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Executive Insight Brief

July 7, 2023

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View From The Hill



Members of Congress spent the week of the Fourth enjoying their last week of the Independence Day recess—a prime opportunity for parade marching in home states and districts. But not all Members were enjoying community barbeques at home, as some fanned out across the globe on congressional delegations, or CODELs. There were not [one](#) but [two](#) CODELs to Taiwan, where lawmakers met with President Tsai Ing-Wen, including during a bipartisan Indo-Pacific delegation led by House Armed Services Chairman Mike Rogers and Ranking Member Adam Smith.

Next week, both chambers will return for a two-week sprint towards the August recess, where we expect the House to undertake floor consideration of this year's [NDAA](#). The more than 1,400 amendments Members have filed ahead of next week can be tracked via the Rules Committee's [website](#). As the fiscal year wraps up, House Republican leadership has been discussing the possibility of introducing a continuing resolution to the House floor as early as this month to avoid a government shutdown if all 12 appropriations bills are not passed by September 30th. The House and Senate Appropriations Committees are also determining earmark totals. House appropriators have proposed increasing funding devoted to earmarks by 20% from FY23 levels in the Agriculture, Energy, MILCON, and Homeland Security bills, while seeking cuts overall. In the Senate, only the Agriculture and MILCON bills have been marked up so far, with \$1.6 billion devoted to earmarks.

While Congress will be in session in Washington during the ongoing NATO summit in Vilnius, Lithuania, the presence of Senate Foreign Relations Chairman Bob Menendez (D-NJ) will be felt across the pond as his objection to the U.S. sale of F-16 fighter jets to Ankara increasingly becomes seen as a [bargaining chip](#) in the opposition of Turkey and Hungary to the accession of Sweden into the transatlantic alliance. Senator Jim Risch (R-ID) is also [blocking](#) arms sales to Hungary over delays in approving Sweden joining NATO.

Aerospace & Defense

[Navy set to lose out on jets due to row with Boeing \(Politico\)](#)

Boeing and the Navy aren't getting along, and it's costing the military essential jets needed to phase out aging aircraft and be prepared for potential conflict with China. The Navy is set to get only 16 of the last F/A-18 Super Hornet jets Boeing will ever make instead of the 20 appropriated due to a dispute over intellectual property rights that's dragging out negotiations, Rep. Mike Garcia (R-Calif.), a member of the House Appropriations defense subcommittee and a former Super Hornet pilot, tells POLITICO. Washington has been eager to replenish rickety jet stocks and stave off a strike fighter shortfall with new Super Hornets — featured in Tom Cruise's "Top Gun: Maverick" and considered the backbone of the Navy's aviation operations at sea. But there's a time crunch because Boeing is ending production in 2025 to focus on new technologies. Congress appropriated funding for 12 Super Hornets in fiscal 2022 and eight in fiscal 2023 for jets the Navy didn't request. But the service decided to use the deal in a last-ditch effort to gain data rights it says it needs to perform maintenance on the aircraft in case of a war with China over Taiwan. The reason why the Navy will receive fewer fighters is a combination of rising inflation and suppliers exiting the program, Garcia said. But the Navy is still waiting for Boeing to submit a "fully priced" proposal for the 20 Super Hornet aircraft, Navy spokesperson Lt. Cmdr. Javan Rasnake said in a statement.

[Decision to send cluster munitions to Ukraine on Biden's desk](#)

[US Army taps RTX for \\$117 million infrared sensor deal \(Defense News\)](#)

RTX, until recently known as Raytheon Technologies, won a contract to manufacture forward-looking infrared packages for installation aboard U.S. Army tanks and other vehicles. The low-rate initial production deal for 3rd Generation FLIR B-Kit sensors is worth as much as \$117.5 million and could run until 2027, the service's Program Executive Office Intelligence, Electronic Warfare and Sensors said in a statement July 6. Generally, FLIR technology picks up infrared radiation, or heat sources, and provides live images or video for review. The visual feed can help pilots and drivers navigate amid hazardous weather and can assist troops detect and target opposing forces over long distances. RTX's efforts will be based in McKinney, Texas. The company over the past two decades delivered more than 25,000 predecessor second-generation FLIR sensors. RTX is the second-largest defense contractor in the world when ranked by defense revenue, according to the Defense News Top 100 list. The company earlier this year secured a separate, \$118 million deal with the Army for a batch of advanced target sensors destined for drones, namely the General Atomics-made MQ-1C Gray Eagle.

