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ARIPPA PERIODIC MEDIA NEWS – 6-1-19

(News clips from the previous month)

CFB, COAL REFUSE, ENERGY INDUSTRY

[Three Mile Island will close Sept. 30, as nuclear rescue legislation stalls in Harrisburg](#) - The Three Mile Island Unit 1 reactor near Harrisburg will close as planned Sept. 30, its owner Exelon said Wednesday.

[PJM CEO Andy Ott to Retire](#) - Andy Ott said Monday he will step down as PJM's president and CEO next month, marking the second top executive to exit the organization this year.

[FERC Ends Notices of Alleged Violations](#) - FERC on Thursday officially rescinded its controversial policy of allowing its Office of Enforcement to publicly disclose its investigations of possible misconduct and their subjects' identities, ending a practice in place since 2011 (PL10-2-003).

[Utility Group Under Congressional Investigation Will Disband](#) - A utility industry coalition that has often challenged stricter air pollution and climate rules for power generation said it will dissolve. The Utility Air Regulatory Group (UARG), which has been under investigation from the House Energy and Commerce Committee due to its relationship with the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) top air policy official and his former law firm, in a statement on May 10 said its "membership has decided to disband the organization following a wind down period."

[US Northeast power markets try to balance changes to capacity markets, valuation mechanisms](#) - Northeastern US power markets are at an inflection point, industry experts said Thursday, as independent system operators attempt to adjust capacity markets to reflect changing resource mixes and at the same time improve energy market valuation mechanisms.

[EPCAMR, WPCAMR Urging Local Governments, Watershed, Environmental Groups To Urge Congress To Reauthorize Federal Mine Reclamation Fee](#) - The Eastern and Western PA Coalitions for Abandoned Mine Reclamation are urging counties, local governments, watershed and environmental groups to pass a resolution to urge Congress to reauthorize the federal Mine Reclamation fee for another 15 years.

[Proposed Nuclear Bailouts in OH, PA Get Mixed Reactions From Industry](#) - Proposed financial bailouts for nuclear power plants in Ohio and Pennsylvania are raising questions as to whether those facilities can compete on their own against coal and natural gas.

[Report: U.S. energy consumption, production and exports hit record highs in 2018](#) - U.S. energy consumption, production and exports all reached record levels in 2018, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration.

[Smooth operator: PJM credits low Q1 congestion costs to mild weather, cheap fuel](#) - PJM Interconnection's wholesale electricity markets are working smoothly and producing competitive results, according to a first quarter analysis from the grid operator's independent market monitor.

[PJM Carbon Pricing Challenges Surmountable, Panel Says](#) - As PJM considers how to best manage future carbon policies, energy industry experts say the unique challenges the RTO faces can be mitigated with strong coordination between policymakers, stakeholders and grid staff.

[Grid operator PJM says it has more than enough electricity for hottest summer days](#) - Despite the loss of the B.L. England electric plant as a peak electricity generator, electric grid operator PJM Interconnection is ready to meet demand this summer, the organization announced Thursday.

[Coal 'steadying' here and statewide, industry group official says](#) - Coal, which has been on a decadelong decline in the state, apparently is burning more brightly. The Pennsylvania Coal Association, an industry group based in Harrisburg, this week released the results of a study titled “The Economic Impact of the Coal Industry in Pennsylvania.”

[Labor leader: Trump has stopped erosion of coal jobs](#) - The president of the United Mine Workers of America said Tuesday that President Trump has helped stop the erosion of the coal industry, with employment holding steady under his administration.

[Mining Coal Ash for Rare Earth Elements](#) - When China embargoed rare earth element (REE) shipments to Japan following a territorial dispute in September 2010, it served notice that it was willing to leverage its position as the world’s near-monopoly supplier of these strategic materials.

[MSNBC Hardball: Chris Matthews hosts ‘The Deciders’ Town Hall in Wilkes-Barre, PA](#) - Chris is hosting a special edition of Hardball tomorrow night, live from the Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania area. After voting for Obama in 2008 and 2012, this area of Pennsylvania switched widely in 2016, giving a big majority vote to Trump.

