

Bayer asks Congress to help fight lawsuits

Bill would shield biotech firm from claims that Roundup causes cancer

BY TONY ROMM

The biotech giant Bayer has lobbied Congress over the past year to advance legislation that could shield the company from billions of dollars in lawsuits, part of a national campaign to defeat claims that its weed killer Roundup causes cancer in people who use it frequently.

The measure threatens to make it harder for farmers and groundskeepers to argue that they were not fully informed about some health and safety risks posed by the popular herbicide. By erecting new legal barriers to bringing those cases, Bayer seeks to prevent sizable payouts to plaintiffs while sparing itself from a financial crisis.

At the heart of the lobbying push is glyphosate, the active ingredient in certain formulations of Roundup. Some health and environmental authorities contend it is a carcinogen, but the federal government — which previously conducted its own review — does not. Under local laws, thousands of plaintiffs have filed lawsuits targeting Roundup over the past decade, claiming at times they were never warned that regular exposure could cause them to develop debilitating or deadly diseases, such as non-Hodgkin's lymphoma.

Throughout the legal wrangling, Bayer has maintained that its popular weed killer is safe, though it agreed to pay roughly \$10 billion in a landmark settlement that concluded thousands of cases in 2020 without any

SEE FARMERS ON A6

Tech giants scramble to gird the grid to handle AI

BY EVAN HALPER AND CAROLINE O'DONOVAN

The mighty Columbia River has helped power the American West with hydroelectricity since the days of FDR's New Deal. But the artificial intelligence revolution will demand more. Much more.

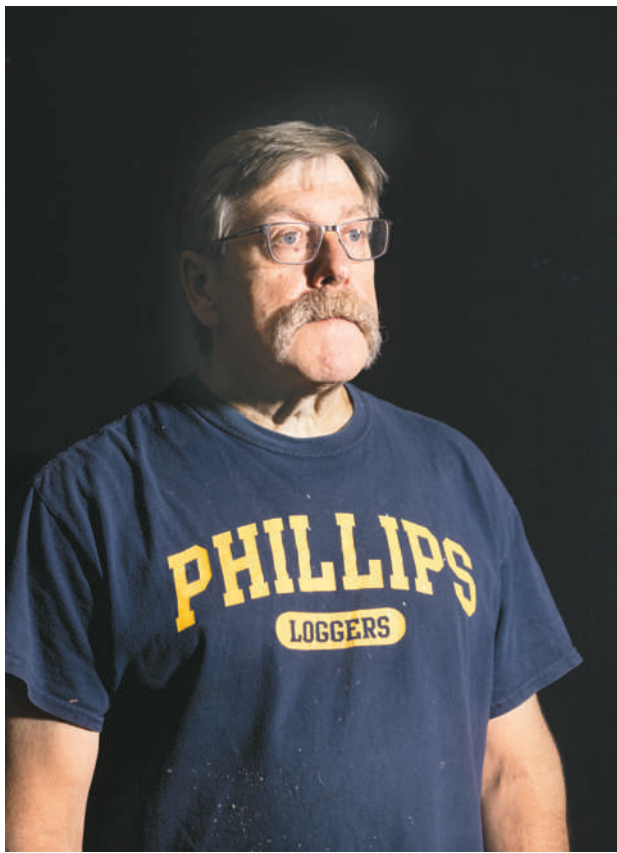
So near the river's banks in central Washington, Microsoft is betting on an effort to generate power from atomic fusion — the collision of atoms that powers the sun — a breakthrough that has eluded scientists for the past century. Physicists predict it will elude Microsoft, too.

The tech giant and its partners say they expect to harness fusion by 2028, an audacious claim that bolsters their promises to transition to green energy but distracts from current reality. In fact, the voracious electricity consumption of artificial intelligence is driving an expansion of fossil fuel use — including delaying the retirement of some coal-fired plants.

In the face of this dilemma, Big Tech is going all-in on experimental clean energy projects that have long odds of success anytime soon. In addition to fusion, tech giants are hoping to generate power through such futuristic schemes as small nuclear reactors

SEE POWER ON A4

ELECTION 2024



PHOTOS BY JENN ACKERMAN FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

These are the 'double haters.' They may decide the election.

BY ASHLEY PARKER IN HUDSON, WIS.

Ask voters here in far western Wisconsin what they think of their two main presidential choices in November — the same two choices they had four years ago — and the answers, even tinged with Midwest nice, come out hard and blunt.

"Absolute trash."
"Three-hundred-and-some-odd million people, and that's all we can get?"
"Terrifying."

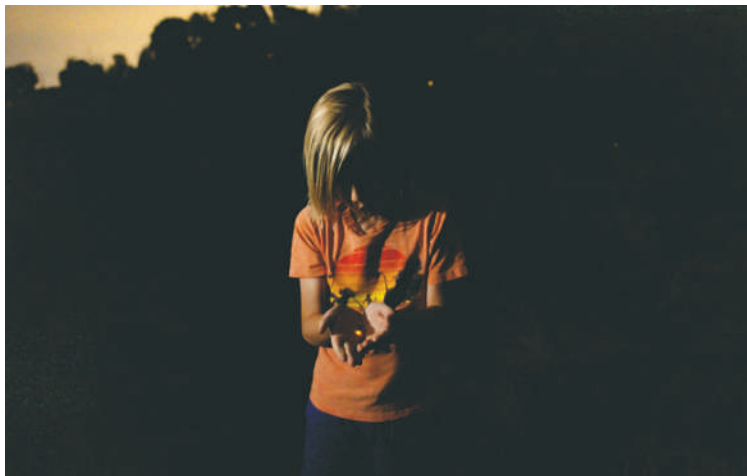
"Both options suck. And it's going to, I think, boil down to what sucks less."

