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## ARIPPA PERIODIC MEDIA NEWS – 3-1-21

(News clips from the previous month)

### CFB, COAL REFUSE, ENERGY INDUSTRY

[ERCOT narrowly avoided 'much more devastating' impacts as nearly half of generation went offline: CEO](#) - Almost half of the Electric Reliability Council of Texas' generation was forced offline at its peak during last week's power crisis that left millions without electricity for days, according to new data released by the grid operator.

[Valley Forge, Pa. power grid operators studying what went wrong in Texas](#) - The catastrophic Texas blackout was a wider failure than the state's power grid, which teetered on the brink of an even bigger collapse during a freeze that knocked out electricity to 4 million customers, energy executives said Thursday.

[Exelon announces plan to spin off generation assets into second company](#) - Exelon will divide its utility holdings and generation assets into two specialized companies beginning in 2022, company leadership announced on Wednesday.

[Top board leaders resign after deadly Texas power outages](#) - Top board leaders of Texas' embattled power grid operator said Tuesday they will resign following outage over more than 4 million customers losing electricity last week during a deadly winter storm, including many whose frigid homes lacked heat for days in subfreezing temperatures.

[Texas Launches Probe of Power Companies After Blackouts](#) - The fallout from the severe weather that crippled the power grid in Texas and other states over the past week continues, as officials grapple with what went wrong and who should be held accountable for an energy emergency that left millions without electricity.

[Texas suspends utility disconnections after 'skyrocketing' power bills](#) - Texas regulators on Sunday issued a moratorium on utility disconnections for customers who do not pay their power bills, following a spike in power prices that impacted millions of customers across the state who were without power for days last week.

[Texas outages take center stage during Congressional hearing on climate and clean energy](#) - Attempts to blame the Texas power outages on renewable energy stand to derail calls for bipartisan climate legislation, members of the Congressional Subcommittee on Energy said Thursday.

[Power experts cite gas constraints as main cause of ERCOT outages, but system planning questions remain](#) - As rolling outages continued to plague Texas on Wednesday, power sector experts found themselves fighting against misinformation about the root of the problem.

[FERC, NERC to investigate mass outages across ERCOT, SPP, MISO](#) - Federal regulators on Tuesday opened an inquiry into bulk power system operations following a polar vortex across the middle of the country that left millions of people without electricity.

[Texas wholesale electric prices spike more than 10,000% amid outages](#) - The spot price of wholesale electricity on the Texas power grid spiked more than 10,000% on Monday amid a deep freeze across the state and rolling outages among power producers, according to data on the grid operator's website.

[University of Kentucky conducts pilot-scale testing for REE extraction](#) - A NETL-supported project at the University of Kentucky (UK) successfully conducted pilot-scale testing in their facility that was designed to extract mixed rare earth elements from coal and coal by-products using advanced extraction technologies, achieving production of mixed rare earth oxide (MREO) concentrates of up to 98% purity and exceeding original project goals.

[Coal-Fired Power Took a Beating During the Pandemic, Study Finds](#) - The share of energy generated from coal has dropped more sharply during the coronavirus pandemic than that of any other power source, according to a new report on Monday that looked at coal demand in some of the world's largest emitters of greenhouse gases.

[EIA projects swift electricity demand recovery after COVID-19, strong renewables growth](#) - U.S. electricity use, which took an unexpected dive in 2020 after COVID-19 began, may return to 2019 levels as early as 2022, according to the latest Annual Energy Outlook from the U.S. Energy Information Administration.

[Alliant, Duke announce generator shutdowns, accelerating nation's transition to coal-free status](#) - Alliant Energy on Tuesday announced it would retire its 1,100 MW Columbia Energy Center, making the company's subsidiary Wisconsin Power & Light coal-free by 2025.

[Morgan Stanley: Coal-Fired Power Off U.S. Grid by 2033](#) - A report from Morgan Stanley, a global wealth management company, said coal-fired power generation is likely to disappear from the U.S. power grid by 2033, largely displaced by renewable energy resources.

[FEATURE: Place, prices, alternatives playing roles in coal-fired generation retirements](#) - Despite retirement of 131.8 GW of coal-fired generation capacity since 2010, about 225.3 GW of such capacity remains operating today, led by Texas, Indiana and West Virginia, and replacing that capacity with low- or no-carbon alternatives by 2050 would likely coincide with declining wholesale power prices, industry observers say.

