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ARIPPA PERIODIC MEDIA NEWS – 5-3-21

(News clips from the previous month)

CFB, COAL REFUSE, ENERGY INDUSTRY

[PJM proposes to end FERC MOPR policy that raised prices for state-subsidized resources](#) - The PJM Interconnection is proposing to eliminate a controversial rule that effectively raises the price for state-subsidized resources, such as renewables and nuclear, bidding into its wholesale capacity market.

[Heavy Push by Industry, Biden Administration to Jumpstart Transmission Expansion, Grid Modernization](#) - Bolstering the Biden administration's recently announced initiatives to modernize the nation's grid and improve its resilience, the Department of Energy (DOE) on April 27 made up to \$8.25 billion in loans available to expand transmission capacity nationwide, while the Department of Transportation (DOT) offered new guidance to help speed the siting and permitting of transmission lines.

[States ask FERC to eliminate MOPR, grant more flexibility in pursuing alternatives to PJM capacity market](#) - State legislators within the PJM Interconnection are asking federal regulators to allow more flexibility in pursuing alternatives to the grid operator's capacity market, as they pursue a fix to the minimum offer price rule (MOPR) expansion.

[FirstEnergy says it's talking to feds about cutting deal in HB6 bribery probe](#) - FirstEnergy Corp. officials are discussing cutting a deal with the U.S. Department of Justice to avoid possible criminal charges as part of the ongoing House Bill 6 bribery probe, the company disclosed on Thursday in a new regulatory filing.

[Equitable energy transition will require more than funding and job training, researchers say](#) - To achieve social and economic equity goals, organizations should focus on tightening policies around qualifications and livable wages for employees and contractors, according to a new guide from Inclusive Economics and the Bloomberg Philanthropies American Cities Climate Challenge.

[Reports: Plugging wells, reclaiming mine land could create thousands of jobs](#) - Appalachia's long history with fossil fuels turned out to be a costly one. A new report by the Ohio River Valley Institute found there are more than half a million abandoned oil and gas wells in Pennsylvania, Ohio, West Virginia and Kentucky that will cost up to \$34 billion to plug.

[The dirty truth: It takes coal to heal coal's scars on the landscape](#) - Will the acid mine drainage that pollutes thousands of miles of streams in Pennsylvania and Western Maryland ever be erased?

[Power plant to lay off 43](#) - An NRG Energy spokesman confirmed that layoffs scheduled next month will affect 43 jobs at the Homer City Generating Station in Center Township.

[U.S. energy consumption fell by a record 7% in 2020](#) - In 2020, total U.S. energy consumption fell to 93 quadrillion British thermal units (quads), down 7% from 2019, according to EIA's Monthly Energy Review.

[Weather-related outages primary cause of Texas blackouts, new ERCOT data finds](#) - The majority of outages within the Texas grid during a February cold snap were weather-related, a preliminary report from the Electric Reliability Council of Texas (ERCOT) found.

[Nuclear, Coal, Oil Jobs Pay More Than Those in Wind, Solar: Report](#) - Workers in nuclear energy and fossil fuel industries earn higher wages than those in renewable energy sectors like wind and solar that are the focus of President Joe Biden's plan to stimulate the U.S. economy and combat climate change, according to an analysis published on Tuesday.

[State of the Electric Utility 2021: Accommodating state policies is top priority for FERC, utilities say](#) - Utilities also cited tax credits and other financial incentives as the best way to decarbonize the U.S. power sector, Utility Dive's 2021 State of the Electric Utility Survey Report found.

LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY ISSUES: FEDERAL

[BIDEN'S FIRST 100 DAYS: New FERC chair making changes 'at warp speed'](#) - US President Joe Biden's first 100 days have brought a shift at a key independent regulator with oversight over energy markets and interstate gas pipelines, thrusting a Democrat with a strong interest in climate into a leadership position.

[GOP leaders from 19 states ask Supreme Court to review power plant regulation ruling](#) - Republican attorneys general from 18 states and one Republican governor are asking the Supreme Court to review a lower court ruling that they argue gave the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) too much power to regulate emissions.

['America is on the move again,' Biden declares in his 1st address to Congress](#) - President Joe Biden declared Wednesday night that “America is rising anew” as he called for an expansion of federal programs to drive the economy past the pandemic and broadly extend the social safety net on a scale not seen in decades.

[Federal group intends to revive coal communities](#) - Brian Anderson knows that more than a bandage – more than a zillion of them, actually – are needed to stanch the bleeding in coal country.

[Biden plan for cleaner power system faces daunting obstacles](#) - If the nation is to meet President Joe Biden’s goal of cutting America’s greenhouse gas emissions in half by the end of the decade, it will have to undertake a vast transformation toward renewable energy.

