



Rendering of Tanager-2 (Carbon Mapper)

Next month, scientists and diplomats from all over the world will arrive in Antalya, Türkiye for the UN climate conference known as COP31. The host country wants to make global progress on reducing planet-warming methane from landfills, which could be a big deal. So, **UCLA's STOP Methane** used satellite data to create a [Top 10 list of super-emitting landfills in Turkey's waste sector](#) to provide some very specific mitigation opportunities since that country wants to lead by example. This data is not just numbers; it helps tell a story about an urgent climate problem and real environmental impacts on nearby residents.

These mega-leaks are the subject of a [feature in the Guardian](#), which paired on-the-ground reporting in Istanbul with UCLA's research:

“Staff from the Istanbul metropolitan municipality's waste management division, İstaç, at the site in Silivri appeared surprised when shown satellite images of the massive gas leak emanating from a spot visible from their office windows,” **Damian Carrington** and **Ruth Michaelson** write. “Fatih Arslan of İstaç cleared his throat while staring intently at the satellite images presented to him by the Guardian. ‘Well, there's not much to say,’ he said, initially blaming the emissions on areas of the waste site not yet covered with clay after the dumping process. ‘It's inevitable that this is happening ... of course we have to make improvements,’ he ventured.”

A reporter was only able to hand these satellite images to a landfill operator and ask for a comment thanks to a satellite called Tanager-1, a state-of-the-art emissions-sensing instrument from **Planet Labs** and **Carbon Mapper**, an independent nonprofit that also analyzes the satellite data.

Last Thursday, the power of this eye in the sky was multiplied. Carbon Mapper and their collaborators celebrated as Tanager-2 [launched](#) successfully into space from Vandenberg Space Force Base in Lompoc. In the last year, UCLA's STOP Methane Project has focused on [super-emitters](#) in the biggest U.S. oil & gas basins; [landfills all around the world](#); and the super-sized plumes in [Turkmenistan](#). Our work is just

getting started. Two satellites mean double the data. (You can follow this project and read a newsletter out today about landfill solutions by [subscribing here](#).)

In addition to enabling all sorts of important research, Tanager-2 will help local air regulators increasingly monitor super-polluting methane emissions: The California Air Resources Board says it will be able to find leaks and follow up faster to make sure operators have made repairs. Carbon Mapper chief executive **Riley Duren** [told](#) the LA Times' **Blanca Begert** that the company aims to visualize 90 percent of methane emissions around the planet eventually. Even though the federal government [plans](#) to loosen methane regulations, these super-emitters will not stay hidden.

Welcome to the Drain, a roundup of climate and environmental news from Legal Planet. Our song this week is "[Full Spectrum Dominance](#)" by Dummy, one of 600+ songs on my climate playlist (on [Spotify](#) and [Apple Music](#)).

SWEAT-ER WEATHER



Our new abnormal means suffering a weeklong 100-degree October heatwave while people are putting out Halloween pumpkins. As we start to associate extreme heat events with autumn, it begs the question: Is there pumpkin spice sunscreen? [Of](#)

[course there is.](#)

SoCal saw temperatures 20-25 degrees above average and the region is [breaking multiple records](#) each day. "We're getting into rare territory now," CBS LA Chief Meteorologist **Paul Deanno** [said](#). "A gallon of gas cost 30 cents in the summer of 1963. That is the last time we had five straight days above 100 degrees in downtown LA until today."

I appreciated this [Guardian story](#) that quoted my UCLA colleague **Edith de Guzman**, who was able to turn attention to the heatwave coinciding with the first game of the National League division series between the LA Dodgers and the Atlanta Braves (two teams sponsored by fossil fuel companies).

Kudos to **Kevin Baxter** for this [perfect kicker quote](#) in an LA Times sports section story, which not only focused on how extreme heat is making America's favorite pastime harder to enjoy, but also found a Dodgers fan to succinctly comment on climate change. "I've been coming to games my whole life and this is easily the hottest game I've ever been to," said Nicholas Gonzalez, 38, of Culver City. "The dark silver lining," Gonzalez, the heat-weary fan said in a nod to global warming, "is this might be the coolest October of the rest of our lives."

This January-September 2026 period was the warmest January-September on record for the Contiguous U.S. since 1895, [according](#) to PRISM climate data.

Be prepared to go from sweat to wet. UC climate scientist **Daniel Swain** crunch the numbers and says "I've never seen such high predictive confidence in a very wet California winter. This is a truly extraordinary forecast amid a record-strength El Niño event."

To deal with El Niño, California will partner with a Finnish satellite-imaging company to track "near-real-time" information on floods, wildfires and other natural disasters, POLITICO reports.

