

The logo for POLITICO, featuring the word "POLITICO" in white, uppercase, sans-serif font centered on a solid red rectangular background.

**Dan Becker, director of the Safe Climate Transport Campaign** at the Center for Biological Diversity, said it appears California would need EPA approval to end sales of internal combustion engine cars. California has almost always been granted Clean Air Act waivers to more stringently control tailpipe pollution — but the Trump administration last year revoked its permission for California to regulate greenhouse gases from cars, casting doubt on whether it would approve this new measure as well should the president be re-elected.

**"Under ordinary circumstances they would get it,"** Becker said. "If Trump were re-elected, maybe not."

# California's EV rush

By KELSEY TAMBORRINO

09/24/2020 10:00 AM EDT

*With help from Annie Snider,  
Anthony Adragna and Daniel  
Lippman*

*Editor's Note: Morning Energy is a free version of POLITICO Pro Energy's morning newsletter, which is delivered to our subscribers each morning at 6 a.m. The POLITICO Pro platform combines the news you need with tools you can use to take action on the day's biggest stories. [Act on the news with POLITICO Pro.](#)*

## QUICK FIX

- **California Gov. Gavin Newsom set a goal of banning new gasoline-fueled vehicles within 15 years** in a rebuke to President Donald Trump and other federal leaders already challenging the state's strict fuel economy rules.
- **The CEO of the company seeking to build the Pebble Mine resigned** following the release of recordings in which he touted his close relationships with key state and federal officials who will decide whether to approve the mine.

— **Joe Biden got another presidential endorsement today**, this time from environmental advocacy group 350 Action.

**GOOD MORNING! IT'S THURSDAY.** I'm your host, Kelsey Tamborrino. IBEW's Malinda Brent gets the trivia win for knowing Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg and Sens. [Bernie Sanders](#) (I-Vt.) and [Chuck Schumer](#) (D-N.Y.) all attended [James Madison High School](#) in Brooklyn, as did former Sen. Norm Coleman (R-Minn.) and Judge Judy. For today: How many Supreme Court justices have been on U.S. currency? And who are they? Send your tips, energy gossip and comments to [ktamborrino@politico.com](mailto:ktamborrino@politico.com).

*Check out the [POLITICO Energy podcast](#) — all the energy and environmental politics and policy news you need to start your day, in just five minutes. Listen and subscribe for free at [politico.com/energy-podcast](https://politico.com/energy-podcast).*

#### **DRIVING THE DAY**

#### **CALIFORNIA'S EV**

**RUSH:** California Gov. Gavin Newsom signed an [executive order](#) Wednesday setting a goal to

ban the sale of new gas vehicles within 15 years, [POLITICO's Colby Bermel, Carla Marinucci and Alex Guillén report](#). "We are setting a new marker," Newsom said at a press conference.

**Under the order, the California Air Resources Board** will be tasked with writing the vehicle rules, which the Newsom administration says will slash greenhouse gas and nitrogen oxide emissions. Other agencies will be directed to support the development of zero-emission vehicle charging stations, and medium- and heavy-duty trucks will be mandated to be zero-emission by 2045 where feasible.

**California dreaming?** The ban is likely to face opposition from automakers and Republican leaders in Washington, who have already battled the state over its stricter fuel economy rules.

**Dan Becker, director of the Safe Climate Transport Campaign** at the Center for Biological Diversity, said it appears California would need EPA approval to end sales of internal combustion engine cars. California has almost always been granted Clean Air Act waivers to more

stringently control tailpipe pollution — but the Trump administration last year revoked its permission for California to regulate greenhouse gases from cars, casting doubt on whether it would approve this new measure as well should the president be re-elected.

**"Under ordinary circumstances they would get it,"** Becker said. "If Trump were re-elected, maybe not."

**Joe Biden has not proposed any ban on combustion engines.** "Joe Biden believes that the transition to electric vehicles presents an enormous opportunity to create a million good-paying union jobs, dominate a fast-growing market worldwide, and meet the demands of the climate crisis," said spokesman Matt Hill. "He's got a plan to do that and thinks of it in terms of incentives and investments, not bans."

**National Economic Council Director Larry Kudlow** meanwhile said during **Wednesday's briefing** that he did not expect California's announcement to "spread" to other states, and instead said it seemed like "a very extreme"

position. "I don't think we should be taking any steps to get rid of fossil fuels, for example," he said. "And by the way, there should be consumer choice for all automobiles and that includes electric automobiles."

**What else?** Newsom also announced he was asking state lawmakers to implement a fracking ban by 2024, [Pro's Jeremy B. White and Colby report](#). But he stopped short of directing his own oil and gas regulators to stop approving fracking permits — drawing frustration from environmentalists, who have increased their criticism of Newsom on fracking in recent days, especially as the governor has emphasized California's role in fighting climate change.

#### 2020 WATCH

**350 ACTION BACKS BIDEN:** 350 Action, the political arm of environmental group 350.org, endorsed Joe Biden for president today, the latest sign Biden's climate change plan is winning over progressives who had been skeptical about the Democratic nominee's commitment to the issue, [Pro's Zack Colman reports](#).