[Key Republican Energy Regulator Looks to Stay Past End of Term](#) - A Republican on the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission who raised eyebrows for delving into carbon pricing is considering staying on after his term expires, amid doubts that a Democratic successor can be confirmed by the end of June.

[Cartwright seeks continued federal funding for abandoned mine cleanup](#) - U.S. Rep. Matt Cartwright, D-Moosic, this week discussed the importance of the U.S. Interior Department’s work in Northeastern Pennsylvania with Secretary Deb Haaland during a hearing of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior, Environment and Related Agencies.

[Power grid upgrades absent in Senate Republicans' \\$568B counter to Biden infrastructure proposal](#) - Republican senators on Thursday released a \$568 billion infrastructure bill as a counter to President Joe Biden's \$2 trillion infrastructure proposal, unveiled earlier this month.

[DOE Announces \\$109.5 Million to Support Jobs and Economic Growth in Coal and Power Plant Communities](#) - In connection with a White House report on economic revitalization in coal and power plant communities, the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) today announced \$109.5 million in funding for projects that directly support job creation in communities impacted by changes in the energy economy—the first results of a government-wide initiative launched by President Biden in the first week of his administration to boost the economic potential of coal and power plant communities.

[Biden pledges to halve US carbon emissions by 2030, sending signal to businesses and world leaders](#) - The United States will work to cut economy-wide greenhouse gas emissions 50-52% by 2030 relative to 2005 levels, President Joe Biden announced on Thursday ahead of an Earth Day climate summit with other world leaders.

[DOE, EPA officials offer advice as FERC turns focus to environmental justice](#) - In a further sign of a shift in focus at the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, the agency got advice from US Department of Energy and Environmental Protection Agency officials about how to improve engagement and better consider environmental justice issues as the commission makes key energy infrastructure decisions.

[FERC Issues Policy Statement on Carbon Pricing in Organized Wholesale Markets](#) - The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) today issued a policy statement clarifying how it will consider market rules proposed by regional grid operators that seek to incorporate a state-determined carbon price in organized wholesale electricity markets.

[DOE launches 100-day grid security push as Biden ends Trump ban on some Chinese-made equipment](#) - The U.S. Department of Energy and the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) on Tuesday announced a 100-day plan to address "persistent and sophisticated threats" to the nation's electric grid, including a "voluntary industry effort" to deploy technologies to secure industrial control system (ICS) and operational technology (OT).

[Biden takes on Dems' 'Mission Impossible': Revitalizing coal country](#) - Despite deep skepticism from union allies, Democrats are determined to make their "Just Transition" away from fossil fuels work.

[DOE to invest US\\$6 million in products from coal waste](#) - The U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) Office of Fossil Energy (FE) has announced US\$6 million in Federal funding for cost-shared research and development (R&D) projects under the funding opportunity announcement (FOA) DE-FOA-0002405, Advanced Coal Waste Processing: Production of Coal-Enhanced Filaments or Resins for Advanced Manufacturing and Research and Development of Coal-Derived Graphite.

[Glick, Chatterjee clash on RTO expansion incentive as FERC announces transmission initiatives](#) - The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission advanced a draft plan to reduce its planned grid incentives for utilities to join regional transmission organizations (RTOs), by modifying a March 2020 notice of proposed rulemaking (NOPR) during its monthly meeting on Thursday.

[Biden \\$1.5 trillion budget proposal includes 27% increase in overall clean energy spending](#) - President Joe Biden's \$1.52 trillion budget request for Fiscal Year 2022, sent to Congress on Friday, includes billions of dollars in funding for clean energy, cybersecurity and more.

[FERC seeks more input on PJM capacity market construct, possible reforms](#) - Following up on discussions during a technical conference in March, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission is seeking additional input on capacity market constructs as state policies are increasingly affecting resource entry and exit, including whether new market rules could be implemented in PJM Interconnection without delaying its December capacity auction.

[FERC names enviro lawyer, ex-Manchin aide to top roles](#) - As the U.S. Federal Energy Regulatory Commission increases its focus on renewable energy in the Biden era, the agency's chairman on Monday appointed lawyers with industry and climate advocacy credentials to two top positions.

[Biden \\$2 trillion infrastructure proposal includes billions in spending on transmission, clean energy](#) - President Joe Biden on Wednesday unveiled the details of his \$2 trillion infrastructure plan that includes billions of dollars in electric vehicle, transmission and clean energy investments.

LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY ISSUES: STATE

[Pennsylvania governor withdraws cabinet nominees amid RGGI dust-up](#) - Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Wolf canceled confirmation hearings for several of his cabinet nominees this week as tensions flare with Republican lawmakers over their efforts to thwart his climate initiatives.