So Cal communities along the shore are preparing for an El Niño-fueled "coastally trapped wave" — a bulge in the ocean surface that is expected to raise California's sea levels by up to a foot in October, the Washington Post [reports](#).

LITIGATION

In the hours after Monday's *Suncor v. Boulder* oral arguments, my UCLA Emmett Institute colleague **Alejandro Camacho** wrote a [Legal Planet post](#) analyzing the arguments we did and did not hear. It was cited as "Insta-analysis" by [Axios](#). He was quoted in the [LA Times](#), [Grist](#), and two articles in [Mother Jones](#).

The justices "appeared potentially at an impasse," **Lesley Clark** [wrote](#) at POLITICO. At least four justices expressed skepticism about the oil industry's argument that the Clean Air Act explicitly prevents such lawsuits against polluters."

Justice Alito [said](#) this week that he "reluctantly" recused himself from the case and that justices shouldn't make a practice of explaining their reasons for stepping aside. (Hard not to when you're on a book tour.) His recusal came after **Consumer Watchdog** [released research](#) showing the two oil companies whose stock Alito held warned investors and in amicus briefs that they would be significantly impacted by the decision. "As the date of the argument approaches and I immersed myself in the arguments that were being made on both sides," Alito [told](#) the **WSJ**.

No matter how the case is decided, the climate accountability genie is out of the bottle largely due to the rise of attribution science, **Jeff Goodell** [writes](#) for NYT Opinion, and the Supreme Court is unlikely to jam it back in. "Even if the court sides with Suncor, attribution science will continue to move forward, filling in the gaps between cause and effect in our understanding of how climate works."

Meanwhile, court filings by Massachusetts in its own climate lawsuit include previously undisclosed documents from Exxon, revealing new details about internal deliberations at the oil giant. Experts say they provide new details on internal deliberations at Exxon from the 1980s to the 2010s, **Nicholas Kusnetz** [reports](#) for Inside Climate News.

California Attorney General **Rob Bonta** is leading a coalition of 26 states and local governments in [filing a new lawsuit](#) against the Trump administration over its rollback of federal vehicle fuel economy standards, alleging the new rules illegally weaken fuel-economy requirements for cars and light trucks, **Hayley Smith** [reports](#) for LAT.

MEDIA NEWS

Last week, I [ranted](#) against some not-so-good journalism covering heat pumps in the Bay Area. Here's a good example of *good* journalism on the subject: Chevron quietly gave \$150,000 to a Bay Area group that's now accused of using AI to fight the Bay Area's landmark heat pump rule. **Miranda Green** [reports](#) for Desmog that the group claimed victory after regulators recommended delaying landmark rules that would eventually phase out gas water heaters in 2.8 million homes.

Climate Home News has launched [The Climate Agenda Lite](#), a "snapshot of what's coming up on the climate calendar, from major events and policy negotiations to wider geopolitical shifts you need to be aware of."

Ivan Couronne [announced](#) he's starting in a new role at AFP as founding editor of the "Future of the Planet Desk." Intriguing name. (Glad it's not Legal Planet Desk, lol.) "In short: we'll cover the legal battles shaping the planet's future, drawing on AFP's global text, photo and video network to report on the people behind the cases and on the undercovered consequences of those battles."

Event alert: The UCLA Center for Occupational and Environmental Health is co-hosting an event called **"Toxic Truths: How Independent Journalists Are Exposing Industrial Pollution That Corporations Want Hidden,"** on October 29. Journalists from Red Canary Magazine and The Examination will join the panel discussion. ([RSVP here](#))

And this is cool: **UC Santa Barbara** has launched a new [minor in environmental humanities](#). The program, based in the College of Letters & Science, "examines how culture, history, ethics, research and storytelling shape the ways people understand and respond to environmental change."

POLITICS



Much ink was spilled dissecting BAAJA, last week's bipartisan deal on a [permitting](#). This is the "[Greens' Dilemma](#)" in 2026.

Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse defended the deal [in a long thread](#), saying that "it will lower electric costs and emissions, and lift wind, solar and battery power (BIG lift for battery), and add LOTS of good jobs." The National Association of Manufacturers is [running ads](#) urging Congress to approve the permitting plan.

The "Permit Me to Explain" blog by the **Environmental Policy Innovation Center** has a section-by-section [dashboard](#) that summarizes every provision of BAAJA.

One set of provisions would rewrite federal electricity law to allow states and utilities to "discriminate against artificial intelligence data centers and crypto miners for the first time," **Robinson Meyer** [writes](#) at Heatmap News.