**The endorsement comes despite Biden falling short** of [four of the goals](#) laid out by 350 Action: opposing all new federal permits and leases for fossil fuel infrastructure; supporting a national fracking ban; rejecting counsel from people tied to fossil fuel interests; and committing to investigating the fossil fuel industry's role in causing and misleading the public about climate change.

**Biden and his running mate, California Sen. [Kamala Harris](#)**, have centered their climate policy pitch around economic and racial justice issues with increasing ambition and urgency, 350 Action told POLITICO. The group believes it can continue advocating for a potential Biden administration to take even stronger measures to tackle the problem.

**"It doesn't indicate that we love everything.** It indicates where we think we have the best chances of pushing our agenda," 350 Action Executive Director May Boeve told POLITICO. "We've already seen movement and we're going to keep pushing." Boeve and

350 Action North America Director Tamara Toles O'Laughlin told Zack they believed progressives could push Biden into more aggressive action on fracking and other climate policies if he wins the White House.

**DEBATE PREP:** Thirty-seven Senate Democrats called on the Commission on Presidential Debates to ensure moderators ask Trump and Biden about climate change during the upcoming presidential debates, [Pro's Anthony Adragna reports](#). "The 2016 presidential debates were the most-watched in U.S. history; however, there was not a single question on climate change asked by the moderators during any of the four debates," reads the [letter](#), led by Sen. [Ed Markey](#) (D-Mass.). "This cannot happen again." Among the signatories were all senior members of Senate Democratic leadership, including Minority Leader [Chuck Schumer](#).

**THIS WEEK - DON'T MISS #MIHealthSummit:** POLITICO will feature a special edition *Future Pulse* newsletter at the Milken Institute Future of Health Summit this week. Go inside one of the most influential gatherings of global health industry leaders and innovators determined to confront and conquer the most transformative health challenges. The pandemic exposed weaknesses across our health systems, particularly in treating our most vulnerable communities. This year's conference focuses on the converging crises of public health, economic insecurity, and social justice. [Sign up today for exclusive coverage from December 7–9.](#)



## **HOUSE CONSIDERS CLEAN**

**ENERGY BILL:** House lawmakers today will make their way through nearly 100 amendments made in order to a sprawling clean energy package, [H.R. 4447 \(116\)](#), on the floor. In opening up floor debate on Wednesday, Democrats said that the bill marked a first step toward bolder climate change legislation, while Republicans denounced it as overly partisan and too costly. "This legislation lays the groundwork for important and comprehensive future climate policy," Energy and Commerce Chair [Frank Pallone](#) (D-N.J.) said on the floor. "The main goal of this energy package is to move provisions we believe have a shot at becoming law this Congress after negotiations with the Senate."

**Keep an eye out:** Rep. [Deb Haaland](#) (D-N.M.) plans to offer a [floor amendment](#) during today's debate to increase authorized funding levels by 50 percent for the renewable energy research programs at the Energy Department.

**BRAWL IN THE 'GLADES:** A House Transportation and Infrastructure subpanel

today [dives into the tangled issues of Florida water management](#) that were set aside earlier this summer when the House advanced its Water Resources Development Act, [H.R. 7575 \(116\)](#). The last few months have underscored the dire effects wrought on the Sunshine State by the massive Army Corps of Engineers project to drain the Everglades nearly a century ago. Estuaries like the St. Lucie have been blotted by toxic algae blooms spawned by polluted discharges from Lake Okeechobee, while parts of Miami-Dade County and the Florida Keys have suffered from devastating wildfires due to lack of water.

**Technically a review of the massive, overall Everglades restoration effort** approved by Congress in 2000, the hearing is likely to be marked by internecine battles among Florida's lawmakers. Rep. [Brian Mast](#) (R-Fla.), representing communities around the St. Lucie, has pushed legislation, [H.R. 8049 \(116\)](#), that would require the Army Corps to make human health and public safety a top priority in their approach to managing the lake, citing EPA's recommended safety limit for algae toxins. But south

Florida lawmakers led by Rep. [Debbie Mucarsel-Powell](#)(D) and [Daniel Webster](#) (R) have questioned the legislation's true intent, fearing it could lead to water shortages south of the lake. Meanwhile, state lawmakers from outside Florida have [raised](#) concerns about the precedent Mast's legislation could set, particularly in the West.

## **CALIFORNIA OFFICIALS**

**TALK SALTON SEA:** The California official who [confronted](#) Trump earlier this month on the link between climate change and wildfires will appear today before a House Natural Resources subcommittee. Wade Crowfoot, who is the secretary of California's Natural Resources Agency, will join Joaquin Esquivel, the chair of California's Water Resources Control Board, in speaking at a Waters, Oceans and Wildlife hearing on the federal and state efforts to mitigate health risks to Californians living near the toxic dust-laden Salton Sea, which has been starved of inflows by Colorado River water conservation efforts.

