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ARIPPA PERIODIC MEDIA NEWS – 7-1-19

(News clips from the previous month)

LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY ISSUES: STATE

[Senator Argall and Senator Yudichak Announce Expansion of Coal Refuse Energy and Reclamation Tax Credit](#) - Senator David G. Argall (R – Schuylkill/Berks) and Senator John Yudichak (D – Luzerne/Carbon) announced today that the Pennsylvania state budget includes a major expansion of the Coal Refuse Energy and Reclamation Tax Credit which will protect over 3,000 energy jobs and continue the successful environmental reclamation work in counties impacted by centuries of coal mining.

[Gov. Wolf signs Pennsylvania budget that's missing some of his priorities](#) - Democratic Gov. Tom Wolf on Friday signed the state's \$34 billion budget, even though it lacks many of his key priorities — including a minimum wage hike — and forced him to sign off on several Republican-backed measures that his party opposes.

[Highlights of Pennsylvania's 2019-20 budget package](#) - Highlights of the spending package advancing in the state Legislature for Pennsylvania state government's 2019-20 fiscal year starting July 1, as well as the fate of key initiatives proposed by Democratic Gov. Tom Wolf:

[DEP Expects To Present EQB With A Consultant Report On Costs/Benefits Of Climate Cap-And-Trade Petition Early Next Year; Update On PFOS Petition](#) - On June 18, the Department of Environmental Protection told the Environmental Quality Board it expects to present the Board with a consultant's evaluation of the cost and benefits of the climate cap-and-trade petition early next year.

[Nuke debate expected to reignite this fall](#) - Nuclear-industry advocates intend to regroup this summer and assess their best strategy for reintroducing legislation this fall to support nuclear plants, with the goal of giving state leaders time to debate whether to help the industry financially as deadlines near for closing the Beaver Valley plant in western Pennsylvania, several observers noted.

[Sen. Yudichak, Rep. Frankel To Introduce Resolutions Supporting Reauthorization Of Federal Mine Reclamation Fee](#) - On June 19, Sen. John Yudichak (D-Luzerne), Minority Chair of the Senate Environmental Resources and Energy Committee, Rep. Dan Frankel (D-Allegheny) asked their colleagues in the House and Senate to co-sponsor resolutions urging Congress to reauthorize the federal Abandoned Mine Reclamation Program and the fees supporting it.

[DEP: Federal Fee Due To Expire In 2021 That Is The Only Source Of Funds To Address \\$3.9 Billion In High-Priority AML Problems](#) - On June 18, John Stefanko, DEP Deputy Secretary for Active and Abandoned Mine Operations, told the Citizens Advisory Council federal mine reclamation funds are the sole source of funding Pennsylvania has to address the over \$3.9 billion high-priority abandoned mine reclamation problems remaining in the state. And, the federal fee supporting the program is due to expire in 2021.

[Republicans On House Environmental Committee Urge IRRRC To Disapprove DEP Air Quality Permit Fee Increases, Threatening Integrity Of Program](#) - On June 17, with 15 minutes notice, the House Environmental Resources and Energy Committee held a meeting where Republicans voted to send a letter to the Independent Regulatory Review Commission urging them to disapprove a proposed EQB regulation increasing permit review fees for DEP's Air Quality Program.

[Sen. Costa To Introduce Bill Cutting Carbon Pollution From Power Plants By 90% By 2040 Thru Cap-And-Invest Program](#) - On June 6, Senate Minority Leader Jay Costa (D-Allegheny) circulated a co-sponsor memo announcing he is introducing legislation to require the Environmental Quality Board to enact a limit on carbon pollution from the power sector.

[Wolf Administration Tours Abandoned Mine Reclamation Site, Discusses How Restore Pennsylvania Plan Could Help Address Abandoned Mines](#) - Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Secretary Patrick McDonnell and staff today joined local elected officials and representatives from Scrubgrass Generating and South Sandy Creek Watershed Association to tour an abandoned mine reclamation site in Irwin Township, Venango County, and to discuss how the bipartisan Restore Pennsylvania proposal could help communities fund mine reclamation projects.

[Bill Proposing Change In Standard For Reviewing DEP Permit Decisions On Appeal Will Add Time, Cost To Permit Reviews, Narrow Grounds For Citizen Appeals](#) - On June 6, Sen. Camera Bartolotta (R-Washington) introduced Senate Bill 726 (Bartolotta-R- Washington) which would create a new standard for the review for appeals of DEP permit actions before the Environmental Hearing Board by limiting parties appealing permit decisions-- a company or a citizens group-- to issues raised in and information contained in a record of decision of a permit prepared by DEP.

[Democrats plot legislative end run to pass Wolf's infrastructure plan, while internal debate continues](#) - Facing an uncooperative Republican-controlled Legislature, Gov. Tom Wolf and his legislative allies are looking to use a legislative shortcut to pass a marquee part of the Democrat's second-term agenda — a \$4.5 billion investment in state infrastructure, from roads to rural broadband and flood prevention.

