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## ARIPPA PERIODIC MEDIA NEWS – 2-1-23

(News clips from the previous month)

### CFB, COAL REFUSE, ENERGY INDUSTRY

[Constellation, NRG and other generators urge FERC to reject PJM’s mid-capacity auction rule change](#) - Federal regulators should reject the PJM Interconnection’s proposal to change its capacity market rules in the midst of an auction, in part because it would undermine certainty in wholesale power markets, according to power plant companies such as Constellation Energy Generation, NRG Energy and Vistra as well as generator and clean energy trade groups.

[PJM generator average interconnection costs soar 728%, driven by network upgrades: DOE Lab](#) - The average cost for generators to connect to the grid in the PJM Interconnection soared from 2020 to 2022 compared to previous two-year intervals, largely driven by network upgrades beyond the interconnecting substation, according to a study released Thursday by the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory.

[W.Va. governor's family coal firm agrees to reclaim mines](#) - A coal company owned by the family of West Virginia Gov. Jim Justice has agreed to reclaim three large surface mines in southwestern Virginia to settle a lawsuit with environmental groups.

[Increasing renewables likely to reduce coal and natural gas generation over next two years](#) - In our latest Short-Term Energy Outlook, we expect that increased U.S. power generation from new renewables capacity—mostly wind and solar—will reduce generation from both coal-fired and natural gas-fired power plants in 2023 and 2024.

[Third North Carolina Power Substation Targeted by Gunfire as BPS Physical Security Concerns Mount](#) - A third power substation has been damaged by gunfire in North Carolina, prompting an FBI investigation. The incident on Jan. 17 is part of a spate of gunfire vandalism that has renewed physical security concerns at a federal level.

[Electricity prices surged 14.3% in 2022, double overall inflation: US report](#) - Consumers paid 14.3% more for electricity last year on average, than in 2021, more than double the overall 6.5% rise in prices, according to Consumer Price Increase data released Jan. 12 by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

[2023 Outlook: US power sector trends to watch](#) - Federal, state and corporate actions are boosting clean energy in the U.S., but supply chain and economic challenges persist while grid reliability and security concerns are growing.

[PJM Operated Reliably Throughout Winter Storm Challenges](#) - PJM shared its preliminary analysis of operating and market conditions during Winter Storm Elliott over the Christmas weekend in December, outlining how PJM and its members preserved the reliable flow of power and how market prices reflected system needs through record-breaking cold and unplanned generation outages.

[Mapped: Biggest Sources of Electricity by State and Province](#) - On a national scale, the United States and Canada rely on a very different makeup of sources to generate their electricity

[Wholesale U.S. electricity prices were volatile in 2022](#) - Average wholesale electricity prices at major trading hubs in the United States rose throughout much of 2022 and were, at times, volatile as a result of extreme weather events.

[Ratepayers to foot \\$2M bill for coal-power mandate](#) - Electric utilities in Wyoming are already incurring costs to comply with legislation that requires them to pursue retrofitting coal-fired power plants with carbon capture, utilization and sequestration facilities, despite preliminary analyses that CCUS technology is cost-prohibitive.

[Turning coal mine drainage into a source of rare minerals](#) - A new study investigates a novel process for lessening the negative environmental impact of coal mine drainage and extracting rare-earth elements from it, precious minerals needed to manufacture many high-tech devices.

[Bomb cyclone sparks fierce debate over grid readiness](#) - Christmas week's fierce "bomb cyclone" has put new urgency behind a critical issue for the nation's power system — how grid owners and operators prepare for extreme weather emergencies.

[FirstEnergy agrees to pay \\$3.9M for failing to tell FERC about energy bill bribery payments](#) - In the latest fall-out from a two-year-old bribery scandal, FirstEnergy will pay \$3.9 million for failing to fully provide the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission's enforcement office with requested lobbying and accounting information, according to an agency order issued Friday.

[Are We Headed for a Reliability Train Wreck?](#) - So far, utilities have announced plans to retire some 93,000 MW (nameplate) of coal—almost half the existing coal fleet—by the end of this decade.

[Appalachian Region Independent Power Producers Assn. Accepting Applications For Mine Reclamation Grants](#) - The Appalachian Region Independent Power Producers Association (ARIPPA) is partnering with the Eastern and Western Pennsylvania Coalitions for Abandoned Mine Reclamation to offer competitive awards to watershed and conservancy organizations facilitating abandoned mine drainage (AMD) and/or abandoned mine land (AML) remediation projects in Pennsylvania.