## **PEBBLE MINE CEO**

**RESIGNS:** Tom Collier, the CEO of Pebble Partnership, resigned Wednesday following [the release of recordings](#) where he discussed expanding the Alaska Pebble Mine project and touted his close relationships with key state and federal officials who will be weighing whether to approve the mine, [Alex reports for Pros](#).

**In the recordings released this week** by nonprofit Environmental Investigation Agency, Collier and Ronald Thiessen, CEO of its Canadian parent company Northern Dynasty Minerals, were recorded saying Alaska Republican Sens. [Lisa Murkowski](#) and [Dan Sullivan](#), who oppose the mine, ultimately would not stand in its way. They also argued that while the mine is currently being permitted for 20 years, it could easily last another 160 once it is operational.

**"The unethical manner** in which these tapes were acquired does not excuse the comments that were made, or the crass way they were expressed," Thiessen said in a statement. Pebble has brought in former CEO John Shively, who left

in 2014, as the company's interim chief.

### **MICHIGAN COMMITS TO 2050**

**GOAL:** Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer (D) unveiled two executive orders Wednesday to establish a "MI Healthy Climate Plan" that aims to develop new clean energy jobs and put the state on a path toward becoming carbon neutral by 2050.

**One of the orders formally states** that Michigan will aim to achieve economy-wide carbon neutrality by no later than 2050, and to maintain net negative greenhouse gas emissions thereafter. It directs the Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy to develop the action plan for the state to reduce emissions and transition toward carbon neutrality. Michigan will also aim to achieve a 28 percent reduction below 1990 levels in greenhouse gas emissions by 2025. The other order creates a Council on Climate Solutions to guide the implementation of the plan.

**JOINING IN:** Massachusetts Attorney General Maura Healey led a coalition of 18 states, territories and counties in filing [an](#)

[amicus brief](#) on Wednesday to affirm a lower court's ruling that the Army Corps of Engineers did not properly assess the potential impact of an oil spill from the Dakota Access pipeline. The filing in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia supports the Standing Rock Sioux, Cheyenne River Sioux, Oglala Sioux and Yankton Sioux Tribes in their challenge to the Corps decision to grant an easement to Dakota Access authorizing the construction of a portion of the pipeline under Lake Oahe.

**Several Democratic lawmakers also [submitted a brief](#)** on Wednesday to vacate the easement, including Reps. [Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez](#) (N.Y.) and [Raúl Grijalva](#) (Ariz.) and Sens. [Elizabeth Warren](#) (Mass.) and [Tom Carper](#) (Del.)

**JOIN TUESDAY TO POWER FORWARD WITH WOMEN RULE:** Americans have endured multiple crises in 2020, from the pandemic to the economic recession, racial injustices, and a highly contentious presidential election. Women have often led the way in helping the country navigate these crises and will continue to in the new year. Join us for the conclusion of "Powering Forward," a series of virtual conversations that has brought the Women Rule community together during a year that changed how women live, work, and lead. [REGISTER HERE](#).

#### REPORT ROUNDUP

**IEA: CCUS KEY TO NET-ZERO**

**GOALS:** New analysis from the

International Energy Agency out today said carbon capture, utilization and storage will be one of the key technologies for putting energy systems around the world on a sustainable trajectory toward meeting international net-zero climate goals. CCUS is "virtually" the only technology solution for deep emissions reductions from cement production, and is the most cost-effective approach in many regions to curb emissions in iron and steel and chemicals manufacturing, the report said.

### **Plans for more than 30 commercial CCUS**

**facilities** have been announced in the last three years, though mainly in Europe and the United States. Projects now nearing a final investment decision represent an estimated potential investment of around \$27 billion — more than double the investment planned in 2017, the report said. "This portfolio of projects is increasingly diverse — including power generation, cement and hydrogen facilities, and industrial hubs — and would double the level of CO<sub>2</sub> captured globally, from around 40 million tonnes today."

**But cooperation will be key:**

"Markets alone will not turn CCUS into the clean energy success story it must become," said IEA Executive Director Fatih Birol in the report. "But governments and industry today have the chance to combine their forces to realise the environmental and economic benefits that CCUS offers."

**MOVERS AND SHAKERS**

— **Austin Hacker** is now press secretary/digital director for the House Oversight Committee. He most recently was press secretary and digital director for the House Natural Resources Committee.

**THE GRID**

- "[Wyden calls for probe of Perry's role in Ukraine gas shakeup](#)," POLITICO Pro.
- "[Mike Lee holds up action on energy package](#)," via E&E News.
- "[Ohio AG Dave Yost sues to block House Bill 6 nuclear bailout money from being paid out](#)," via Cleveland.com.
- "[Former Vitol manager charged over alleged Ecuador bribery](#)," via Financial Times.
- "[Florida power companies face legal challenge on disconnections](#)



during pandemic," via Tampa Bay Times.

— "Republicans claim addressing climate change is too expensive. Americans aren't buying it, a new poll shows," via TIME.

— "After storms, they built higher. They dread doing it again," via The New York Times.

**THAT'S ALL FOR ME!**

[California's EV rush - POLITICO](#)