[Ukraine provides ideal 'testing ground' for western weaponry](#)

[U.S. Is Destroying the Last of Its Once-Vast Chemical Weapons Arsenal \(The New York](#)

[Times\)](#)

In a sealed room behind a gantlet of armed guards and three rows of high barbed wire at the Army's Pueblo Chemical Depot in Colorado, a team of robotic arms was busily disassembling some of the last of the United States' vast and ghastly stockpile of chemical weapons. In went artillery shells filled with deadly mustard agent that the Army had been storing for more than 70 years. The bright yellow robots pierced, drained and washed each shell, then baked it at 1,500 degrees Fahrenheit. Out came inert and harmless scrap metal, falling off a conveyor belt into an ordinary brown dumpster with a resounding clank. The destruction of the stockpile has taken decades, and the Army says the work is just about finished. The depot near Pueblo destroyed its last weapon in June; the remaining handful at another depot in Kentucky will be destroyed in the next few days. And when they are gone, all of the world's publicly declared chemical weapons will have been eliminated. The American stockpile, built up over generations, was shocking in its scale: Cluster bombs and land mines filled with nerve agent. Artillery shells that could blanket whole forests with a blistering mustard fog. Tanks full of poison that could be loaded on jets and sprayed on targets below. They were a class of weapons deemed so inhumane that their use was condemned after World War I, but even so, the United States and other powers continued to develop and amass them.

Budget & Appropriations

[Senators want to boost Pentagon UFO office funding, transparency \(Defense News\)](#)

Senators want to give the Pentagon's unidentified anomalous phenomena, or UAP, office a major funding boost to scan the skies and near space for threats from China and beyond — part of the fallout from the Chinese spy balloon that U.S. jets shot down after it drifted across the U.S. continent. Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand, D-N.Y., announced a funding boost for the All-domain Anomaly Resolution Office, tasked with researching and analyzing UAPs, in the Senate Armed Services Committee's version of the 2024 National Defense Authorization Act. House lawmakers have not made their funding request for the office public. The final spending bills will be debated later this summer. The funding push comes after the Chinese spy balloon served as a reminder that U.S. adversaries are increasingly operating in Earth's upper atmosphere — and as the public's fascination with unidentified phenomena grow. In a 2021 Gallup poll, more than 40% of respondents blamed alien spacecraft for at least some of the unidentified incidents in recent years. Gillibrand's office would not say what how much more funding the anomaly office would receive, if the measure is passed, as it falls under a classified part of the budget. If the Senate's text is passed, current or former government contractors would have 60 days to turn over any unidentified-object data they've come across to the Pentagon office. Contractors would also be required to provide a "comprehensive list of all non-earth origin or exotic unidentified anomalous phenomena material," according to the Senate's intelligence authorization bill text.