[FirstEnergy to forgo \\$102 million 'decoupling' provision in scandal-ridden House Bill 6](#) - FirstEnergy won't charge customers \$102 million this year, forgoing a fee included in the controversial House Bill 6, Ohio Attorney General Dave Yost said Monday.

[A Report Undercuts Nuclear Firm's Claims That Its Plants Need Bailouts. But Is It For Real?](#) - On August 27th, 2020, Exelon Corp., one of the largest providers of nuclear power in the United States, announced that it would close two of its nuclear plants in northern Illinois, called Byron and Dresden, in roughly one year's time, even though the plants are licensed to operate for decades more.

#### **LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY ISSUES: FEDERAL**

[Biden is hiking up the cost of carbon. It will change how US tackles global warming](#) - President Biden on Friday dramatically altered the way the U.S. government calculates the real-world cost of climate change, a move that could reshape a range of consequential decisions, from whether to allow new coal leasing on federal land to what sort of steel is used in taxpayer-funded infrastructure projects.

[Senate confirms Granholm to lead DOE](#) - The U.S. Senate on Thursday voted 64-35 to confirm former Michigan Gov. Jennifer Granholm as President Joe Biden's Secretary of Energy. In a tweet to Vice President Kamala Harris, Granholm said she is ready to lead the Department of Energy "to redefine what's possible to address climate change and create millions of good-paying clean energy union jobs."

[FERC to examine potential market violations in wake of massive Texas power outages](#) - The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission on Monday announced it would investigate whether any natural gas or electricity market violations occurred during the recent cold snap that left millions without power in Texas and Oklahoma last week.

[FERC 'finally' ends PJM MOPR proceeding, paving way for grid operator's next capacity auction](#) - The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission on Thursday voted 3-1 to vacate an "infamous" footnote added to a rehearing order on the PJM Interconnection's broader minimum offer price rule (MOPR) proceeding.

[FERC closes resilience docket opened in response to DOE coal, nuclear bailout proposal](#) - The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission on Thursday voted 4-1 to close its resilience docket opened in response to a 2017 effort by the Department of Energy to bail out uneconomic coal and nuclear plants.

[Congress, Texas should 'rethink' ERCOT's 'go it alone approach': FERC Chair Glick](#) - Federal Energy Regulatory Commission Chair Richard Glick on Thursday called on Congress and the Texas state legislature to "rethink" the state's grid operator's "go it alone approach" in the wake of rolling blackouts experienced across the region this week.

[Back in Paris pact, U.S. vows no more sidelining of climate](#) - World leaders welcomed the United States' official return to the Paris climate accord Friday, but politically trickier steps lie just ahead for President Joe Biden, including setting a tough national target in coming months for cutting damaging fossil fuel emissions.

[Wielding a deciding vote in Senate, Joe Manchin brings Appalachian energy to climate debate](#) - Joe Manchin knows how it may appear to climate advocates: a West Virginia senator and incoming chair of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee teaming up with a Wyoming Republican senator to advance energy goals while together they represent the top coal-producing states in the country.

[Gina McCarthy: Expect more climate executive orders](#) - President Biden is likely to issue more executive orders on global warming, said White House climate adviser Gina McCarthy in an interview with E&E News.

[Biden won't revive Obama's Clean Power Plan. So now what?](#) - Michael Regan, Biden's pick to lead EPA, told Capitol Hill lawmakers last week that the administration would look for its own solution to limit power plant carbon rather than reuse the one crafted by President Obama.

[The Energy 202: Biden picks ex-Obama climate official for Energy Department deputy](#) - President Biden plans to nominate David Turk, a former Obama administration official, as his deputy energy secretary.

[Manchin: Biden administration has started off on wrong foot, risks bipartisan progress on climate](#) - By picking a fight over the size of the next COVID-19 stimulus package, President Joe Biden has reinforced partisan divides and risks straining future conversations about energy, infrastructure and climate, Sen. Joe Manchin, D-W.Va., said during a Thursday webinar hosted by the Bipartisan Policy Center.

[Montana District Court Vacates EPA's 'Secret Science' Rule](#) - The Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) "Secret Science" rule establishing new standards for consideration of certain "pivotal" scientific studies, which was slated to go into effect on Jan. 6 of this year, has been vacated and remanded by the U.S. District Court for the District of Montana.

[Biden EPA pick promises senators 'clean slate' in examining greenhouse gas regulations](#) - Joe Biden's pick to serve as administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency pledged to take a "clean slate" approach when determining how to take on the Clean Power Plan versus the Affordable Clean Energy Act — regulations under the Obama and Trump administrations, respectively, aimed at addressing carbon emissions from fossil fuel-fired power plants.