Some green groups are adamantly opposed. "This is a climate kill shot that condemns our most vulnerable communities to suffer decades more fossil fuel pollution," says a press release from the **Center for Biological Diversity** (CBD). It cites "numerous provisions that lock in thousands of fossil fuel projects, including oil and gas pipelines, LNG export terminals, and expanded fossil fuel drilling onshore and offshore."

One brutal response to that approach is an article titled [“You don’t need to hate people to save the planet”](#) at The Argument by its editor-in-chief **Jerusalem Demsas**, formerly of the Atlantic. She uses a leaked [transcript](#) from a coalition call to “stop the bill” led partly by CBD to make the case that the group is pro-biological diversity except when it comes to humans.

I [wrote last week](#) about getting out the green vote. A new poll from the non-partisan nonprofit **Environmental Voter Project** finds that 59% of likely midterm voters in 8 battleground states want politicians to talk *more* about climate change and pollution. “Among the 81% who said that they wouldn’t rule out a candidate who makes transitioning away from fossil fuels a top priority, 7 of 10 said they would be more likely to vote for them, writes **Covering Climate Now** ahead of a panel discussion on the topic.

DATA CENTERS + ENERGY



What does the data center boom look like from the sky? The NYT’s Upshot [put together](#) interactive graphics using data from **Cleanview** that allow you to swipe and see how unused land or even plots in residential neighborhoods have been transformed.

Maybe it's starting to look more like a data center *bust*. *At least* \$260 billion of data center investments were canceled this year after sustained local opposition, [according](#) to new Heatmap Pro data. "About half of all projects that have met local backlash this year were ultimately canceled."

There's consensus building among economists that AI is a bubble waiting to pop. "The big-spending hyperscalers need \$13-\$18 trillion in revenues over the next 10 years to justify their AI-infrastructure investments," **Ryan Cummings** and **Jared Bernstein** [write](#).

San Francisco's Board of Supervisors this week [passed](#) a temporary, 45-day moratorium on data centers citywide, halting the construction of new centers and ordering a planning commission study on their impacts.

Democratic Gov. **Abigail Spanberger** just released [a blueprint](#) that doubles down on the state's landmark climate law, the Virginia Clean Economy Act (VCEA) while "aiming to solve the data center growth problem," Canary reports.

In northwest Arizona, an area with little to no known oil or gas reserves, nearly 320,000 acres of public land in northwest Arizona have been nominated for oil & gas leasing, **Joan Meiners** [reports](#) for the Arizona Republic. "The lands encompass hiking, mountain biking and ATV trails, limestone rock climbing destinations and favorite deer hunting spots."

Locally, the city of LA's zoning administrator is [now weighing](#) whether to revoke the permit for the 32 closely-packed oil and gas wells at the Murphy drill site on West Adams Boulevard, run by Bakersfield-based E&B Natural Resources. Residents of the Jefferson Park neighborhood have been fighting for more than a decade to close it down due to air pollution and health concerns.

MORE METHANE

I spent a good six years of my youth cooking in commercial kitchens, during and after college. I can tell you that most line cooks are not interested in (or have thought much about) switching from gas stoves to all-electric. But maybe if they knew what we're learning about the risks and dangers of gas they'd think again.

"Dangerous amounts of heat and air pollution swirl in most commercial kitchens — even when the stoves are off," **Alison Takemura** [reports](#) for Canary Media. That's

based on a new peer-reviewed [study](#) by **PSE Healthy Energy**. The study looked at 27 commercial kitchens and found gas appliances often exposed workers to nitrogen dioxide and extreme heat above health and safety thresholds; all-electric kitchens did not, **Tony Briscoe** [reports](#) for the LA Times.

An investigation by **The Examination** and **Bloomberg News** [finds](#) that a World Bank initiative to eliminate routine gas flaring by 2030 is so riddled with loopholes that companies are trumpeting success even as satellites show their flares burn day in and day out. "Even in some oil fields where companies already claimed to have eliminated the practice, satellite data from 2025 and 2026 show flares still ablaze most of the time, according to the analysis by the two news organizations."

To Europe, which has officially delayed the landmark methane regulation for one-year delay, Reuters [reports](#). European Commission President **Ursula von der Leyen** told EU lawmakers the postponement would save money and her energy minister cautioned that "we do not foresee this to be more than one year."

In New Mexico, that state's attorney general, **Raúl Torrez**, is [pushing back hard](#) against FERC's review of a proposed gas pipeline by Energy Transfer known as the "Green Chile Project," which is intended to power Oracle and OpenAI's Project Jupiter data center, calling the review "inadequate."