[DEP: Fire burning in mine near Trevorton; cause unknown](#) - The Department of Environmental Protection said Tuesday that an untold number of waste tires continue to burn and flames have spread inside an "abandoned mine opening" on Big Mountain in Northumberland County.

[Senate moves new bill to keep Pa. out of RGGI without General Assembly's OK](#) - State lawmakers are advancing a new attempt to prevent the commonwealth from joining a regional cap and trade program targeting power plant emissions.

[Senate committee approves regulatory relief package](#) - The Senate Intergovernmental Operations Committee approved legislation that would remove bureaucratic red tape, increase transparency, and provide for legislative input over the state's regulatory process in Pennsylvania, according to the bills' sponsor, Senator Kristin Phillips-Hill (R-28).

[Pennsylvania will lose a U.S. House seat after redistricting](#) - Pennsylvania will lose one of its seats in the U.S. House of Representatives, the Census Bureau has confirmed, setting up a high-stakes redistricting process as Democrats and Republicans battle to protect their incumbents.

[Pennsylvania Gov. Wolf: full reopening could happen 2 weeks after 65-70% of population vaccinated, could be sooner if people wear mask, socially distance](#) - Gov. Tom Wolf told reporters Wednesday the “general idea” on when a full reopening of businesses in the state could happen is two weeks after 65-70% of the state’s population is vaccinated for COVID-19, allowing that extra time for “herd immunity.”

[Lawmakers Announce Re-organization of Legislative Coal Caucus](#) - State Sen. Gene Yaw (R-23) and Sen. John Yudichak (I-14) along with Rep. Tommy Sankey (R-73) and Rep. Pam Snyder (D-50) today announced that they will serve as Co-Chair’s for the Legislative Coal Caucus during the 2021-2022 Session.

[Pa. lawmakers identifying ways to kickstart Pa.’s economic recovery](#) - Employers from across Pennsylvania say the best way to kickstart the state’s economy is for the government and Gov. Tom Wolf’s COVID-19 mitigation orders to “get out of the way,” according to House Republican leaders.

[Pennsylvania Republicans ramp up focus on proposals to limit governor’s disaster declaration powers: ‘A way to restore balance’](#) - Top Senate Republicans on Tuesday put a spotlight on two proposed constitutional amendments that seek to limit the governor’s disaster-declaring powers and give lawmakers more of a role in those situations.

[Pa. Senate extends remote participation rules to May 31](#) - The Pennsylvania Senate on Monday agreed to extend its temporary rules allowing for senators to participate remotely during the COVID-19 emergency.

[U.S. Supreme Court dismisses the last challenge over Pennsylvania’s 2020 election](#) - The case was the last of a torrent of litigation over the conduct of Pennsylvania’s election, which drew intense scrutiny and several appeals to the nation's highest court.

[DEP looks to address environmental justice concerns in RGGI rule](#) - The Department of Environmental Protection is hoping to address environmental justice concerns raised by Pennsylvania’s attempt to join the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI).

[Pa.’s move to new unemployment compensation computer system set for June 8](#) - Pennsylvania’s 16-year-long beleaguered effort to modernize its unemployment compensation computer system is said to have reached the final stage with the plan to go live on June 8.

[PA Senate Environmental Chairman Sponsors Solar Environmental Justice Act](#) - State Sen. Gene Yaw (R-23), Chairman of the Pennsylvania Senate Environmental Resources and Energy Committee, is introducing the Solar Environmental Justice Act, which prohibits state taxpayer dollars or tax credits from being utilized to purchase solar panels and related components manufactured or assembled outside the United States.

[Sens. Yaw, Martin, Laughlin Seek Clean Water, Environmental Improvement Funding through Recent Stimulus Appropriation](#) - Three Senate Republicans are pushing for increased funding towards clean water initiatives through the most recent federal stimulus payment to the Commonwealth.

[Senate, House Democrats To Introduce Bill To Transition PA To 100% Renewable Energy By 2050](#) - On April 21, a group of Senate and House Democrats will be introducing legislation to transition Pennsylvania to 100 percent renewable energy by 2050 as a step toward putting the state on track toward a greener, more sustainable future.

[U.S. Secretary Of Energy Jennifer Granholm Says There Is A Future For Some Fossil Fuels In Western Pa.](#) - As for the future of coal, Granholm says coal is losing out to natural gas and other fuel sources.

[Pa. still facing uphill battle to join Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative](#) - Pennsylvania’s efforts to join the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative face continued opposition within the state legislature.

[Legislature rejects coal community comeback plan in passing bill to keep coal plants operating as long as possible](#) - The West Virginia Legislature passed a bill on the last day of the regular legislative session Saturday designed to help the coal industry while rejecting an amendment designed to help communities devastated by the industry’s decline.