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ARIPPA PERIODIC MEDIA NEWS – 8-1-20

(News clips from the previous month)

CFB, COAL REFUSE, ENERGY INDUSTRY

[US energy use hit 30-year low during pandemic shutdowns](#) - U.S. energy consumption plummeted to its lowest level in more than 30 years this spring as the nation's economy largely shut down because of the coronavirus, federal officials reported Wednesday.

[May coal deliveries to US power plants fall to more than 13-year low: EIA](#) - Coal deliveries to US power plants fell to a more than 13-year low of 28.9 million st in May, down 3.7% from 30.02 million st delivered in April and 37% lower than the 45.86 million st shipped in the year-ago month, according to US Energy Information Administration data.

[The Energy 202: U.S. coal production hit its lowest point in last four decades](#) - Last year was a terrible, horrible, no good, very bad one for the U.S. coal-mining industry.

[PJM to file proposed 5-minute dispatch, pricing changes with FERC](#) - In a rare outcome, PJM Interconnection stakeholders July 23 unanimously approved a proposal to implement short-term market rule changes to better align power price formation with generation resource dispatch, though many market participants want PJM to move ahead with a more holistic approach.

[Justice objects to call to investigate FirstEnergy lobbying for 2019 power plant tax breaks](#) - Gov. Jim Justice blew up Wednesday over a call to investigate lobbying efforts by FirstEnergy Corp. that resulted in July 2019 special session legislation giving a \$12.5 million a year tax break to the company's Pleasants Power Station.

[Ohio coal giant Murray Energy is \\$100K dark money donor 'Company B' in federal probe](#) - Now-bankrupt Ohio coal giant and House Bill 6 supporter Murray Energy Corp. provided \$100,000 in "dark money" involved in the alleged racketeering and bribery scheme that ensnared former House Speaker Larry Householder and four others.

[Columbus utility giant AEP funded dark money spending in HB 6 campaign](#) - A dark-money group wholly funded by House Bill 6 beneficiary and Columbus utility giant American Electric Power contributed \$350,000 toward the campaigns now at the center of a racketeering and bribery case that ensnared House Speaker Larry Householder, an investigation by The Dispatch finds.

[Top Ohio lawmaker charged with accepting \\$61M bribe in scheme to pass nuclear bailout](#) - Federal authorities arrested and charged Speaker of the Ohio House Larry Householder with bribery in a scheme he allegedly created to guarantee the passage of legislation last year bailing out two nuclear power plants owned by a subsidiary of the FirstEnergy Corp.

[Ohio lawmakers seek to repeal another bill benefiting FirstEnergy -- this time, over 'excessive' profits](#) - As Ohio lawmakers debate repealing the House Bill 6 nuclear bailout, a pair of House Democrats are seeking to erase another policy sought by FirstEnergy -- this time, regarding how the state calculates whether the utility's subsidiaries are making "significantly excessive" profits.

[After \\$60M Bribery Charges, Questions Renewed over Ratepayer Subsidies for Nuclear Power](#) - New Jersey opted for \$300 million annual subsidies only after bitter legislative battle. Will Ohio nuclear scandal initiate new round of skirmishes?

[ComEd admits to bribery charge in Illinois, agrees to pay \\$200M fine](#) - Exelon subsidiary ComEd agreed to enter a three-year deferred prosecution agreement and pay a \$200 million fine based on a single bribery charge related to a long-running scheme in Illinois.

[Pandemic, upcoming elections factor into state capacity market exit decisions](#) - Decisions to exit PJM Interconnection's capacity market -- already fraught with market power and cost concerns -- have been further complicated by the potential for a change in the White House to prompt policy whiplash and the ongoing health crisis that has limited states' funds and resources available to tackle the daunting task of rethinking resource adequacy, PJM stakeholders said July 15.

[Split in Washington over abandoned mine reclamation fund pits Wyoming industry against Pennsylvania scars](#) - For decades, Reed Johnson has been calling attention to roughly 100 acres of scars on and around his Clearfield County property.

[Environmental Groups Sue DEP Over W.Va. Coal Reclamation Fund](#) - A new lawsuit brought by environmental groups raises the alarm over the solvency of a fund that can be used to clean up coal mining operations when mining companies walk away.

[U.S. EIA: Renewable Energy Will Generate More Electricity Than Coal In 2020, 2021](#) - The latest short-term energy outlook released by the U.S. Energy Information Administration July 7 forecasts renewable sources of generation will produce more electricity than coal-fired power plants in 2020 and 2021.

[As COVID-19 surges, federal regulators worry about energy sector supply chain](#) - The U.S. electric grid has held up reliably during the pandemic. But if the economic shutdown stretches on, regulators are worried about potential supply chain and reliability issues.

