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ARIPPA PERIODIC MEDIA NEWS – 2-1-19

(News clips from the previous month)

CFB, COAL REFUSE, ENERGY INDUSTRY

[The Energy 202: Polar vortex tests gas and electric systems in Midwest, Mid-Atlantic](#) - As millions of residents in the Midwest and Mid-Atlantic hunker down amid historically bitter temperatures, the cold is testing the very energy systems meant to keep their lights on and homes warm during the brutal winter weather.

[Reinventing Coal: Researchers Create Novel Materials from a Declining Energy Resource](#) - What do carbon fiber, steel, textiles, shampoo, and laundry detergent have in common? They can all be made directly from coal or have their cost and performance improved with additives derived from coal.

[Power plants may shut down if court rolls back reg changes](#) - Utilities and other power producers say they may have to halt operations at coal-fired plants around the country if a court rolls back a Trump administration extension to the deadline for closing some coal ash dumps.

[Monitor Sees Problems with PJM Reserve Pricing Plan](#) - PJM's proposed revisions to how it prices reserves in its energy market necessitates changes in the RTO's capacity market to prevent substantial overpayment by customers for electricity and the exercise of market power by generators, Independent Market Monitor Joe Bowring said Friday.

[Fossil generators ask Supreme Court to review state nuclear subsidies](#) - Independent power generators on Monday asked the U.S. Supreme Court to review lower court decisions upholding nuclear power subsidies in New York and Illinois, arguing they violate the Federal Power Act.

[Emphasis on Solar and Wind Stresses Electricity Systems](#) - America's electricity system is quickly losing one of its major strengths — "dispatchable fuel diversity" — due to the rapid growth of problematic solar and wind power and an overdependence on just one fuel source in some states, a trend with dire implications for electricity reliability and consumer costs.

[2019 US renewable generation additions expected to far outpace gas: EIA](#) - 23.7 GW of new U.S. electric generating capacity, mostly from wind, natural gas and solar, are expected in 2019, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA) inventory of electric generators.

[Renewables, nuclear power gets outsized federal subsidies: study](#) - The Institute for Energy Research on Friday announced a report showing that renewables and nuclear power received 93% of federal subsidies in 2016, but produced only about 22% of the nation's energy, which drew mixed reactions from industry observers.

[FirstEnergy Solutions reaches restructuring agreement, could emerge from bankruptcy in 2019](#) - FirstEnergy Solutions announced Wednesday that it has reached an agreement with key creditors that could allow the company to negotiate its Chapter 11 bankruptcy proceeding and emerge on the other side with "continued ownership and operation of its retail and wholesale load-serving business."

[FirstEnergy Solutions scraps deal with Exelon, will keep operating Bruce Mansfield and Beaver Valley for now](#) - FirstEnergy Solutions, the bankrupt subsidiary of Akron-based FirstEnergy Corp., will not be selling its retail electricity business to Exelon, the company announced Wednesday.

[PSEG drives home vow to shutter nuclear plants unless public subsidizes them](#) - Absent financial help, PSEG Nuclear vows to close its nuclear units in South Jersey within three years, saying the plants are not projected to cover hundreds of millions of dollars in annual expenditures, according to applications submitted to the state.

[Researchers Invent Cheap Way to Capture Carbon Dioxide from Coal Plants](#) - Until the day the world can actually stop using dirty fuels, we need smart ways to clean them up as much as we can. One group of researchers may have found a solution by using a cheap powder to capture carbon dioxide emissions from power plants before they make it into the atmosphere.

[EIA: US far off track for global climate goals as fossil fuel reliance persists](#) - The U.S. and its electric power sector are not on track to reduce carbon emissions to the level scientists say is necessary to stave off the worst effects of climate change, according to a new federal government report published Thursday.

[As plant retirements stack up, federal efforts to help coal industry grow more urgent](#) - There is slim chance a large baseload coal plant will ever be built again in the United States, experts say. But Republican lawmakers and the federal government are continuing efforts to support the industry, evidenced by an increase in research funding opportunities and proposed legislation meant to benefit the fuel production and the possibility of future plants.

[Game-Changing Coal Power Technologies](#) - To be a relevant player in the future power mix, coal power efficiency and costs must improve, and technologies in the realm of research and development promise to do just that.

[New York's Plan to Kill Coal Is Already Boosting Power Prices](#) - New York's plan to put the state's last coal-fired power plants out of business hasn't even been approved yet and electricity is already trading like they're shut.

