

BIG DATA SUPPORTS CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION EFFORT

White House encourages organizations to use publicly available data to fight climate change

In March, the White House unveiled its Climate Data Initiative, which aims to [leverage big data](#) and technology to help understand and address climate change. This initiative has been followed by a series of programs. An accelerator program will support public and private sector initiatives aimed at boosting [climate change preparedness](#) using big data. Topics such as food security, agriculture, flood and drought will be addressed by the startups.

IBM will [offer scientists](#) who are researching climate change related issues free access to dedicated virtual supercomputing. Each approved project will have the opportunity to access up to 100,000 years of computing time, valued at USD 60 million.

The Urban Observatory and Esri, a big data visualization pioneer, will [join together](#) on a project that allows users to quickly map sustainability data, such as population density and traffic patterns. The tool will be available on the internet and an interactive exhibition featuring the Urban Observatory will be permanently stationed at the Smithsonian Institution starting in February 2015.



WATER RISKS STILL FRONT AND CENTER FOR BUSINESSES

Water risk was highlighted in Ceres' [2010 report](#) *Murky Waters? Corporate Reporting on Water Risk*, when the SEC highlighted the materiality of water risk: "Changes in the availability or quality of water... can have material effects on companies." Businesses have been paying attention to water as a material risk for years but recent examples have brought the issue back to light. For example, a business can lose its license to operate amidst local activism around the company's depletion of the local aquifer.

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BIG COAL FIGHTS BACK; AUSTRALIA APPROVES A NEW COAL MINE

New coal mine approved despite environmental pressures; Groups lobby in support of EPA plan

The Australian government approved a controversial [coal mining project](#) this week, despite pressure from environmental groups and marine tour operators. The project is subject to groundwater protections and other conditions, including offsetting 30,000 of destroyed hectares. [The mine](#) is expected to generate as much as USD 300 billion for the economy.

It's not just environmental groups that are unhappy with the coal industry. The ski industry in the US is fighting [Big Coal](#), urging the industry to curb carbon emissions from power plants. Ski industry supporters testified this week in favor of the EPA's plan to cut carbon emissions.

Although it seems that the US is making good progress, a few unintended consequences of US economic activity are affecting [GHG emissions](#). For example, many are unaware that US energy companies are sending more fossil fuels than ever to other parts of the world.

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AVIVA URGES ASSET OWNERS AND CONSULTANTS TO CONSIDER SUSTAINABILITY

Asset management and insurance giant produces white paper following UN Global Compact

Asset management and insurance giant, Aviva, [published a roadmap](#) outlining a set of proposals for how asset owners and investment consultants will need to demonstrate that they integrate sustainability considerations into their investments.

Aviva outlines the proposal in its recent white paper on how the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) can harness global capital markets. [The proposals](#) are “ambitious and systemic” says Aviva’s CEO Mark Wilson in the foreword to the 60-page report: “In my view, there are a number of important global capital market failures leading to unsustainable economic activity that are in need of correction by governments.”

STAT OF THE WEEK

What’s behind increased energy demands in China? Frozen dumplings. China had 250 million cubic feet of refrigerated storage capacity in 2007; by 2017, the country is on track to have 20 times that. At five billion cubic feet, China will surpass even the United States, which has led the world in cold storage ever since artificial refrigeration was invented. So what’s the big deal? Cooling is already responsible for 15 percent of all electricity consumption worldwide, and leaks of chemical refrigerants are a major source of greenhouse-gas pollution.

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BELIEVE IT OR NOT

New vocab word of the week: Cli-Fi

Definition: A sub-genre of science fiction that explores the possible, often catastrophic, effects of climate change is gaining in popularity and has even been added to some university curriculums.

Will these “cli-fi” movies and novels make a difference in how people react to global warming?

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