[Chesapeake Bay health dips, but still rates a C in annual report card](#) - Bay health took a hit from record rainfall last year, but experts claim the Chesapeake’s growing resilience managed to keep a bad situation from getting worse.

[New York to phase out coal by 2020 through strict emissions regulations](#) - The New York Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) on Thursday adopted regulations that require all power plants to meet strict emissions limits, a move expected to phase out the state's remaining coal-fired power plants by 2020.

[Virginia entry to regional GHG initiative blocked as governor declines to veto budget language](#) - Governor Ralph Northam, D, said May 2 he won't veto language in the Virginia budget that prevents the state from joining the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative.

[NJ utility board going to court over \\$300M nuclear bailout](#) - The state Board of Public Utilities is going in front of a court over hundreds of millions a year in ratepayer subsidies it approved for PSEG last month.

[Ohio House passes bill that shores up nuclear, coal plants](#) - The Ohio House on Wednesday passed the biggest overhaul of the state’s energy laws in a decade, adopting a bill that shores up the state’s two financially struggling nuclear power plants and two coal-fired plants while gutting programs that promote renewable energy and energy efficiency.

[Cost to reclaim all active Ohio coal mines could be nearly \\$545 million, report estimates](#) - After coal companies recalculated the potential cost to clean up every active mining site in Ohio, there was an 11% drop to nearly \$544.8 million, according to the latest estimates presented Thursday by Atlanta-based Pinnacle Actuarial Resources Inc.

[NERC to analyze first potential cyberattack on US grid](#) - The North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC) told Utility Dive it will conduct a root cause analysis to determine what caused a utility to temporarily lose visibility to certain parts of its supervisory control and data acquisition system.

[Wyoming coal giant Cloud Peak files for bankruptcy](#) - Cloud Peak Energy, the coal giant that operates two Wyoming mines, filed for bankruptcy Friday amid mounting debt and declining demand.

[New CEO push on climate-change policy](#) - A new coalition of more than a dozen major corporations and environmental groups is launching on Wednesday to urge Congress to pass legislation addressing climate change.

[Sierra Club latest green group to kick off 2020 efforts](#) - The Sierra Club is the latest green group to announce it will put significant resources into the 2020 election in order to put candidates who vow take action on climate change in office.

LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY ISSUES: FEDERAL

[Energy Secretary Rick Perry: U.S. can make oil, gas, coal cleaner](#) - The Trump administration is committed to making fossil fuels cleaner rather than imposing "draconian" regulations on oil, gas and coal, U.S. Energy Secretary Rick Perry said Thursday.

[Federal court deals decisive blow to Obama water rule](#) - A federal court dealt a decisive blow against the Obama administration's Waters of the U.S. rule this week, bolstering the Trump administration's deregulation agenda.

[EPA Sets Schedules for Long List of Power Plant Regulatory Actions](#) - The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) will act on a spate of power plant rules over the next year, its newly released agenda of regulatory and deregulatory actions shows.

[Trump administration readies draft plan to speed environmental permitting](#) - The Trump administration will complete a draft proposal to streamline environmental permitting for big infrastructure projects by next month, an administration official said on Wednesday, marking a key step in its controversial effort to cut red tape for industry over the objections of conservationists.

[Power Plan Proposes New Approach on Climate](#) - Washington is about to see another controversial chapter in the Trump era. Any day now, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) will issue its final "Affordable Clean Energy" rule (ACE).

[Senate targets nuclear, carbon capture support as pressure mounts for Republican climate response](#) - Federal energy officials are calling for an increased focus on carbon capture and sequestration (CCS) technologies, as well as advanced nuclear, as the Senate tees up climate-focused bills to counter the House's Green New Deal legislative package.

[Countering LaFleur, Chatterjee rejects notion of a partisan split at FERC](#) - Federal Energy Regulatory Commission Chairman Neil Chatterjee is once again pushing back hard against the notion that partisanship is coloring the agency's work under his watch or that the White House exerts more influence than it once had.