[House GOP may move stopgap spending bill as soon as this month](#)

[House, Senate majorities putting their stamps on earmarks \(Roll Call\)](#)

The fiscal 2024 appropriations process has just begun, but some patterns in the distribution of earmarks by the majorities in their respective chambers are starting to emerge. Across four bills containing earmarks that the House Appropriations Committee has approved, the new GOP majority is proposing to increase earmarked dollars above levels included in initial fiscal 2023 House bills last year. Despite a push to hold overall spending below the current fiscal year, funding devoted to earmarks in House bills has grown by more than 20 percent — from less than \$1.6 billion to over \$1.9 billion — in the Agriculture, Energy-Water, Homeland Security and Military Construction-VA bills. While seeking overall cuts, House Republicans are proposing increases for defense-related programs and veterans funding in line with the debt limit law and would boost border security as well. As a result, new spending across the four bills is 2.5 percent higher than what House Democrats proposed last year for the fiscal 2023 versions — so the growth of earmarks is significantly outpacing overall increases. Senate Appropriations Democrats in control in that chamber have reported two bills thus far — Agriculture and Military Construction-VA — with a lot more money devoted to earmarks than their House counterparts in those two bills: \$1.6 billion versus \$780 million.

[Spending bill targets Kerry's office, global climate spending](#)

[NDAA takes aim at critical mineral supply chain \(Roll Call\)](#)

Lawmakers are mulling a slew of new authorities and reporting requirements designed to shore up the U.S. supply chain of critical minerals as tensions with China deepen. House and Senate versions of the fiscal 2024 defense authorization put a new layer of pressure on the Pentagon to secure its access to materials used in a wide variety of weapons — provisions pushed by both Democrats and Republicans. China currently controls most of the market for materials known as critical minerals, including cobalt, lithium, nickel and "rare earth elements," a subgroup of critical minerals that come from a smaller number of sources. Although these minerals are found around the world, China dominates the market for processing and refining them. That leaves the U.S. highly vulnerable to shortages if growing tensions with China cause economic rifts between the two nations, lawmakers argue. Critical minerals are used in many modern defense technologies, including aircraft engines, batteries, high-powered magnets and more. Defense-minded lawmakers have spent years raising concerns about critical minerals, a list of 50 minerals the U.S. Geological Survey deems "critical to the U.S. economy and national security," including aluminum, cobalt, graphite, magnesium, manganese, titanium, tungsten and zinc.

Advanced Technologies

[As Businesses Clamor for Workplace A.I., Tech Companies Rush to Provide It \(The New York Times\)](#)

Earlier this year, Mark Austin, the vice president of data science at AT&T, noticed that some of the company's developers had started using the ChatGPT chatbot at work. When the developers got stuck, they asked ChatGPT to explain, fix or hone their code. It seemed to be a game-changer, Mr. Austin said. But since ChatGPT is a publicly available tool, he wondered if it was secure for businesses to use. So in January, AT&T tried a product from Microsoft called Azure OpenAI Services that lets businesses build their own A.I.-powered chatbots. AT&T used it to create a proprietary A.I. assistant, Ask AT&T, which helps its developers automate their coding process. AT&T's customer service representatives also began using the chatbot to help summarize their calls, among other tasks. AT&T is one of many businesses eager to find ways to tap the power of generative artificial intelligence, the technology that powers chatbots and that has gripped Silicon Valley with excitement in recent months. Generative A.I. can produce its own text, photos and video in response to prompts, capabilities that can help automate tasks such as taking meeting minutes and cut down on paperwork.

[The US Military Is Taking Generative AI Out for a Spin](#)

[Defense Innovation Unit seeks proposals to ship cargo using rockets \(Defense News\)](#)

The Defense Innovation Unit is seeking pitches from commercial space companies to provide "novel" launch capabilities for delivering cargo around the globe, into space and within space, from one orbit to another. The Pentagon's commercial innovation hub released a solicitation June 30 for a Novel Responsive Space Delivery effort, which aims to work with companies to prototype launch systems that can deliver cargo "to, from and through space." The Defense Department wants to be an early adopter of commercial rocket transport capabilities. The ability to quickly deliver cargo or personnel anywhere on Earth could have utility for near-term operations, including in the Indo-Pacific region, where island chains and large bodies of water present a mobility challenge. The department has been working to mature an operational concept and acquisition strategy for acquiring these types of launch services since 2018, when U.S. Transportation Command started partnering with companies like SpaceX, Blue Origin, VOX Space and Rocket Lab USA through cooperative research and development agreements. The Space Force, which would ultimately decide whether to formalize the effort, hopes to have a program in place by 2026. DIU's solicitation appears to move those efforts forward by calling for "flight-ready" proposals within two years of a contract award. The notice emphasizes the importance of mature, cost-effective solutions that can move large amounts and varied types of cargo. It also seeks proposals with a strong commercial business case and whose systems are designed to minimize the creation of debris on orbit.