[New FERC member argues power markets must 'respect' state policy choices](#) - "Fixing markets" ranks No. 1 on the priority list of the newest Democrat on the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, Allison Clements said in an exclusive Feb. 2 interview with S&P Global Market Intelligence and S&P Global Platts.

[FERC Signals Green Light on Carbon Pricing to Help Reduce Emissions](#) - The body that regulates the interstate transmission of oil, electricity, and natural gas has signaled its willingness to approve regional grid operator plans that incorporate carbon pricing into their rate structures. Carbon pricing encourages a market-based approach to reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, essentially by charging polluters.

## **LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY ISSUES: STATE**

[STRUZZI REINTRODUCES RGGI BILL](#) - State Representative Jim Struzzi said yesterday he is reintroducing legislation which Governor Tom Wolf vetoed last year that would have required the General Assembly's consideration of the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, Wolf's controversial proposal to join by executive order a nine-state compact to limit greenhouse gas emissions from coal-fired power plants.

[At DEP budget hearing, some legislators focus on Pa.'s effort to join RGGI](#) - Pennsylvania's possible entry into a regional cap and trade program does not affect the 2021-22 budget, but state House lawmakers had many questions about the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) during a budget hearing Monday with Department of Environmental Protection Secretary Patrick McDonnell.

[Sen. Yaw Introduces Bill To Preempt Local Governments From Requiring New Buildings Use Climate-Friendly Energy Sources](#) - On February 24, Sen. Gene Yaw (R-Lycoming), Majority Chair of the Senate Environmental Resources and Energy Committee, introduced Senate Bill 275 which would prohibit local governments from adopting requirements that new buildings use climate-friendly energy sources.

[Temps fall, but Western Pa. power plants, gas lines built to operate during big chills](#) - As some Western Pennsylvanians awoke Sunday morning with temperatures close to zero, they got the heat and power they needed from their natural gas service and electric power plants to keep warm.

[Voters may never again get to choose Pa.'s lieutenant governor candidates](#) - The Pennsylvania Senate is advancing a measure that would give the state's political parties final say over candidates for lieutenant governor, taking power away from voters.

[U.S. Supreme Court is not taking up three Pennsylvania election cases brought by Trump or his allies](#) - Three cases brought by Pennsylvania Republican leaders challenging different aspects of last year's presidential election here have been turned aside by the Supreme Court of the United States.

[Pa. Gov. Tom Wolf signs another extension of COVID-19 disaster declaration](#) - Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Wolf signed another renewal of the state's disaster declaration tied to the coronavirus pandemic, even as state lawmakers hope to curtail some of his broad powers in emergencies.

[State agency calls for delay in RGGI implementation](#) - Pennsylvania's Independent Regulatory Review Commission has asked the state's Environmental Quality Board to delay the state's entry into the Northeast Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative for one year.

[Wolf Administration Announces Creation of COVID-19 Vaccine Joint Task Force with Legislature](#) - While conversations with the entire General Assembly on the state's vaccine plan will remain ongoing, Governor Tom Wolf's Administration also sought to provide a mechanism for accurate, timely information sharing via a streamlined set of communicators between these two branches of state government.

[Wolf signs \\$912M pandemic relief bill after unanimous approval by legislature](#) - Gov. Tom Wolf on Friday signed an aid package passed by legislature that will provide over \$900 million to the hospitality industry, private schools and people struggling with bills amid the pandemic.

[Pa. voters will have a say on curbing governor's emergency declaration powers](#) - Now it is up to voters to decide whether Pennsylvania's General Assembly should have a say in how long a governor's emergency disaster declarations should last.

[Pa. budget overview: Income tax hike, aid for schools, a higher minimum wage and a lot of opposition](#) - Gov. Tom Wolf's \$37.8 billion budget is big, bold and unlikely to pass as envisioned by the Democratic governor.

[Pa. Budget: Wolf proposes record personal income tax increase, along with tax cuts for some](#) - The budget calls for the single-biggest personal income tax ever, though Gov. Tom Wolf has cast it as a major reform that would actually only increase taxes on about one-third of all filers.

[Pa. budget: Wolf plan funnels environmental fees and taxes into workforce aid](#) - Gov. Tom Wolf's budget proposal keeps the Department of Environmental Protection's budget relatively flat, decreasing it slightly from \$810 million to \$807 million across all funding sources.