With Election Day less than five months away, voters in Hudson are increasingly preoccupied with just which option — President Biden, 81, or former president Donald Trump, 78 — is "the evil we've got to vote for," in the words of Gregory Wold, 57, a retired corrections department employee from North Hudson, Wis.

During the 2020 election, Hudson — a city nestled on the banks of the St. Croix River that separates Wisconsin from Minnesota — favored Trump over Biden by a slim 155 votes. Almost twice as many Hudson voters, 308, voted for someone else — a rare move in a closely contested race.

SEE DECIDERS ON A8

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Kimberly Nelson, Steve Slama, Mathilda Leeson and Jim Seifert are 'double haters' — voters dissatisfied with both major party choices.



KIM RAFF FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Sawyer Garcia with a firefly at the Spanish Fork, Utah, farm where his grandmother, Diane Thompson Garcia, gives summer tours.

Gasps in the glow of a summertime secret

In a dark Utah farm field, fireflies create a twinkling spectacle nightly

BY JULIA LYON

SPANISH FORK, UTAH — Not far from Main Street and the new houses that seem to be sprouting everywhere, grassy farm fields hold a summertime secret that thousands of people ache to see. It makes adults feel like kids again. It makes kids believe in a bit of magic.

Only a lucky few dozen get invitations nightly. And at the farm that Diane Thompson Garcia's family has owned for five

generations, they are greeted like old friends.

Garcia is the guardian of the glow.

She leads visitors down a narrow trail after dusk disappears on a long June day. There often are gasps as they glimpse the first firefly of the night — for many, the first they've ever seen. Yet for the grown-ups who didn't think lightning bugs existed in Utah and for the children who can't believe such tiny, flickering creatures exist at all, Garcia is more than just

a guide.

As darkness settles, she begins to tell her story. Then the fireflies start the show.

All Garcia wanted back in 2017 was for people to witness the fireflies on her Utah County farm before they were gone. Despite her many pleas to city leaders, it seemed inevitable that the development coming ever closer to her 24-acre farm would lead to more traffic and bright lights, the kind of environment that extinguishes

SEE FIREFLIES ON A10



Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant arrived in Washington on Sunday.

Fears of all-out war in Mideast

ISRAEL-LEBANON TENSIONS ESCALATE

Gallant in D.C. amid threats from Hezbollah

BY SARAH DADOUCH, KYLE MELNICK AND NIHA MASIH

BEIRUT — Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant arrived in Washington on Sunday for meetings with U.S. officials amid growing fears that border clashes between Israel and the Lebanese militant group Hezbollah could escalate into all-out war.

Hezbollah released a video message Saturday night threatening to attack crucial Israeli buildings if a full-scale conflict were to break out in Lebanon. The video appears to display coordinates near a central Israeli airport, two power plants, a nuclear research center, a cargo port and a gas field.

It also includes a clip from a speech that Hasan Nasrallah, the head of Hezbollah, delivered Wednesday: "If a war is imposed on Lebanon, the resistance will fight without restraints, without rules, without limits," he said.

The Israel-Lebanon border has been a battlefield since Oct. 7, when Hamas-led militants overran southern Israel, triggering the war in Gaza and inspiring attacks by Iranian-backed proxies from Iraq to Yemen.

Israeli forces and fighters from Hezbollah — the Iranian-aligned group that is Lebanon's most dominant military and political force — have traded carefully calibrated blows, exchanging rocket, mortar and drone fire on a near-daily basis. While the violence has displaced tens of thousands of civilians on both sides of the border, it has, until now, remained relatively contained.

But the scope and pace of attacks have increased significantly in recent weeks, matched by sharper threats from Israeli and Hezbollah officials, who both say they are prepared for war — a nightmare scenario that officials in Europe, Washington and across the region fear would devastate Lebanon, threaten major Israeli cities and consume the Middle East.

"We have been pursuing a diplomatic resolution to try to make clear that there should be no further escalation, and that's what

SEE GAZA ON A13

IN THE NEWS

Curriculum conflict Virginia officials proposed dozens of revisions to an elective course on African American history, striking some mentions of white supremacy and systemic racism, records show. B1

A deadly Hajj Heat wave fatalities highlighted the risks faced by unregistered pilgrims. A12

THE NATION Donald Trump suggested at two events that migrants should fight for sport. A2
California is facing a nearly \$50 billion budget shortfall in the coming fiscal year. A3

THE WORLD Some Japanese officials and businesses are turning to surcharges for foreigners amid a tourism boom. A14
Western governments want Ukraine to do more to battle corruption. A14

THE ECONOMY The app Watch Duty, mostly run by volunteers and on a shoestring budget, has become one of the most trusted sources of information on wildfires. A15
YouTube is testing a feature allowing users to add contextual notes to others' videos. A15

THE REGION A historic lighthouse in the Chesapeake Bay is on the market for \$450,000. B1
Montgomery County is poised to finally implement a rent stabilization policy. B1
Wheaton Ice Arena offers skaters a refuge from the punishing heat. B1

STYLE Democrats are looking to redeem themselves in New York in November after a handful of surprising losses in the state in 2022. C1
As Gen Z embraces crew socks, some millennials are getting defensive about their own preference for low-cut styles. C1

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