[EPA Disputes New York Times Report on Health Risks of Replacing Obama's Clean Power Plan](#) - The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) disputed Monday a New York Times report, which suggested that the agency plans to adjust its pollution health risk projections to justify its repeal of the Obama-era Clean Power Plan (CPP).

[EPA Will Issue Final Carbon Rules for Power Plants in June](#) - The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) plans to take final action to repeal the Clean Power Plan in June 2019, a federal court filing shows.

[Murkowski questions need for renewables tax credits](#) - Phasing out the Production Tax Credit (PTC) and Investment Tax Credit (ITC) for wind and solar generation could lead to "regional disparities" in adopting renewables and leave best available technologies behind, industry experts told the U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources on Tuesday.

[The Energy 202: Interior secretary blames Congress for lack of action on climate change](#) - He acknowledged climate change is real. He acknowledged that humans are contributing to it.

[Senate Democrats push tax code overhaul to streamline clean energy incentives](#) - Sen. Ron Wyden, D-Ore., and more than two dozen other lawmakers introduced legislation on Thursday to "overhaul" the federal energy tax code by consolidating 44 energy incentives into three technology-neutral provisions intended to promote energy independence and a low-carbon economy.

[House committee approves bill](#) - The U.S. House Natural Resources Committee recently approved the RECLAIM Act, a bill proposed by Rep. Matt Cartwright to help communities revitalize lands that have been adversely affected by coal mining.

[United Nations Says 80 Countries May Ramp Up Climate Pledges](#) - About 80 countries want to increase their climate pledges ahead of schedule under the Paris climate accord, the United Nations said Tuesday, signaling that some of them would do so at a summit of world leaders in September.

[House passes bill to force U.S. to stay in Paris climate agreement](#) - The House of Representatives passed a bill on Thursday designed to force the United States to stay in the Paris accord, in a rebuke to President Trump, who has promised to withdraw from the landmark climate agreement inked under his predecessor, Barack Obama.

LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY ISSUES: STATE

[Committee advances legislation to fight blight and support mine reclamation](#) - Today, the Senate Finance Committee approved two bills sponsored by Senator David G. Argall (R-29) to improve a tax credit program for older buildings and support the state's threatened coal refuse jobs.

[Senate Committee Advances Bill To Increase Coal Refuse Energy & Reclamation Tax Credit To \\$45 Million/Year](#) - On May 8, the Senate Finance Committee reported out Senate Bill 618 (Argall-R-Schuylkill, Yudichak-D-Luzerne) to increase the Coal Refuse Energy and Reclamation Tax from \$10 to \$45 million a year.

[Water pollution proposal faces mounting opposition from Pa. Legislature](#) - The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency rang the alarm about short staffing within Pennsylvania's surface water pollution program several times, most recently in 2016.

[Senators Santarsiero, Collett To Introduce Bill Giving Attorney General Concurrent Jurisdiction Over Certain Environmental Crimes](#) - On May 16, Senators Steve Santarsiero (D-Bucks) and Maria Collett (D-Bucks) invited their colleagues to co-sponsor legislation giving the state Attorney General concurrent jurisdiction over environmental crimes involving the Safe Drinking Water Act, Clean Streams Law and Solid Waste Management Act.

[GOP counters Gov. Wolf's capital plan with more drilling, not taxes](#) - Republicans who control Pennsylvania's Senate are preparing an alternative to Gov. Tom Wolf's proposal for a multibillion-dollar capital plan, funding it by removing restrictions on natural gas drilling underneath state-owned forest land rather than by taxing natural gas production.

[PUC Names Seth A. Mendelsohn New Executive Director](#) - On May 23, the Public Utility Commission announced the appointment of Seth A. Mendelsohn of Harrisburg, a senior government leader, business and leadership professor, and former corporate vice president, as Executive Director, effective May 28.

[Pennsylvania Republicans retain 3 legislative seats in special elections](#) - Voters have picked Republicans to fill three open seats in the state Legislature in heavily Republican districts in south-central and western Pennsylvania.