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

[President Biden to end COVID-19 emergencies on May 11](#) - President Joe Biden informed Congress on Monday that he will end the twin national emergencies for addressing COVID-19 on May 11, as most of the world has returned closer to normalcy nearly three years after they were first declared.

[US FERC pulls back from expanded environmental reviews for gas projects](#) - In a change that could speed natural gas project review timelines, the US Federal Energy Regulatory Commission appears to be pulling back from a practice of conducting environmental impact statements for most projects that add capacity and have incremental greenhouse gas emissions.

[U.S. EPA administrator contemplating stepping down - sources](#) - U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Michael Regan is considering stepping down, according to four sources familiar with the matter.

[EPA Moves to Deny Coal Ash Disposal at Six Massive Coal Power Plants](#) - The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has proposed barring six coal-fired power plants in various states—a combined 11 GW—from disposing coal ash into unlined surface impoundments.

[EPA ruling could shutter W. Pa power plant ahead of schedule](#) - The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has found that a western Pennsylvania power plant can no longer dump toxic coal ash into unlined ponds, a ruling that could close the plant before its planned retirement in 2028.

[FERC enters 2023 with a new leader, a vacant seat and an agenda topped by transmission and grid reliability](#) - The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission is heading into 2023 with a new leader, Acting Chairman Willie Phillips, a vacant seat and a packed agenda that includes transmission planning reform, grid reliability and possible market reforms.

[Names circulating for vacant FERC spot](#) - The top attorney at the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission and an energy adviser for House Democrats are among the candidates in the running for an open seat at FERC, according to several people familiar with the process.

[Abandoned mines legislation signed into law](#) - The future health of area waterways became more secure on Dec. 29 when President Joe Biden signed into law the STREAM Act, which now allows Pennsylvania to set aside money to continue operating and maintaining acid mine drainage treatment facilities.

[Key House Republican floats energy package](#) - House Energy and Commerce Committee Chairwoman Cathy McMorris Rodgers (R-Wash.) on Wednesday signaled the committee will move on a larger energy legislative package under her leadership.

[EPA Releases Updated Legal Guidance on Identifying, Addressing Cumulative Impacts to Advance Environmental Justice, Equity](#) - Today, the US Environmental Protection Agency announced the latest action to identify and address cumulative impacts from pollution and non-pollution sources.

[House Republican fires opening salvo on energy permitting](#) - A senior House Natural Resources Committee Republican offered an early preview Monday of how the GOP will seek to overhaul the permitting process for energy projects with its new House majority.

[White House guidance on GHG analysis will ease renewable energy permitting, trade groups say](#) - The White House Council on Environmental Quality's interim greenhouse gas emissions guidance released Friday will ease the permitting process for clean energy projects, according to renewable energy trade groups.

[After speaker showdown, House enters uncharted territory](#) - The many concessions House Speaker Kevin McCarthy made to secure the gavel will make the legislative process incredibly difficult — maybe close to impossible — while stymieing lawmakers' ability to agree on spending and any bipartisan energy and environment goals.

[EPA Proposes to Strengthen Air Quality Standards to Protect the Public from Harmful Effects of Soot](#) - Today, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is announcing a proposal to strengthen a key national ambient air quality standard (NAAQS) for fine particle pollution, also known as PM2.5, to better protect communities, including those most overburdened by pollution.

[Fetterman to Join Agriculture, Banking, Aging, and Environment & Public Works Committees](#) - Pennsylvania U.S. Senator John Fetterman today announced that he will serve on the powerful U.S. Senate Committees on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs; and Environment & Public Works.

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

[Governor Shapiro Signs Executive Order to Improve Commonwealth Licensing, Permitting, and Certification Processes by Establishing Standard Response Times and Money-Back Guarantee](#) - Today, Governor Josh Shapiro signed an Executive Order to improve the Commonwealth's licensing, permitting, and certification processes, beginning a comprehensive review of how long it takes agencies to process applications and how workers and businesses apply online.

[Unexpected Pennsylvania House speaker hopes to retain job](#) - The rank-and-file Democrat who was unexpectedly elected speaker of the Pennsylvania House as a compromise candidate earlier this month is saying he hopes to keep the job even after three vacant Democratic-leaning seats are filled in special elections next week.

[Report: Coal falls, gas climbs in Pennsylvania](#) - Pennsylvania's energy landscape underwent a seismic shift in the last 20 years, according to recent federal data.