[Army Mulls New Tool to Track Soldier Readiness](#)

[ALGORITHMIC WARFARE: New Tech Brings Data to "Tactical Edge" \(National Defense Magazine\)](#)

Situational awareness once depended on outdated maps, phone tag and spotty internet connections. Today, edge computing technology is providing situational awareness to the warfighter in minutes. Delayed information in a contested environment literally weaponizes time, said Ki Lee, chief technology officer at Booz Allen Hamilton's global defense sector. Booz Allen invested in small business Reveal Technology to fight time with decentralized data. Reveal created a platform called Farsight — a software application that receives images from drones or surveillance platforms and rapidly creates three-dimensional, situational awareness products for mission planning. While Defense Department operations have become "much more decentralized" over the past decade, "from a data perspective, the prevalent pattern is to centralize data — bring that data from the sensor to the ground station, copied over numerous times to every single operation center," Lee said. Reveal's CEO Garrett Smith defined the "edge" as the point at which tactical decisions are being made and executed. And that's exactly where he's bringing the data. Farsight's AI-powered capabilities include real-time 2D and 3D mapping, line-of-sight analysis and route planning. A tour of the website reveals red and green-blotched layouts of thermal imaging, vertical measurement tools and detailed 3D models equipped with drag-and-rotate features that allow clicking through city streets and swirling around aerial views.

Military Installations & Communities

[Inside Dugway Proving Ground \(Insider\)](#)

Behind tall barbed wire fences, scientists at Dugway Proving Ground, a military base covering 800,000 acres in rural Utah, have been examining some of the world's deadliest chemicals and biological agents for decades. While the remote army base used to be responsible for creating chemical weapons — and, at one point, testing them on US soldiers — it now only analyzes them. But even that isn't entirely safe. In 2014, Dugway inadvertently sent out several doses of anthrax, a lethal agent, around the country and to Korea. A later report found that Dugway had failed to follow standard procedures — and use enough radiation — to kill the anthrax samples. The US is destroying its arsenal of chemical weapons, such as VX gas, to meet a treaty obligation that its entire stockpile is eliminated by September 30. It's about 85 miles southwest of Salt Lake City, Utah. It's in one of the most isolated areas in the US, known for rattlesnakes and wild horses. This remoteness attracted the Army to build the facility in the early 1940s. President Franklin D. Roosevelt greenlit the military base in the aftermath of the Pearl Harbor attack. He originally set aside 127,000 acres, but Dugway now covers about 800,000 acres — larger than the state of Rhode Island. The base began operating in 1942 to show soldiers how to

firebomb towns.

[New commander to lead Tobyhanna Army Depot's 3,200 employees](#)

[Recruiting now: veterans, military spouses to work the polls in 2024 \(Military Times\)](#)

Running an election used to be a “sleepy” practice, said New Hampshire Secretary of State David Scanlan, who has helped organize elections in his state for over 20 years. Voters trusted the process, and for the most part had faith in the outcomes. That’s changed over the past decade, with the increased spread of falsehoods about election integrity leading to a loss of confidence among voters, Scanlan said. His proposed solution? Bring one of America’s most trusted communities into the process: enlist veterans and military spouses to help organize and watch the vote. Misinformation about elections reached a climax in 2020, when former President Donald Trump and his supporters falsely claimed he lost because of widespread voter fraud. New Hampshire was one of many states Trump targeted with claims of election fraud that were later investigated and rejected by officials he had appointed. He contended that his loss in the state was due to voter fraud in the town of Windham – an assertion that was debunked through a forensic audit. Still, hundreds of people sent messages of outrage to election officials in the suburban town. To fortify New Hampshire voters against misinformation in the lead-up to the 2024 presidential election, Scanlan is working with We the Veterans, a non-partisan nonprofit that recruited 63,000 veterans and military family members to work the polls during the 2022 midterms through its Vet the Vote campaign. Scanlan wants to encourage New Hampshire veterans to volunteer during the 2024 election.

