions over the negotiations grew so heated that a European official at one point accused a U.S. official of trying to "internationalize" the Trump administration's focus on fossil fuels.

COURT AWARDED WARRANT AGAINST PAGE: The FBI obtained a secret court order to monitor the communications of Carter Page, who Trump identified as one of his foreign policy and energy advisers in March 2017, last summer, the Washington Post reports. Officials said the judge granted the request after concluding there was probable cause Page was acting as an agent of Russia.

OZONE CHALLENGE ON HOLD: Pruitt's EPA now can decide whether to rewrite an Obama-era ozone regulation after a federal appeals court put ongoing litigation over the rule on hold Monday, Pro's Alex Guillén reports. Oral arguments that had been scheduled for April 19 were delayed indefinitely by the D.C. Circuit

Court of Appeals and the court also ordered EPA to provide updates every 90 days on its progress in reviewing the standard. The court further asked to be notified "promptly" once EPA decides whether to repeal or modify the tightened ozone standard.

Opens regulatory review to comment: EPA also formally opened a docket to public comment Monday as part of its push, under a Trump executive order, to identify regulations to be repealed, replaced or modified. Public comments will be accepted through May 15. "EPA will be listening to those directly impacted by regulations, and learning ways we can work together with our state and local partners, to ensure that we can provide clean air, land, and water to Americans," Pruitt said in a statement.

GETTING PRUITT'S EAR: Since his February confirmation, Pruitt has held face-to-face meetings with at least 17 governors, state and regional environmental officials, state agriculture officials and at least five congressional lawmakers, the agency told ME. Those five: House Science Chairman Lamar Smith, Rep. David McKinley and Sens. Shelley Moore Capito, Luther Strange and Joe Donnelly.

Noticeably absent are in-person meetings with Senate EPW Chairman John Barrasso and Rep. John Shimkus, who chairs the subcommittee that oversees EPA. But Barrasso's office said he's spoken to Pruitt over the phone since his confirmation and seen him at a host of public events. "The chairman and the committee are in close contact with the leadership at the EPA," Mike Danylak, an EPW spokesman, told ME. Shimkus spokesman Jordan Haverly said he'd met with Energy Secretary Rick Perry last week but hadn't yet seen Pruitt.

STAFFING SHUFFLE: PHMSA plans a shuffle of career staff to alleviate openings in the pipeline safety agency, according to an email obtained by POLITICO. "We have a couple of critical positions which have remained unfilled. We are making some personnel moves to fill those positions," which will be effective April 16, PHMSA Associate Director Alan Mayberry announced in the email sent to staff on Monday. PHMSA Southwest Region Director Rodrick Seeley will take over the national safety coordinator position for Wayne Lemoi, who will become the National Safety Coordinator. Western Region Director Chris Hoidal will become a senior technical adviser for program development. PHMSA is also developing a plan to rotate people in and out of regional director positions for 120 days at a time "until the positions may be filled," the email states. PHMSA operates five regional offices, but it was unclear how many of those are missing senior staff. A PHMSA spokesperson did not immediately respond to an email seeking comment.

ME FIRST! FARMERS CALL ON TRUMP TO STAY IN PARIS: The National Farmers Union, a left-of-center farmers and ranchers advocacy group, is asking Trump to keep the U.S. in the Paris climate agreement and preserve carbon dioxide reduction commitments. The group argues in a letter it's sending today climate-fighting policies can help rural populations, whether through improved energy efficiency or carbon sequestration through land banking. "Farmers are on the front lines of climate change," NFU President Roger Johnson says in the letter. "Producers have been experiencing costly disruption from climate change for some time, including more frequent and intense drought, flooding and wildfires." The American Farm Bureau Federation, the nation's largest farm group, does not appear to have opined on the Paris agreement, but it opposes most greenhouse gas regulation.