[House Republican committee leaders named as gridlock ensues](#) - The House Republican leadership team announced its committee chairs for the 2023-24 session, according to Republican House leader Bryan Cutler (R-Lancaster).

[Hopes of bipartisan cooperation give way to complete deadlock in the Pa. House](#) - The Pennsylvania House officially adjourned Tuesday until late February, almost certainly ending any chance of voters seeing constitutional amendments on their May ballot.

[Pennsylvania lawmakers revive bill to rein in regulatory spending](#) - Republicans lawmakers will again tackle regulatory reform and the separation of powers in the new legislative session.

[Claim that Pa. climate program was unlawfully delayed is moot, court says](#) - Commonwealth Court is dismissing the Department of Environmental Protection's claim that a signature climate regulation was unlawfully delayed.

[Senate Republicans Urge Gov. Shapiro To Take Steps 'Immediately' To Repeal Final Reg. Limiting Carbon Pollution From Power Plants \[RGGI\]](#) - On January 18, every member of the Senate Republican Caucus wrote a letter to Gov. Josh Shapiro urging him to take steps to repeal the final regulation limiting carbon pollution from power plants consistent with the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative.

[Businesses, groups tell lawmakers regulatory burden, high energy costs must be lowered](#) - A Pennsylvania Senate panel was told that higher energy costs were strangling businesses and consumers alike and that regulatory burdens on the energy industry need to be lowered to keep the commonwealth competitive.

[Debra Todd sworn in as first woman chief justice of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court](#) - Debra McCloskey Todd was sworn in as chief justice of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court on Friday, the first woman elected to the post in the court's 300-year history, at a gathering in downtown Pittsburgh that was part formal ceremony, and part celebration of her career and her accomplishments.

[Pa. Gov. Josh Shapiro fills executive staff with loyal allies, political veterans](#) - Newly minted Pennsylvania Gov. Josh Shapiro is stocking his executive staff of advisors, mediators, and policy experts with political veterans and loyal allies.

[Who has Pa. Gov. Josh Shapiro nominated for his cabinet? \(Full list\)](#) - Gov. Josh Shapiro's proposed cabinet would assemble people from across the ideological spectrum who already have experience at top levels of government and public service.

[Pennsylvania's energy debate enters cautiously optimistic era](#) - Though warm feelings of bipartisanship quickly fell apart in the state House earlier this month, hope remains for a working relationship between Senate Republicans and Democratic Gov. Josh Shapiro.

[Five takeaways from Gov. Josh Shapiro's inaugural speech](#) - Gov. Josh Shapiro on Tuesday delivered an inauguration speech touching on big themes, but skirted naming any specific policy initiatives.

[Pennsylvania sets drinking water standards on two 'forever chemical' PFAS compounds](#) - The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection adopted new limits on two of the toxic class of chemicals known as PFAS.

[DEP: 47 Coal Mine Reclamation Projects Covering 977 Acres And Costing \\$123 Million Now In Active Construction](#) - On January 12, Patrick Webb, Acting Director of DEP's Bureau of Abandoned Mine Reclamation, told the Mining and Reclamation Advisory Board DEP has 47 mine reclamation projects covering 977 acres in active construction at a cost of \$123 million.

[Pa.-backed 'blue hydrogen' hub pitch passes first hurdle in race for \\$7 billion in federal funds](#) - The Pennsylvania-blessed effort to develop a "blue hydrogen" hub in the region, which would use natural gas to make the new fuel, has secured encouragement from the U.S. Department of Energy, which is overseeing a fierce competition for \$7 billion in hydrogen hub funding.

[PA State Sen. Scott Martin Elected Chair Of Interstate Chesapeake Bay Commission](#) - On January 6, Sen. Scott Martin (R-Lancaster) was elected to serve as Chairman of the Chesapeake Bay Commission in 2023 as Pennsylvania continues its work to reduce pollution in the watershed.

[Public comment opens on Youngkin administration's regulation to withdraw Virginia from RGGI](#) - Virginians can weigh in on a plan to withdraw the state from the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI), a program aiming to reduce emissions in 11 East Coast states.

[Senate bill to withdraw Virginia from carbon cap program voted down](#) - The lone Republican attempt of the 2023 General Assembly session to repeal a law allowing Virginia's participation in a regional carbon cap and invest program was killed in a Senate committee Tuesday.