[Rep. Sewell to announce major funding to support Alabama’s military installations](#)

[Army first-quarter suicides highest since 2013 \(Defense One\)](#)

The number of soldier suicides in the first quarter of 2023 was the highest since the Pentagon began keeping track of the data a decade ago, despite a decrease in force size during the same time period. The number of deaths by suicide in the active-duty U.S. Army for the first quarter of 2023 increased by 12 from the same time period in 2022 for a total of 49 deaths, the Defense Department’s Defense Suicide Prevention Office reported. The increase came as the Army shrank by more than 20,000 soldiers. By contrast, the number of deaths by suicide in the first quarter of each year from 2013 to 2022 averaged 34, according to calculations by Defense One, based on Defense Suicide Prevention Office historic data. Army officers are among the hardest hit, Sgt. Maj. of the Army Michael Grinston said last week at a meeting of command sergeant majors. Eleven officers died by suicide in 2022, while nine had died by suicide as of the third quarter of calendar year 2023, Grinston said. He blamed many of the suicides on a combination of adverse life

events, gun ownership, and alcohol abuse. “How do we change that culture?” Grinston said, referring to the use of alcohol in the Army, as part of a wide-ranging conversation that touched in part on functional alcoholism in the military. The Army has attempted a range of fixes to address suicide, and seen some success. However, some believe the service has not taken enough action to prevent suicide deaths.

Homeland Security

[U.S. Looks to Restrict China's Access to Cloud Computing to Protect Advanced Technology \(The Wall Street Journal\)](#)

The Biden administration is preparing to restrict Chinese companies' access to U.S. cloud-computing services, according to people familiar with the situation, in a move that could further strain relations between the world's economic superpowers. The new rule, if adopted, would likely require U.S. cloud-service providers such as Amazon and Microsoft to seek U.S. government permission before they provide cloud-computing services that use advanced artificial-intelligence chips to Chinese customers, the people said. The Biden administration's move on cloud services comes as China said Monday it would impose export restrictions on metals used in advanced chip manufacturing. National-security analysts have warned that Chinese AI companies might have bypassed the current export controls rules by using cloud services. These services allow customers to gain powerful computing capabilities without purchasing advanced equipment—including chips—on the control list, such as the A100 chips by American technology company Nvidia.

[Watchdog faults "ineffective" Border Patrol process for release of migrant on terror watchlist](#)

[After Discord leak, Pentagon to tighten procedures for classified info \(Politico Pro\)](#)

The Pentagon is tightening up the way it handles classified national security information, after a member of the Air National Guard allegedly leaked a trove of military secrets online earlier this year. A review ordered after that incident and made public Wednesday did not find systematic failures, or call for drastic changes to the way the Pentagon safeguards classified information. However, it did find areas where the Pentagon needs to improve accountability measures to prevent future leaks. Those include keeping better track of who has access to classified documents and where that information is being held, along with making sure those who can see classified information have up-to-date nondisclosure agreements. The massive leak revealed some of the nation's top military secrets, from America's relationship with its allies to the war in Ukraine, and prompted questions about whether agencies across the U.S. government are properly safeguarding classified information.