SECONDED: The Business Council for Sustainable Energy is also sending a letter today to Secretary of State Rex Tillerson urging the U.S. to remain in the Paris agreement and be an active participant in the UNFCCC. "Our coalition is also concerned that any back-tracking on U.S. commitments to the Paris Agreement or UNFCCC could induce negative market outcomes for U.S. companies that are doing business abroad," the letter states.

DES MOINES DROPS AG WATER POLLUTION SUIT: Two years after the Des Moines Water Works undertook an ambitious legal gambit aimed at forcing regulation of the upstream agricultural pollution fouling its water supply, the utility is calling it quits in court. In a statement Tuesday night, the Water Works said it would not seek to appeal a federal district judge's March decision dismissing the case. The Iowa Supreme Court had already ruled that the utility couldn't win financial damages in the suit. Instead, Water Works CEO Bill Stowe said the utility would be looking to lawmakers to remedy the problem, which the courts had suggested would be the proper avenue.

TRUMP, PRUITT MEET WITH CEOs: Pruitt met with Dan Yergin, author of "The Prize" and the vice chairman of IHS Markit; Mary Barra of General Motors and Paul Atkins of Patomak Global Partners as part of the White House's "Strategic and Policy Forum" on Tuesday. Trump addressed the environment directly during remarks: "On the environment, we're going to be very, very careful on the environment," he said. "[But] we've unleashed a lot of companies, especially right now in the energy sector — you see what's going on there. It was impossible for people to do what they had to do, and now they can do it. It's all done." Pruitt's pic from the scene [here](#).

CARPER TOURS REFINERY: Top Senate Environment and Public Works Committee Democrat [Tom Carper](#) [tweeted](#) Tuesday about his visit to a refinery in Delaware. "On the side of a 'cat' at the Delaware City Refinery, now undergoing maintenance by 1,600 workers from all over the country," he said. ME guesses he may be referring to the plant's fluid catalytic cracker, the unit responsible for making gasoline.

McCARTHY MADE ROMNEY'S INFAMOUS BINDERS: The Boston Globe [obtained](#) Mitt Romney's much-mocked "[binders of full of women](#)" and former Obama administration EPA chief Gina McCarthy made it into them. She sought an environmental post and the Globe reports the words "knows about brownfield redevelopment" appeared next to her name. McCarthy ultimately held several environmental positions in Massachusetts under Romney.

MAIL CALL! CONCERNS OVER INSPECTOR GENERAL FUNDING: Top House Energy and Commerce Democrat [Frank Pallone](#) wrote the inspector generals at EPA, Energy and NRC to express concerns about potential funding and staffing cuts. "While we understand the difficult fiscal choices must be made, agency inspectors general are one of the federal government's best resources for reducing fraud, waste and abuse, and actually saving taxpayer dollars," the New Jersey Democrat wrote in the [letters](#).

COAL RESPONDS TO PJM STUDY: The American Coalition for Clean Coal Electricity sent a [letter](#) Tuesday commenting on a [recent PJM study](#) that it says has been "misinterpreted" as endorsing a rapid increase in natural gas-fired electricity generation. It asks a number of question about the resilience of the 13-state system and argues "there are many other issues associated with a less diverse resource mix."

CLEAN ENERGY INVESTMENTS DOWN IN Q1: Global clean energy investments declined 17 percent the first quarter of this year, according to Bloomberg New Energy Finance. The U.S. saw an even steeper drop of 24 percent, with \$9.4 billion in investments. BNEF notes less money in the financing market does not necessarily mean 24 percent less generation is being developed in the U.S. Lower average capital costs per megawatt of solar and wind "means that year-by-year it's possible to finance equivalent amounts of capacity in these technologies for fewer dollars," Jon Moore, BNEF CEO said in a [statement](#).

YOU NEED MORE TIME, MR. SECRETARY: Public lands, energy, veterans, Latino and religious advocacy groups are out with a [letter](#) this morning urging Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke not to enact any changes to BLM's November 2016 rule aimed at curbing public-land methane waste without holding public forums and allowing comments on any revisions. "That process reflects how the Bureau of Land Management arrived at the current rule, and it is important that you hear from the people who are most affected by the waste of resources: the American people and western communities," the groups wrote.