[Award-Winning Coal Unit Set for Retirement](#) - The five owners of a 410-MW coal-fired unit at the Craig Generating Station in Colorado have said they will retire the generator on Sept. 30, 2028, about one year before what will then be the last operating unit at the facility will be shuttered.

[Coal retirements spur 8% drop in 2019 power sector carbon pollution after Duke, Vistra top 2018 emitters: Ceres](#) - Carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions from the U.S. electric power sector fell 8% between 2018 and 2019, a result of an increasingly rapid shift away from coal-fired power, according to a report released Wednesday from Ceres.

[Developers cancel long-delayed, \\$8B Atlantic Coast Pipeline](#) - The developers of the long-delayed, \$8 billion Atlantic Coast Pipeline announced the cancellation of the multistate natural gas project Sunday, citing uncertainties about costs, permitting and litigation.

[Beneficial Use Case Study: Revloc Mine Reclamation](#) - Reclamation of the western side of the Revloc coal refuse pile first required the processing and removal of reject materials that could not be burned in a CFB plant, including rock, clays, and other materials left from the in-place burning of coal refuse over much of the last century.

[Coal Ash Is Not Toxic](#) - Coal ash is not toxic. How do we know this? When evaluating the material as a whole, there is a wealth of information on the toxicity testing of coal ash in mammalian and aquatic species that demonstrates that coal ash is not toxic.

LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY ISSUES: FEDERAL

[EPA Changes Closure Requirements in Coal Ash Rule](#) - The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on July 29 finalized several changes to the regulations for disposal of coal combustion residuals (CCRs), or coal ash, from electric utilities.

[Trump to nominate Democratic, Republican appointees to FERC](#) - President Donald Trump on Monday announced he would nominate two commissioners to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, including a Democratic nominee.

[Duckworth introduces safety net bill for coal country](#) - Sen. Tammy Duckworth (D-Ill.) is sponsoring a bill to provide a safety net for coal workers who risk losing their jobs as the country shifts to cleaner forms of energy.

[Trump Administration Invests in New Future for Coal](#) - The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) announced on Friday it will provide \$118 million in funding to support research and development of technologies to make coal power generation clean.

[A blow to small solar, a win for states and utilities? Regulators, analysts assess FERC's PURPA rule](#) - Changes to the way a 40-year-old federal law is implemented could significantly benefit vertically-integrated utilities in non-competitive markets, while harming small-scale solar developers, stakeholders told Utility Dive.

[FERC Finalizes PURPA Rule Reforms](#) - The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) finalized a long-awaited rule revising regulations that govern qualifying small power producers and cogenerators under the Public Utility Regulatory Policies Act of 1978 (PURPA).

[Trump finalizes rule 'slashing' environmental permitting reviews for pipelines, other projects](#) - President Donald Trump on Wednesday announced his administration has finalized changes to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) that will reduce the number of projects that require federal review and narrow the scope of effects considered under those reviews.

[EPA rejects tougher air-quality standards, says 2015 limits are sufficient](#) - The Trump administration said Monday that it will maintain national air-quality standards put in place in 2015, despite calls for more stringent regulations that advocates say are necessary to protect Americans in communities that are particularly vulnerable to respiratory ailments.

[Almost impossible' for FERC to address rehearing orders in 30 days, Glick says](#) - It will be "almost impossible" for the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to respond to requests for rehearing within 30 days, as required by the D.C. Circuit of Appeals, Commissioner Richard Glick said Tuesday during a virtual conference on wholesale market reform hosted by the American Public Power Association.

[DOE Specifies 'Foreign Adversaries' for Trump BPS Equipment Ban](#) - Taking its first major step to act on President Trump's May 1 executive order (EO) to limit foreign bulk power equipment transactions in the U.S., the Department of Energy (DOE) has issued a definitive list of six foreign "adversaries" that pose threats to the U.S. bulk power system (BPS): China, Cuba, Iran, North Korea, Russia, and Venezuela.

[EPA ending policy of relaxed enforcement standards Aug. 31](#) - The U.S. EPA is set to end its "enforcement discretion" policy on Aug. 31, according to an agency memo. The agency cited the adjustment of pandemic-related policies across the country as the rationale behind its decision.

[U.S. House Passes Infrastructure Bill Including Abandoned Mine Reclamation Initiatives, And Extending Federal Reclamation Fee](#) - On July 1, the U.S. House passed a \$1.5 trillion infrastructure bill that includes bipartisan proposals to address the problem of abandoned mine lands in Pennsylvania and across the country.

[House Democrats release sweeping climate proposal calling for net-zero US emissions by 2050](#) - House Democrats on Tuesday released a sweeping proposal to address the climate crisis that calls for the U.S. to reach net-zero carbon emissions by 2050, in large part through decarbonizing the electric and transportation sectors.

LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY ISSUES: STATE

[Sen. Costa Introduces Bipartisan Bill To Reduce Carbon Pollution From Power Plants, Protect Communities, Workers Already Affected By Changing Energy Economy](#) - On July 30, Senate Minority Leader Jay Costa, Jr. (D-Allegheny) introduced Senate Bill 15 which, consistent with existing statutory authority, provides for the adoption of a "Cap and Invest" program to reduce carbon pollution from power plants and for the use of proceeds from the program to protect communities and workers already adversely affected by the changing energy economy, provide low-income assistance with energy bills and promotes clean energy and energy efficiency.

[EQB Proposes To Adopt Manganese Water Quality Toxic Standard Protective Of Public Health](#) - The Environmental Quality Board published a proposed regulation to adopt a manganese water quality toxic substances standard that is protective of public health in the July 25 PA Bulletin for public comment.

[DEP Consultant Under Fire as Link to Other RGGI Support Statements Emerge](#) - Correspondence supporting Pennsylvania's participation in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI), as well as opposition to legislation requiring legislative oversight of the RGGI plan, have now been called into question as having a direct connection to ICF International Inc., a Fairfax, Virginia-based global consulting and technology services company employed by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to study Pennsylvania's potential participation in RGGI, according to state Sen. Gene Yaw (R-23), Chairman of the Senate Environmental Resources and Energy Committee.

[Gov. Tom Wolf allows public records bill to become law but uses announcement to criticize GOP](#) - Gov. Tom Wolf allowed a public records law to become law on Sunday, refusing to sign it.

[Nuclear power bailout stalled in Harrisburg as feds allege bribes fueled Ohio aid package](#) - An effort to help Pennsylvania's nuclear power industry snag an estimated \$500 million a year ratepayer bailout should not be hurt by an alleged bribery scandal involving FirstEnergy Corp. in Ohio, a state representative said.

[Vote by DEP's small business advisory committee says PA should not join regional cap and trade group](#) - As small businesses and all Pennsylvanians deal with the health and economic crisis, the Wolf administration's effort to push through a regulation on the state's energy producers that will lead to higher prices for all consumers faces growing opposition.

[EQB Approves Final Air Quality Fee Increase, Proposed Revisions To Chapter 105 Permitting Regs](#) - On July 21, the Environmental Quality Board approved the final regulation increasing Air Quality Program permit fees and proposed changes to the Chapter 105 Waterways Management Permitting Program.

[House Supports James' Bill to Remediate PA's Toxic Waste Areas](#) - The House unanimously approved legislation drafted by Rep. Lee James (R-Venango/Butler) that would add a member of the coal refuse energy and reclamation industry to the Mining Reclamation and Advisory Board (MRAB) to encourage clean-up of toxic waste areas that pollute local waterways.

[Joint Conservation Committee Issues Recommendations On Supporting Coal Refuse-Fired Power Plants](#) - On July 7, the Joint Legislative Air and Water Pollution Control and Conservation Committee issued a report making recommendations on supporting the coal refuse-fired power plants in response to the DEP proposal to join the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative to reduce carbon emissions from power plants.

[Some of state's waterways reported improving](#) - Abandoned mine pollution and agricultural runoff into Chesapeake Bay are declining, according to Pennsylvania's 2020 draft Water Quality Monitoring and Assessment Report, but urban runoff, sewage overflows and acidification of streams remain significant problems.

[Pa. House moves to block RGGI entrance as DEP estimates it will save money and lives](#) - Pennsylvania's House of Representatives is trying to block the state's entrance into a regional effort to curb carbon emissions from power plants.

[Gov. Tom Wolf says he'll veto GOP effort to end coronavirus emergency, vows to continue reopening](#) - Gov. Tom Wolf said Thursday that he will veto the Republican-controlled Legislature's attempt to end his coronavirus disaster declaration with a concurrent resolution.

[Pa. GOP can't unilaterally end Gov. Tom Wolf's coronavirus disaster declaration, state Supreme Court rules](#) - The GOP-controlled legislature cannot force Gov. Tom Wolf to end his coronavirus disaster declaration, a divided state Supreme Court ruled Wednesday, handing the Democratic governor a victory that could be vital should cases surge again.

[A promising year for Pennsylvania's state budget ends with a \\$3.2 billion thud](#) - Pennsylvania closed out its fiscal year Tuesday with a \$3.2 billion shortfall, with revenues falling 9% below official estimates as the state continues to grapple with the economic damage caused by the coronavirus outbreak.

[Pennsylvania mandates masks in public for most people amid coronavirus increases](#) - Most Pennsylvanians are now required to wear masks in public — rather than simply when they enter businesses — under a new order issued by the Wolf administration in response to the recent increase in coronavirus cases.