[Gov. Tom Wolf, GOP leaders butt heads over how to pay for addressing Pa.'s infrastructure needs](#) - When it comes to investing in infrastructure improvements in Pennsylvania, Gov. Tom Wolf and lawmakers from both parties agree there are some critical needs across the commonwealth that are crying for attention.

[Wolf's infrastructure plan makes legislative debut with near-majority support](#) - Gov. Tom Wolf's much-hyped plan to expand broadband internet, fight flooding, and invest in natural gas production, among other infrastructure investments, was released Wednesday — with nearly enough support to pass both chambers.

[Senate Environmental Committee Hears Ideas On 3rd Party DEP Permit Reviews, Including A Special Licensing Program For Consultants](#) - On June 5, the Senate Environmental Resources and Energy Committee heard testimony on how DEP is making fundamental changes to its Chapter 102 (Erosion and Sedimentation) and Chapter 105 (Dam Safety and Encroachment) permit to speed permit reviews, cautions about constructing third party permit review programs and a suggestion for developing a special licensing program for third party reviewers.

[Senate Confirms Patrick McDonnell As Secretary Of DEP](#) - On June 4, the Senate voted overwhelmingly to confirm Patrick McDonnell as Secretary of the Department of Environmental Protection.

[Report: Pennsylvania natural gas production shows 'significant' jump](#) - Total natural gas production in Pennsylvania grew by 14.7% in the first quarter of 2019 compared to the same period last year, a report by the Pennsylvania Independent Fiscal Office said.

[Could solar's outlook in Pennsylvania be sunny, even if the skies are not?](#) - Follow a trail of deeds piling up in courthouses across Pennsylvania and you might conclude that there is something big on the horizon for solar energy in the Keystone state.

LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY ISSUES: FEDERAL

[EPA Urges States to Submit CCR Programs Even as Coal Ash Regulatory Overhaul Continues](#) - The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on June 24 proposed to partially approve Georgia's permit program for the disposal of coal combustion residuals (CCR). As it did so, it gave other states some advice: Follow Georgia's lead and assume oversight of coal ash that power plants dispose within your borders.

[As Renewables Surge Ahead of Coal, Lawmakers Introduce National Renewable Standard](#) - A bill introduced by Senate Democrats on June 26 establishes a national electricity standard that would require large retail suppliers to source at least 1.5% of their power from renewables by 2020 and gradually grow that share through 2035.

[EPA Finalizes ACE Rule, Replaces Clean Power Plan](#) - The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has issued a final Affordable Clean Energy (ACE) rule to formally replace the Obama administration's controversial Clean Power Plan (CPP).

[Clean Power Plan replacement triggers rush to court](#) - Environmental advocates and state attorneys general on Wednesday signaled they would file lawsuits to block the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Affordable Clean Energy (ACE) rule, which they say will be significantly less effective than the Obama-era Clean Power Plan it replaces.

[EPA's top air policy official steps down amid scrutiny over possible ethics violations](#) - Bill Wehrum, a top Environmental Protection Agency official who helped reverse Obama-era rules aimed at cutting emissions of greenhouse gas and other air pollutants, is stepping down amid scrutiny over possible violations of federal ethics rules.

[Wheeler: Keeping U.S. Coal Sector Alive Will Benefit 'International Environmental Protection'](#) - Coal power, which has seen a marked decline in the U.S., is necessary for reliability and energy affordability, and sustaining it could boost pollution technology exports and "improve lives while driving down emissions worldwide," said Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Andrew Wheeler in a speech last week.

[White House tells agencies they no longer have to weigh a project's long-term climate impacts](#) - The White House proposed Friday that federal agencies no longer have to take a project's long-term climate impacts into account when assessing how they will affect the environment, reversing a major Obama administration policy.

[FERC commissioner LaFleur to leave late August, restoring Republican majority](#) - US Federal Energy Regulatory Commission member Cheryl LaFleur will step down at the end of August, she announced on Twitter Thursday.

[Senate passes carbon capture infrastructure bill](#) - The Republican-led Senate approved 86-8 the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), a legislative package that included bipartisan carbon capture legislation, on Thursday.

[DOE has no 'regulatory or statutory ability' to create coal, nuclear bailout, says Perry](#) - The Department of Energy (DOE) does not have the "regulatory or statutory ability" to create economic incentives for coal and nuclear plants, DOE Secretary Rick Perry told reporters on Tuesday at the 2019 Edison Electric Institute conference in Philadelphia.

[Federal Office Of Surface Mining Reclamation Offering Acid Mine Drainage Treatment Grants To Not-For Profit Groups](#) - The federal Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement is now offering grants for acid mine drainage treatment through the Watershed Cooperative Agreement Program to not-for-profit 501(c)3 entities as determined by the Internal Revenue Service.

[Department of Energy Invests \\$39 Million to Improve Existing Coal-Fired Fleet](#) - Today, the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) Office of Fossil Energy (FE) has selected 17 projects to receive approximately \$39 million in federal funding for cost-shared research and development under funding opportunity announcement Improving Efficiency, Reliability, and Flexibility of Existing Coal-Based Power Plants.