TAKE A GLANCE! STOPPING METHANE LEAKS OFFERS JOB OPPORTUNITIES: [Research](#) released Tuesday, commissioned by the Environmental Defense Fund, finds jobs associated with detecting and repairing methane leaks are scattered throughout 60 companies in 45 states. The majority of those companies are small businesses and have experienced up 30 percent business growth in states with methane regulations.

DRUMMING UP SUPPORT: With just three weeks remaining until the April 29 event, organizers of the Peoples Climate March are holding a live panel, featuring Rep. [Keith Ellison](#) and former White House adviser Van Jones, tonight at 8 p.m. to discuss the "need for the march, the threats represented by the Trump Agenda and what's next for movement building in America." Livestream [here](#).

NOT BLOWN AWAY: Oklahoma state legislators sent Gov. Mary Fallin legislation Tuesday ending state tax breaks for wind generation this year rather than 2021, Pro's Esther Whieldon [reports](#). The governor is expected

to sign the bill. Projects that started service from 2007 to before this year's deadline receive a half-cent-per-kilowatt-hour tax credit for their first 10 years in operation.

QUICK HITS

- Signatories to climate change agreement in dispute over financing. [Financial Times](#).
- World leaders must bring Donald Trump 'back to the table' on climate change, says UN deputy chief. [Newsweek](#).
- Scott Pruitt requests funds for a 24/7 fleet of bodyguards, as the EPA is poised to cut health and safety programs. [Quartz](#).
- North Korean ships head home after China orders coal returned. [Reuters](#).
- Great Lakes water piped to Southwest 'our future,' says NASA scientist. [Detroit Free Press](#).

HAPPENING TODAY

10:00 a.m. — Environmental Protection Agency holds a meeting on finalizing a Safe Drinking Water Act rule, Obsidian, a Cadmus Company, 1776 Eye St NW, 4th Floor

THAT'S ALL FOR ME!

To view online:

<https://www.politicopro.com/tipsheets/morning-energy/2017/04/plans-for-deep-federal-workforce-cuts-unveiled-022311>

Stories from POLITICO Pro

White House calls for deep agency cuts [Back](#)

By Ian Kullgren and Matthew Nussbaum | 04/11/2017 11:00 PM EDT

The White House on Wednesday will direct federal agencies to make deep personnel cuts over the next year, according to the White House budget chief and documents provided to POLITICO.

Agency heads will receive a 14-page memorandum outlining changes. The memo, which replaces the federal hiring ban Trump enacted in January, outlines cuts based on Trump's "skinny" budget, released last month. The budget proposal called for deep cuts to domestic programs and an increase in military spending.

The memo tells agencies to "begin taking immediate actions to achieve near-term workforce reductions." It also instructs agencies to develop by June 30 a plan to "maximize employee performance" — i.e., take steps to reward employees deemed effective while working to improve or dismiss weak performers. The memo also calls for delivery by September of an agency reform plan to shrink personnel to accommodate long term budget reductions outlined in the skinny budget.

Speaking to reporters, budget chief Mick Mulvaney said the end result will likely take effect in about 11 months. The executive branch will be dramatically different, Mulvaney said, with agencies operating more like private businesses. Mulvaney downplayed the cuts, saying the focus was on making agencies more efficient, not just smaller.

"Really what you're talking about doing is restructuring Washington, D.C.," Mulvaney said. "That is how you drain the swamp."

"At the end of the day," Mulvaney added, "this leads to a government that is dramatically more accountable, dramatically more efficient, and dramatically more effective at following through on the promises that the president made during the campaign."

The White House's latest instructions to the agencies would appear to bear the fingerprints of chief strategist Steve Bannon, who pledged himself publicly to "deconstruction of the administrative state."