[Global Report Warns of Looming Skills Shortages in Power, Nuclear, Renewables Sectors](#) - Power companies worldwide are struggling to balance talent shortages with changing skills needed for an increasingly digitalized business, the newly released Global Energy Talent Index (GETI) suggests.

LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY ISSUES: FEDERAL

[FERC's LaFleur to step down](#) - Federal Energy Regulatory Commission Commissioner Cheryl LaFleur will not seek a third term at the agency and will depart later in 2019, she announced on Twitter Thursday.

[DOE fossil head: New US coal plants 'quite possible'](#) - No new coal plants are under construction in the United States today, but the Department of Energy's top fossil fuel official thinks that may change in the near future.

[EPA highlights decrease in greenhouse gas emissions and deregulation in annual review](#) - The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is promoting its deregulatory agenda while also highlighting a measured drop in greenhouse gas emissions as part of its list of 2018 achievements.

[Department of Energy Announces \\$38 Million for Improving Existing Coal-Fired Power Plants](#) - The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) today announced up to \$38 million in federal funding for cost-shared research and development (R&D) projects enhancing technologies that improve the overall performance, reliability, and flexibility of the nation's existing coal-fired power plant fleet.

[EPA's Wherum on whether climate is in crisis: 'I'm trying to figure that out'](#) - The Environmental Protection Agency's top air regulator said Friday he is still determining whether climate change is a "crisis," but said his agency will continue its rollback of carbon regulations proposed by the Obama administration as he studies the issue.

[Exclusive: Bipartisan House group revives carbon tax bill](#) - A bipartisan handful of House members are introducing carbon tax legislation today after first floating it late last year.

[Manchin: 'We're going to surprise a lot of people'](#) - Now the top Democrat on the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, Sen. Joe Manchin, D-W.Va., says he might surprise some people.

[McNamee won't recuse himself from resilience debates unless they 'closely resemble' coal bailout](#) - Federal Energy Regulatory Commission ethics officials have advised Commissioner Bernard McNamee to not recuse himself from FERC's grid resilience proceeding, the regulator said in a Monday letter to Senate Democrats, unless it comes to "closely resemble" the debate over the coal and nuclear bailout proposal he helped craft at the Department of Energy.

[At confirmation hearing, Trump's EPA pick vows to advance a deregulatory agenda](#) - Andrew Wheeler, a former fossil fuel industry lobbyist whom President Trump nominated earlier this month to lead the Environmental Protection Agency, told a key Senate panel Wednesday that he would continue the administration's aggressive reversal of environmental rules even as Democrats asked him why he wasn't doing more to curb greenhouse gas emissions linked to climate change.

[FERC seeks more information to process PJM capacity, energy market proposals](#) - PJM Interconnection's plan to adjust the demand curve used in its capacity auctions and a separate proposal to allow natural gas-fired plants to include maintenance expenses in their cost-based energy market offers were both flagged by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission as "deficient" on certain details needed to evaluate the proposals.

[US DOE earmarks nearly \\$10 million to stimulate market opportunities for coal](#) - The US Department of Energy said Tuesday it has made \$9.5 million available to create new market opportunities for coal through research into making upgraded coal fuel, producing high-value solid products from coal and other advanced material research.

[EPA criminal action against polluters hits 30-year low](#) - The Environmental Protection Agency hit a 30-year low in 2018 in the number of pollution cases it referred for criminal prosecution, Justice Department data show.

[The Energy 202: Court ruling may give environmental activists more fodder against EPA](#) - The Sierra Club, one of the nation's oldest environmental organizations, led a vocal campaign to oust Scott Pruitt by helping to reveal various managerial and ethical lapses by the former Environmental Protection Agency chief.

[FERC's McIntyre dies at 58](#) - Federal Energy Regulatory Commissioner Kevin McIntyre died on Wednesday, FERC confirmed on Thursday.

[Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, activist groups map out next steps in Green New Deal fight](#) - New York Democratic Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and allied progressive groups are ramping up their push for a Green New Deal.

LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY ISSUES: STATE

[Gov. Wolf again pitches plan for taxing Marcellus gas drillers](#) - Gov. Tom Wolf on Thursday announced plans to once again seek a severance tax on Marcellus Shale natural gas drilling, promising to use the money for disaster recovery, infrastructure and the expansion of broadband internet, among other projects.

[Reformers offer ways to make a rank-and-file Pennsylvania lawmaker more powerful](#) - It has been said that you can count on two hands - and most days probably one - the number of state lawmakers who really call the shots at the Pennsylvania State Capitol.