[83 Environmental Rules on the Way Out Under Trump](#) - President Trump has made eliminating federal regulations a priority. His administration, with help from Republicans in Congress, has often targeted environmental rules it sees as burdensome to the fossil fuel industry and other big businesses.

[Pentagon turns to coal ash to escape Chinese dominance of rare earth elements](#) - Coal ash could be the next source of elements the U.S. defense industry uses in everything from night vision goggles to gyroscopes for smart bombs.

[Chatterjee rejects criticism of violating FERC's neutrality with use of #FreedomGas](#) - Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) Chairman Neil Chatterjee drew criticisms of politicizing the traditionally fuel-neutral agency after tweeting on Thursday with a hashtag for "freedom gas," a concept coined earlier in the week by Energy Secretary Rick Perry for U.S. liquefied natural gas (LNG) exported to Europe.

[The Energy 202: Green New Deal gains traction on the campaign trail](#) - Momentum for the Green New Deal is building — not so much in the halls of Congress, but on the presidential campaign trail.

[EPA curbs state power to deny permits for climate concerns](#) - EPA says it can issue federal permits for projects, including pipelines, regardless of whether states raise questions about impacts to climate change or air pollution.

CFB, COAL REFUSE, ENERGY INDUSTRY

[Power Plant Emissions Down Substantially in U.S. Since 1990](#) - Power plant SO₂ and NO_x emissions have decreased 92% and 84%, respectively, since Congress passed major amendments to the Clean Air Act in 1990.

[PSEG Power could lose \\$415M on exit from 2 Pennsylvania coal plants](#) - PSEG Power announced Monday that it has reached a deal to sell its 776 MW interest in two western Pennsylvania coal plants to an undisclosed buyer for an undisclosed price. The deal is expected to close in the second half of this year.

[Report: For 1st time, U.S. renewables produced more electricity than coal in April](#) - Renewable sources of energy produced more electricity than coal in April — a first for the United States, the U.S. Energy Information Administration said Wednesday.

[Natural gas, power groups seek more transparent, 'efficient' FERC enforcement](#) - Natural gas and power trade associations filed a white paper with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission on Wednesday calling for more transparent and efficient enforcement investigations by the agency.

[How the U.S. Is Investing in Advanced Coal Technologies](#) - The U.S. is investing heavily to ensure its future coal-fired power fleet will be cleaner, more efficient, and more flexible, experts said at the 9th International Conference on Clean Coal Technologies in Houston on June 4.

[As Coal Fades in the U.S., Natural Gas Becomes the Climate Battleground](#) - America's coal-burning power plants are shutting down at a rapid pace, forcing electric utilities to face the next big climate question: Embrace natural gas, or shift aggressively to renewable energy?

[Michael Bloomberg gives \\$500M to campaign to kill coal and wound natural gas](#) - Former New York City mayor and climate change crusader Michael Bloomberg announced Friday he is giving \$500 million to a campaign to finish killing coal and start killing oil and gas.

[PJM looks to plug 'leaks' sprouting from patchwork of state carbon policies](#) - The nation's largest electric grid operator is grappling with how to prevent state climate policies from merely pushing emissions — and costs — across state lines.

[Peabody, Arch Coal Combine PRB, Colorado Assets](#) - Two of the top coal producers in the U.S. are joining forces. Peabody Energy and Arch Coal have entered into an agreement to combine their Powder River Basin and Colorado assets in a joint venture.

[FERC infrastructure report reveals phantom 850 MW coal plant, renewables surpassing coal](#) - A monthly infrastructure report compiled by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission indicates a new 850 MW coal-fired plant the commission says is expected online in April 2022.

[US energy storage market sees 232% year-on-year growth](#) - The U.S. energy storage market set a growth record in Q1 of this year, deploying 148.8 MW, a 232% increase from Q1 2018, and a 6% jump from Q4 2018, according to the latest Wood Mackenzie U.S. Energy Storage Monitor.

[As Ohio Senate nears vote on nuke subsidy bill, PJM finds closing plants could save \\$1.6B](#) - A report from the PJM Interconnection finds that retiring current nuclear plants as scheduled in Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Ohio and adding new natural gas and renewables would save \$1.6 billion and 4.3 million tons of carbon, assuming 11.9 GW of coal also retires across the PJM region.

[Are There Potential Downsides of Going to 100 Percent Renewable Energy?](#) - A new study looks at the danger to biodiversity that could come from increased mining of minerals used to create batteries for renewable energy technologies.

[Commission votes to let states opt out of Ohio River pollution-control standards](#) - A commission tasked with overseeing the health of the Ohio River voted 19-2 Thursday to allow states to opt out of pollution-control standards for the river, which is the source of drinking water for some 5 million people.

[Op-Ed: EPCAMR Urges Every Member Of PA's Congressional Delegation To Support The RECLAIM Act To Reclaim Abandoned Mine Lands And Our Economic Future](#) - Coal WAS a way of life in Pennsylvania. However, our abandoned mines need alternative economic development plans going forward.

[Evergreen Conservancy bestows award](#) - Anne Daymut received Evergreen Conservancy's annual Evergreen Award on Tuesday at the Tanoma Wetlands Environmental Educational Center.