Mulvaney did not discuss specifics of the cuts, including how many jobs will be slashed. That, he said, will be left up to the agencies. But Mulvaney did single out the EPA — perhaps the agency most-loathed by Republicans — as a particular target.

"Everybody acknowledges, given the proposed reductions to the Environmental Protection Agency in the budget, they would have to reduce the size of their workforce," Mulvaney said. "And it's just sort of up to them to come up with ideas on how to do that effectively."

But the Defense and Veterans Affairs departments will increase staffing, Mulvaney said, though he didn't elaborate on how that will occur. He didn't address whether agencies might hire contract workers to replace cut positions.

The memo says that agencies should eliminate programs that are duplicative, non-essential to the agency's mission, or are already carried out in some form by state and local government. It also tells agencies to cut any program that is "not justified by the unique public benefit it provides," and to restructure programs to provide better customer service.

The memo also tells agencies to explore new technologies to "automate processes and result in increased efficiency and budgetary savings."

Not all of the staffing cuts will be achieved through layoffs. Trump has yet to fill scores of positions, and the guidance says any vacant posts judged unnecessary can be eliminated immediately.

Mulvaney insisted the process could be bipartisan and include public input.

"We are not just asking conservative right wing think tanks to give us ideas on how to fix this," said Mulvaney, a former Republican congressman from South Carolina. "We're asking the general public: intellectuals, academia and the private sector to give us ideas, and it may well be they come in and make suggestions that might be the exact opposite of a former right-wing member of Congress."

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Obama plan has NOAA swimming to Interior [Back](#)

By Dan Berman | 01/13/2012 11:40 AM EDT

In the early 1970s, [out of spite](#), Richard Nixon placed the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration in the Commerce Department.

Now, President Barack Obama wants to move NOAA to its original destination: the Interior Department.

Obama formally unveiled the plan during a White House speech Friday as part of a larger government reorganization proposal that essentially involves dissolving Commerce.

"As it turns out, the Interior Department is in charge of salmon in fresh water, but the Commerce Department handles them in saltwater," Obama said. "Apparently, this all had something to do with President Nixon being unhappy with his Interior Secretary for criticizing the Vietnam War.

"No business or nonprofit leader would allow this kind of duplication or unnecessary complexity in their operations. So why is it OK in our government? It's not. It has to change," he added.

Obama first took aim at the NOAA/Commerce combination during his State of the Union speech last year, and possibly heard about it a lot from his former chief of staff and Clinton-era Commerce Secretary Bill Daley.

Although Congress has never passed legislation creating NOAA — a constant frustration for the agency's backers on and off the Hill — Friday's plan would require congressional OK.

Under the plan, the president would request fast-track consolidation authority that would allow him to propose agency mergers. Those would be subject to an up-or-down vote from Congress within 90 days. Lawmakers would need to grant the president the fast-track authority and approve each of his requests for consolidation.

Byron Tau and Donovan Slack contributed to this report.

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Trump's climate demands roil U.S. allies [Back](#)

By Andrew Restuccia | 04/11/2017 07:14 PM EDT

President Donald Trump's abrupt turnaround on U.S. climate policy is fueling tension with several of America's closest allies, which are resisting the administration's demands that they support a bigger role for nuclear power and fossil fuels in the world's energy supply.

The dispute blew up at this week's meeting of G-7 energy ministers, at which Trump administration officials pushed to include stronger pro-coal, pro-nuclear language in a proposed joint statement on energy policy. The fight had been simmering behind the scenes for weeks as the White House, Energy Department and State Department clashed with negotiators from other G-7 countries over the statement, according to an internal document obtained by POLITICO and interviews with diplomats.

After a tense back-and-forth at the meeting in Rome on Monday, the G-7 energy ministers — including representatives from Canada, Great Britain and several European Union countries — wound up scuttling the statement altogether.