[The U.S. and China look to repair ties, again](#)

[Republicans' new border plan: send military into Mexico \(The Wall Street Journal\)](#)

Republicans running for president and in Congress are coalescing around a controversial way to wage war against illegal drugs—sending the U.S. military into Mexico. On Capitol Hill, Sens. Lindsey Graham (R., S.C.) and John Kennedy (R., La.) have both voiced support for military operations in Mexico. Sen. J.D. Vance (R., Ohio) said in a recent interview on NBC that cartels should be considered terrorist organizations, meriting a military response. And Reps. Dan Crenshaw (R., Texas) and Mike Waltz (R., Fla.) have sponsored a bill that would formally declare war on the cartels—meaning the military would be authorized to drop bombs on cartel targets. There is a simple reason the idea of a military intervention keeps cropping up—it is popular, and not just with Republicans. In an NBC poll taken in late June, sending troops to the border to stop drugs was the single best-liked of 11 GOP proposals tested with Republican primary voters. And it was the only one that gained support from a majority of all registered voters. The poll findings reflect growing anxiety for Americans, as a continuing opioid crisis fuels record numbers of drug-overdose deaths.

Transportation & Infrastructure

[NHTSA presses Tesla for more records in autopilot safety probe \(CNBC\)](#)

Tesla must send updated records to the National Highway Traffic and Safety Administration as part of an ongoing Autopilot safety probe. The NHTSA initiated its safety probe of Autopilot in 2021 after it identified a string of crashes in which Tesla vehicles crashed into first responders' vehicles. To date, none of Tesla's driver assistance systems are autonomous, and the company's cars cannot function as robotaxis like those operated by Cruise or Waymo. Instead, Tesla vehicles require a driver behind the wheel, ready to steer or brake at any time. Autopilot and FSD only control braking, steering and acceleration in limited circumstances. If Tesla fails to supply the agency with the requested records, it faces "civil penalties of up to \$26,315 per violation per day," with a maximum of \$131,564,183 for a series of daily violations, according to a letter published on the NHTSA website Thursday.

[California company has received FAA certification for its flying car](#)

[Hudson Tunnel Project to get \\$6.9 Billion in largest U.S. transit grant \(The New York Times\)](#)

The federal government is on track to give \$6.88 billion, the most ever awarded to a mass-transit project, for the construction of a second rail tunnel under the Hudson River to New

York City, Senator Chuck Schumer said Wednesday. The two-tube tunnel is part of Gateway, a massive infrastructure project that is widely considered the most important in the country. The new tunnel would supplement a troublesome pair of single-track tunnels that opened in 1910 and have been steadily deteriorating since Hurricane Sandy flooded them with salt water in 2012. The federal pledge will allow Gateway's planners to start seeking companies to construct a tunnel parallel to the deteriorating ones, a project that is expected to cost more than \$16 billion before it is completed in 2035. The governors of New York and New Jersey agreed last year to an even split of the local share of the cost of building the tunnel. That agreement was a critical precursor to obtaining federal funding for the project. But a signed deal with the federal government is not expected until early next year.

[Spectrum authority lapse impinges on broadband, 5G plans](#)

[NYC's Second Avenue Subway expansion to Harlem set to move ahead \(Bloomberg\)](#)

New York City's Second Avenue subway is about to move closer to extending into Harlem as transit officials anticipate construction will begin by year-end. The Metropolitan Transportation Authority, which operates the city's subway, buses and commuter rail lines, is soliciting bids for the first construction contract for the nearly \$7 billion project, six years after the completion of the initial phase of the long-awaited line. The 1.5-mile (2.4-kilometer) expansion will connect the line's current terminus at 96th Street on the Upper East Side to 125th Street in Harlem, featuring three new fully accessible stations. It will also offer an easy transfer to Metro-North Railroad, which serves the city's northern suburbs and Connecticut. The next phase of the line will take roughly seven to eight years to complete once work begins, Jamie Torres-Springer, president of construction and development for the MTA, said via email. New Yorkers waited decades for an underground subway to serve Harlem and the Upper East Side after elevated trains running through those neighborhoods along Second Avenue were torn down in the 1940s. The MTA estimates the new development will serve an additional 100,000 riders daily.