[At Delaware River Governors' Summit, Gov. Wolf Announces His Support For A Full Ban On Fracking In The Delaware Watershed](#) - On May 16, Gov. Tom Wolf announced he supports a full ban on hydraulic fracturing of oil and gas wells in the Delaware River Watershed, including a ban on any water transfers into or out of the basin related to drilling operations.

[Senate Environmental Committee Reports Out Renomination Of McDonnell As DEP Secretary With Favorable Recommendation](#) - On May 8, the Senate Environmental Resources and Energy Committee reported out the renomination of Patrick McDonnell as DEP Secretary with a favorable recommendation to the full Senate.

[Senate/House Lawmakers Announce Bipartisan Bills To Transition State To 100% Renewable Energy By 2050](#) - On May 7, 88 Republican and Democratic legislators announced the re-introduction of legislation in the General Assembly that would require the Commonwealth to get 100 percent of its energy from renewable sources by 2050.

[Three Mile Island's closure haunts Pennsylvania's nuclear debate](#) - Inside cooling towers for the Three Mile Island nuclear plant's sole working reactor, warm water is released in droplets that whisper when the wind blows through the open air supports.

[House Hearing: Nuclear Bill Creates Worst Of All Worlds For Ratepayers; Won't Do Anything To Save TMI](#) - At its fourth and so far final hearing on legislation to aid nuclear power plants-- House Bill 11 (Mehaffie-R- Lancaster)-- the House Consumer Affairs Committee heard advocates for residential and small business ratepayers say the bill represents the "worst of all worlds" for ratepayers and "windfall profits" for nuclear power plant owners.

[Congressional hearing puts focus on struggling PA nuclear industry](#) - A Congressional hearing near Pittsburgh Friday highlighted the plight of the nation's nuclear industry, which has struggled to compete against cheap natural gas and renewables.

[Senate Committees: Alternative Energy Portfolio Standards Worked, But PA Is Behind; More Opposition To Bills Aiding Nuclear Plants](#) - In a marathon session on May 1, the Senate Consumer Protection and Professional Licensure and Environmental Resources and Energy Committees heard from 16 witnesses providing an update on implementation of the Alternative Energy Portfolio Standards and mostly opposition to the bills drafted to aid nuclear power plants.

[PA's Environmental Protection Head Signs Letter Urging Against EPA Budget Cuts](#) - Secretary Patrick McDonnell and 19 Attorneys General signed a letter to congressional leaders urging them to block proposed cuts to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's budget.

[New Laurel Highlands Study Documents \\$3.7 Billion In Annual Economic, Environmental Benefits From Ecosystem Services; Public Meetings May 14, 15, 16](#) - The Steering Committee of the Laurel Highlands Conservation Landscape will host public meetings on May 14, 15 and 16 to present the results of the Value of Clean Water study examining the costs and benefits of land use choices in the Laurel Highlands Region.

[Pa. plan to improve condition of Chesapeake Bay called 'woefully inadequate'](#) - A nonprofit that tracks pollution in the Chesapeake Bay lambasted Pennsylvania on Tuesday, saying that the state is failing to protect the nation's largest estuary from farm manure and dirty stormwater.

[Meetings set for economic study of Laurel Highlands water improvements](#) - Efforts to improve water quality in local streams create an estimated annual economic benefit of \$278 million in the Loyalhanna Creek watershed.

[Coal Mining Industry Seeking Changes To DEP's Mine Reclamation Bond Rate Calculation Methodology](#) - The PA Anthracite Council reported in its May newsletter: "Pennsylvania's anthracite and bituminous coal mining industries are seeking changes to the way the Department of Environmental Protection calculates coal mine reclamation bond rates.

[Nuclear owner Exelon Corp. applauds Pennsylvania moves on carbon emissions](#) - The utility owner of Pennsylvania nuclear facility Three Mile Island showed support for that state's decision to join the U.S. Climate Alliance and develop a new climate action plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

[Pa. GOP leaders trumpet soaring state revenue, caution against spending](#) - Legislative Republicans on Wednesday took a victory lap over a bustling state economy, giving credit to President Donald Trump's tax cuts, while cautioning against spending the newfound windfall.