The feud comes as Trump, who often touts his "America first" approach to foreign policy, is considering whether to pull the United States out of the climate change accord that the Obama administration and leaders of nearly 200 other nations negotiated in Paris in 2015. Some Trump advisers have suggested that he should remain in the deal — but in return, should demand concessions to aid the fossil fuel sector.

G-7 officials, led by the Europeans, refused to agree to stronger language touting fossil fuels without assurances from the United States that it would stay in the Paris climate change agreement, according to officials briefed on the discussions.

The U.S. emphasis on coal "was seen as an issue for all of us," one G-7 country negotiator told POLITICO, noting that Canada, Europe and Japan all expressed frustration about the Trump administration's position. The United States' refusal to discuss or mention the Paris agreement in the joint statement was EU's "biggest" red line during the meeting, the negotiator added.

The meeting underscored the increasingly wide gulf between the Trump administration and its allies over climate change. The leaders of the other G-7 nations have all called for a shift away from fossil fuels and toward renewable energy. Meanwhile, Trump has dismissed climate change as a Chinese hoax and sought to revive the ailing U.S. coal industry.

The draft joint statement obtained by POLITICO, which is dated March 31 and is labeled as a "second draft," provides an unfiltered look at the Trump administration's energy policy priorities.

In one instance, the U.S. rewrote part of the statement to stress that fossil fuels "including coal and natural gas will remain part of the global energy mix for the foreseeable future," striking vaguer language from an earlier draft that said countries would rely on fossil fuels for "some time, as countries progressively reduce greenhouse gas emissions of their energy system."

In another section, the U.S. added a mention of fossil fuels and nuclear power to a line calling on countries to "work together on policies to deploy clean, reliable and affordable energy."

The U.S. also proposed completely eliminating a line stating that since renewable energy will help cut carbon dioxide emissions, the G-7 nations would "take the lead in tackling the challenges of electricity systems with high shares of variable renewable energy and in addressing the resilience of the electricity system" as the energy industry transitions to cleaner sources.

And U.S. officials added a section promoting nuclear power that reads in part, "We note the importance of civil nuclear energy for providing reliable and clean baseload energy."

While the U.S. appeared to back language calling for phasing out "inefficient fossil fuel subsidies that lead to wasteful consumption" over the medium term, it proposed striking a line calling on G-7 countries to "increase efforts to phase them out by 2025."

Ultimately, the Trump administration's demands proved too difficult to overcome, and the G-7 nations scuttled the joint statement. Carlo Calenda, Italy's economic development minister and the chair of the summit, instead released a written summary of the meeting, which noted that the delegation heads of every country but the United States reaffirmed their commitment to the Paris deal.

Energy Secretary Rick Perry, who led the U.S. delegation to the meeting, said the Trump administration "is in the process of reviewing many of its policies and reserves its position on this issue," according to the summary.

It's not the first time the U.S. has been the odd country out in an international meeting since Trump took over. During a March G-20 meeting of finance ministers in Germany, Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin pushed for the removal of language calling on countries to help finance efforts to tackle climate change.

In the run-up to the G-7 meeting, Trump administration officials had asked foreign officials not to pack the joint statement with mentions of renewable energy and climate change, noting that they wouldn't be able to sign off on the text because the White House was still weighing its stance on the Paris deal, according to people familiar with the deliberations.

But sure enough, early drafts of the joint statement included frequent mentions of climate change. And U.S. officials sought to revise the drafts, sparking a fierce round of edits between representatives of the G-7 nations ahead of this week's meeting. One diplomat who worked on the text called it a "slow and complicated process."

At one point during the gathering, tempers flared so high that a European official accused a U.S. official of trying to "internationalize" the Trump administration's focus on fossil fuels, according to one person briefed on the exchange.

Indeed, Trump administration officials have adopted the president's "America first" approach in making the case to industry lobbyists that remaining in the Paris agreement is the best choice for the country, arguing it gives the U.S. leverage to win broader support for technologies to slash emissions from fossil fuels.

During a recent meeting on the Paris agreement, George David Banks, a top White House international energy adviser, pointed to a map of the United States in his office and said, "That's the only thing that matters to me," according to an industry official who attended.