Biotechnology & Healthcare

[Thermo Fisher fronts over \\$900M for data intelligence company as M&A strategy takes shape \(Fierce Biotech\)](#)

The deal will see the life sciences giant hand over \$912.5 million for the Waltham, Massachusetts-based company. CorEvitas, which oversees around 300 employees, has developed a multi-therapeutic data intelligence platform to gather structured patient clinical data spanning more than 400 investigator sites and over 100,000 patients. It does this by managing 12 clinical registries, including nine autoimmune and inflammatory syndicated registries. Justifying the hefty price tag, Thermo Fisher pointed to CorEvitas' more than 20-year pedigree in partnering with pharmas and biotechs. "CorEvitas is well positioned to

grow its revenue organically in the low double digits, with expected revenue of \$110 million in 2023,” Thermo Fisher added. The company would be an “excellent strategic fit” for Thermo Fisher’s clinical research services provider PPD, Capser added. PPD was acquired by Thermo Fisher in another big bucks deal back in 2021, with the company handing out a whopping \$17.4 billion.

[Opioids about as effective as placebo for lower back and neck pain, study finds](#)

[First Alzheimer's drug to slow disease progression expected to get full FDA approval \(CNN\)](#)

The US Food and Drug Administration is expected to decide on Thursday whether to grant traditional approval to the Alzheimer’s drug Leqembi, the first medicine proven to slow the course of the memory-robbing disease. An approval decision would also be expected to trigger a change in how the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services covers the drug, broadening access for up to an estimated million people with early forms of the disease. Leqembi, from drugmakers Eisai and Biogen, received accelerated approval in January based on evidence that it clears amyloid plaque buildups in the brain that are associated with Alzheimer’s disease. Even for those who may benefit from the drug, Honig noted, it’s not a cure; Leqembi was shown in an 18-month clinical trial to slow declines in cognitive ability and function by 27%. The drug also comes with side effects and requires monitoring through regular brain imaging. About 13% of participants in the trial experienced brain swelling or bleeding, and those risks could be higher for certain groups based on their genetics or if they take blood-thinning medications.

[CMS proposes \\$375M reimbursement cut to home health agencies](#)

[With FDA approval in hand, BioMarin lays out plan to sell \\$2.9M gene therapy \(BioPharma Dive\)](#)

BioMarin Pharmaceutical, having secured a long-awaited approval from the Food and Drug Administration, says its focus has now turned to launching its new hemophilia gene therapy in the U.S. market. The FDA on Thursday approved the therapy, known as Roctavian, for certain people with hemophilia A, the more common form of the rare bleeding disorder. While there are other effective treatments already available, the hope surrounding Roctavian has been that, at least for some patients, it could be a one-time fix for their disease. For BioMarin, the launch will have a significant affect on its financial future. The company has already brought seven other drugs to market — a rare achievement in the biotechnology industry — yet it hasn’t been consistently profitable. Wall Street analysts believe Roctavian could change that, and have marked it as a potential blockbuster product. The FDA approved the therapy for certain people living with severe

hemophilia A, a group that totals around 2,500 in the U.S. by BioMarin's estimates.

Climate & Development

[World's Biggest Nuclear Power Plant Being Planned in Canada \(Bloomberg\)](#)

A Canadian utility is starting early work to expand a nuclear plant, potentially building the world's biggest facility as growing demand for clean energy spurs interest in atomic energy. The Ontario government said Wednesday Bruce Power will conduct an environmental assessment of adding as much as 4.8 gigawatts of capacity to its plant in Canada's most-populous province. The plant's eight reactors currently have about 6.2 gigawatts of capacity and supply 30% of the province's power. The expansion would make the site larger than Japan's Kashiwazaki-Kariwa plant, the biggest in the world with seven reactors and more than 8 gigawatts of capacity. The announcement comes amid growing recognition that carbon-free nuclear power is likely to play an important role in the global battle against climate change. Canada is developing plans to mandate a net-zero power grid by 2035, and the Bruce project would be the first conventional nuclear plant in the province in three decades. Another utility in the region, Ontario Power Generation Inc., is involved in an effort to develop a new type of advanced reactor.