[Republican Pa. senator retires, leaving another opening in chamber](#) - Republican Pennsylvania Sen. Don White announced on Tuesday that he will retire at the end of February, leaving a third vacancy in a chamber where the GOP majority recently shrank.

[DEP: Jeansville Mine Fire Extinguished After Four-year Battle](#) - A mine fire in Carbon County that crews have been battling for years is finally extinguished.

[Gov. Wolf Nominates Patrick McDonnell For DEP, Cindy Adams Dunn For DCNR, Russell Redding For Agriculture Secretaries](#) - On January 16, Gov. Tom Wolf formally nominated Patrick McDonnell for DEP Secretary, Cindy Adams Dunn for DCNR Secretary and Russell Redding for Agriculture Secretary in his second term.

[Governor Wolf Establishes First Statewide Goal to Reduce Carbon Pollution in Pennsylvania](#) - Governor Tom Wolf announced that he has signed a new executive order establishing the first statewide goal to reduce carbon pollution in Pennsylvania, which is contributing to climate change.

[DEP Changes Regional Boundaries, Shifts Workload, Provides Update On e-Permitting, e-Inspections To Improve Permit Review Times, Reduce Costs](#) - On January 10, the Department of Environmental Protection announced a change in its regional office boundaries, the opening of a new office to handle multi-county projects and provided an update of ongoing e-permitting and e-inspection initiatives designed to improve permit review times and reduce costs.

[Rep. Mehaffie Named One Of 4 Co-Chairs Of PA Nuclear Energy Caucus](#) - On January 18, Rep. Tom Mehaffie (R-Dauphin) announced he has been invited to serve as co-chair of Pennsylvania's Nuclear Energy Caucus.

[Senate Republicans, Democrats Make Few Changes In Environmental, Energy Committee Chairs](#) - On January 7, Senate President Pro Tempore Joe Scarnati (R-Jefferson) announced Sen. Gene Yaw (R-Lycoming) will again serve as Republican Chair of the Senate Environmental Resources and Energy Committee in the new session.

[Rep. Greg Vitali Named Democratic Chair Of House Environmental Committee](#) - On January 7, House Democratic Leader Frank Dermody (D-Allegheny) named Rep. Greg Vitali (D-Delaware) as the Democratic Chair of the House Environmental Resources and Energy Committee.

[Wolf begins second term with big plans, clearer view of what's possible](#) - Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Wolf is returning for a second term with big plans, although perhaps a more sober view of what's possible.

[New Republican Chair Of House Environmental Committee Wants To Downsize PA's Job-Killing Regulatory Environment](#) - On January 2, the House Speaker named Daryl Metcalfe (R-Butler) as the new Republican Chair of the House Environmental Resources and Energy Committee.

[Pa. PUC prepares to collect millions in past impact fees after 'stripper well' ruling](#) - About 17 natural gas companies are expected to get invoices early this year for millions of dollars of impact fees they owe on low-producing shale wells following a state Supreme Court decision last week.

[Lawmakers introduce comprehensive pipeline legislative package](#) - State Sens. Andy Dinniman, D-19, and Tom Killion, R-9, announced Wednesday that they have introduced a comprehensive legislative package aimed at reforming Pennsylvania's pipeline regulatory process to improve safety at schools and in local neighborhoods and communities.

[Pennsylvania House's powerful new 'oversight committee' triggers legal and political questions](#) - Buried within the multitude of volumes that encompass Pennsylvania laws is a 176-year-old statute that is rarely used.

[Senate Republican Leader Warns Of Significant Budget Challenges; House Republicans Of Need For More Government Oversight](#) - On January 1, Senate President Pro Tempore Joe Scarnati (R-Jefferson) used his remarks opening the new 2019-20 legislative session to warn of significant challenges ahead for this year's state budget.

[Pa. State House makes a number of serious rules changes on opening day](#) - On an otherwise ceremonial swearing-in day, the Pennsylvania State House passed a new set of operating rules Tuesday that carry new language on sexual harassment, criminal convictions and - in a late surprise - another tool to provide legislative oversight of the executive branch.

[Cambria commissioners OK annual debt service payment to CSA](#) - The Cambria County commissioners unanimously approved making their annual payment to the Cambria Somerset Authority after recently sending a letter to the state Department of Environmental Protection seeking reconsideration of a decision that could reclassify the regional authority as a private water system and making it subject to Clean Water Act regulations.