Banks, an advocate of staying in the Paris deal, has been meeting with industry officials for weeks to discuss their views on the agreement. The meetings have had some success: Several coal companies recently endorsed remaining in the pact.

But it remains to be seen whether Trump will ultimately decide to keep the U.S. in the agreement. Steve Bannon, Trump's chief strategist, is said to be opposed to remaining in the deal, while the president's daughter Ivanka and his son-in-law, Jared Kushner, are said to be supportive of staying.

White House press secretary Sean Spicer has said Trump will make a final decision by late May, when he and other world leaders will travel to Italy for a G-7 summit.

Asked for comment, a White House official said Trump "has emphasized the value of the U.S. energy sector as a strategic tool in U.S. foreign policy." The official added: "All U.S. energy resources and technologies, including coal and nuclear, should play an important role in achieving universal access to affordable and reliable energy."

Kalina Oroschakoff contributed to this report.

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Court suspends ozone case, opening path for Trump admin to rewrite rule [Back](#)

By Alex Guillén | 04/11/2017 06:16 PM EDT

The D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals today decided to suspend proceedings in a lawsuit over an Obama-era ozone rule to give the Trump administration time to decide whether to rewrite it.

A three-judge panel granted EPA's request to postpone oral arguments that had been scheduled for April 19 over the 2015 ozone standard. The court also ordered EPA to provide updates every 90 days on its progress in reviewing the standard and to notify the court "promptly" once the agency decides whether to repeal or modify it.

The court also recently canceled oral arguments over EPA's carbon rule for future power plants, although it has yet to decide whether to place that case on hold.

WHAT'S NEXT: EPA will review the ozone standard and decide whether to alter or repeal it, a lengthy notice-and-comment process.

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Ryan explains 'binders full of women' [Back](#)

By Katie Glueck | 10/17/2012 08:26 AM EDT

Mitt Romney received some back-up Wednesday from running mate Paul Ryan for a statement the GOP nominee made in Tuesday's presidential debate about "binders full of women" that's gone viral.

"All he simply meant was that he went out of his way to try to recruit qualified women to serve in his administration when he was governor," Ryan said on "CBS This Morning." "That's really what he was saying."

(Also on POLITICO: 'Binders full of women' meme spreads)

In his second face-off with President Barack Obama at Hofstra University on Long Island, N.Y., Romney said that when he was governor of Massachusetts, his office went through "binders full of women" to find possible female Cabinet members, and immediately sparked an explosion of memes and jokes online and on Twitter.

"By the way, he has an exceptional record of hiring women in very prominent positions in his administration, and that's the point he was making," Ryan said. "The other point is, this economy has been terrible for women. Poverty rates among women are at a 17-year high. We need jobs, we need economic growth. And among those who have been hit hardest in this economy are women.

(PHOTOS: Top political memes of 2012 race)

"So what he was pointing out to was that he went out of his way to find qualified women to serve in senior positions in his administration," Ryan added. "And he did just that, and he had one of the most exceptional records of governors in the country."

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CORRECTED: Oklahoma moves to end wind tax break this year [Back](#)

By Esther Whieldon | 04/11/2017 04:45 PM EDT

Oklahoma state legislators today sent Republican Gov. Mary Fallin a bill that would end state tax incentives for wind energy generation this year instead of in 2021.

Under the bill, H.B. 2298, which Fallin is expected to sign, any wind project brought online after July 1 will not qualify for the state's tax breaks. Projects that started service from 2007 to before this year's deadline receive a half-cent-per-kilowatt-hour tax credit for their first 10 years in operation.

The bill comes as the state is struggling to fill a nearly \$900 million deficit for 2018.

Oklahoma has seen a boom in wind projects in recent years and in 2015 ranked third in the nation in total wind generation, according to the American Wind Energy Association.

This article has been updated to reflect that the bill applies to just wind energy.

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