[Canada Offers Lesson in the Economic Toll of Climate Change](#)

[Federal Money Begins Flowing to Lake Erie for Projects with an Eye on Future Climate Impacts \(Inside Climate News\)](#)

Lake Erie will face more stormwater runoff, increased erosion and changes in both water levels and quality as climate change continues. Projects to mitigate those impacts range from restoring a wetland to deploying a plastic-scavenging drone named Pixie, and more. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration announced plans this spring to fund nearly 150 projects, including four in Ohio. The \$8.2 million for those four projects is just a tiny part of almost \$6 billion authorized over the next few years for NOAA's climate-related programs under the 2021 Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and the 2022 Inflation Reduction Act. Up to \$6 million of the NOAA funds will go for a nature-based shoreline restoration project at the Pickerel Creek Wildlife Area on Sandusky Bay, roughly 75 miles west of Cleveland. Another NOAA grant will provide \$1.7 million to purchase and conserve 105 acres of land along the Chagrin River, roughly 20 miles east of Cleveland and about four miles from Lake Erie.

[Carbon Capture Faces a Major Test in North Dakota](#)

[Earth Hit an Unofficial Record High Temperature This Week -- and Stayed There \(AP\)](#)

[News](#)

Earth's average temperature on Wednesday remained at an unofficial record high set the day before. And for the seven-day period ending Wednesday, the daily average temperature was .08 degrees Fahrenheit (.04 degrees Celsius) higher than any week in 44 years of record-keeping, according to data from the University of Maine's Climate Reanalyzer, a tool that uses satellite data and computer simulations to measure the world's condition. More frequent and more intense heat waves are disrupting life around the world and causing life-threatening temperatures. Last week, Egypt experienced one of its many summer heatwaves, with temperatures soaring above 100 degrees Fahrenheit (37.7 degrees Celsius), according to Egypt's national weather forecaster. To combat heat and humidity, children on Thursday frolicked in the Nile River while pedestrians hunted the shade. One of the largest contributors to this week's records is an exceptionally mild winter in the Antarctic. Parts of the continent and nearby ocean were 18-36 degrees Fahrenheit (10-20 degrees Celsius) higher than averages from 1979 to 2000.

Next Week's Hearings

Armed Services Committees

House: None Listed

Senate: Tuesday, July 11th, 2023; 9:30 am; [To Consider the Nomination of: General Charles Q. Brown, Jr., USAF for Reappointment to the Grade of General and to be Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff](#)

Wednesday, July 12th, 2023; 9:30 am; [To consider the nomination of: General Randy A. George, USA for reappointment to the grade of general and to be Chief of Staff of the Army](#)

Appropriations Committees

House: None listed

Senate: Tuesday, July 11th, 2023; 10:00 am; [Full Committee Hearing: Accelerating Breakthroughs: How the Special Diabetes Program Is Creating Hope for those Living with Type 1 Diabetes](#)

Thursday, July 13th, 2023; 11:00 am; [Business Meeting: Full Committee Markup of Fiscal Year 2024 Legislative Branch; Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies; and Financial Services and General Government Appropriations Acts](#)

Homeland Security Committees

House: Wednesday, July 12th, 2023; 2:00 pm; [A Subcommittee on Border Security and Enforcement hearing entitled, "Protecting the U.S. Homeland: Fighting the Flow of](#)

[Fentanyl from the Southwest Border.”](#)

Senate: Tuesday, July 11th, 2023; 10:00 am; [The PGA-LIV Deal: Implications for the Future of Golf and Saudi Arabia's Influence in the United States](#)

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