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## ARIPPA PERIODIC MEDIA NEWS – 9-1-23

(News clips from the previous month)

### CFB, COAL REFUSE, ENERGY INDUSTRY

[New owner restarts West Virginia coal-fired power plant and intends to convert it to hydrogen use](#) - A West Virginia coal-fired power plant that had been targeted for deactivation was restarted Wednesday under a new owner that plans to retrofit the facility to use hydrogen to generate electricity, Gov. Jim Justice announced.

[Western PA Coalition For Abandoned Mine Reclamation Receives \\$100,000 Federal Grant To Repair Mine Drainage Treatment System In Tioga County](#) - The federal Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement has awarded a \$100,000 grant to the Western Pennsylvania Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation to repair the Arnot Mine Drainage Treatment System in Tioga County.

[American Clean Power asks FERC to hold conference on capacity accreditation](#) - The American Clean Power Association on Tuesday asked the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to hold a technical conference to explore ways to improve how grid operators and utilities measure the value power plants, energy storage and other resources provide to grid reliability.

[NERC Identifies Energy Policy as Key Risk to Grid Reliability Amid Evolving Challenges](#) - The North American Reliability Corporation (NERC) will for the first time consider “energy policy” among five significant evolving and interdependent risks to grid reliability.

[PJM Members Vote on Capacity Market Reform Proposals](#) - PJM stakeholders completed Stage 4 of the Critical Issue Fast Path – Resource Adequacy process with a vote on 18 proposals for capacity market reforms during a special meeting of the Members Committee on Aug. 23.

[Researchers say new coating could boost efficiency at coal and gas plants](#) - Researchers at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign say they’ve developed a coating for steam condensers used in steam-cycle generation that could boost process efficiency by 2% at coal- and natural gas-fired plants.

[DOJ raises market power concerns for PJM in Vistra-Energy Harbor deal](#) - Vistra’s proposed \$6.3 billion purchase of Energy Harbor assets could “substantially” reduce competition and increase wholesale electricity prices in the PJM Interconnection, the U.S. Department of Justice said Tuesday in a filing with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.

[Column: US power system gets gasier, but not much cleaner, in 2023](#) - U.S. power producers increased output of electricity from natural gas by more than from clean power sources in the opening eight months of 2023, as electricity firms grappled with low wind speeds and heavy demand from power-hungry air conditioners.

[Private equity in PJM: Growing financial risks](#) - Private capital, particularly difficult-to-track private equity (PE) investment, has reshaped the PJM power market in the past decade.

[Environmental groups sue to block Virginia’s RGGI exit](#) - Four environmental and climate groups filed a petition Monday in Fairfax Circuit Court challenging the authority of Virginia’s Air Pollution Control Board and Department of Environmental Quality to withdraw the state from the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative.

[Rare Earth Elements Could Be Extracted From Coal Waste in West Virginia](#) - Researchers in Appalachia’s coal country are exploring the possibility of transforming toxic waste into valuable resources. Abandoned coal mines have left behind pollution that contains a surplus of rare earth elements.

[Trump-era Energy secretary to lead electric utility lobby group](#) - Dan Brouillette, who led the Energy Department under former President Trump, will lead a lobbying group for electric utilities, the group said Wednesday.

[DC Circuit rejects Vistra, generator arguments in PJM capacity market dispute](#) - Power supply companies — Vistra, Constellation Energy, Calpine, LS Power Associates, Talen Energy Marketing — and others failed to show the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission made a mistake when it eliminated “default offer caps” in the PJM Interconnection’s capacity market, a federal appeals court said Tuesday.

[Few U.S. workers leaving carbon-intensive jobs move to green ones](#) - The Biden administration is touting its efforts to transition to a clean-energy economy, but a new study shows that few workers who leave industries associated with fossil fuels move to a green job — especially older employees and those without a college degree.

[Young environmental activists prevail in first-of-its-kind climate change trial in Montana](#) - Young environmental activists scored what experts described as a ground-breaking legal victory Monday when a Montana judge said state agencies were violating their constitutional right to a clean and healthful environment by allowing fossil fuel development.

[Experts eye ways to mitigate physical assaults on US power grid](#) - Industry experts offered a range of ideas for how power system planners can help bolster physical grid security during an Aug. 10 technical conference hosted by Federal Energy Regulatory Commission staff.

[6 issues to watch as climate law remakes the energy sector](#) - A year after the Biden administration’s biggest legislative coup, the Inflation Reduction Act is shifting the tectonic plates of America’s sprawling energy sector.

[Utilities say EPA power plant rule isn’t ready](#) - U.S. electric utilities told EPA on Tuesday that a proposed rule to shrink power plant carbon emissions shouldn’t be implemented yet because key emerging technologies aren’t ready, offering the latest pushback to the Biden administration’s plan.

[PJM, ERCOT, SPP and MISO Join Together on Comments on EPA Emissions Rule](#) - On August 8, PJM joined MISO, ERCOT and SPP in submitting comments in response to a proposed EPA rule on New Source Performance Standards for Greenhouse Gas Emissions.

[Coal Use Hits Record High Despite Clean Energy Boom](#) - For years, climate experts have been begging the world’s biggest economies to wean themselves off of fossil fuels. Instead, coal use is at an all time high, hitting a brand new record of 8.3 billion metric tons in 2022, up 3.3% from the prior year, according to figures from the International Energy Agency (IEA).

[FERC interconnection rule may not speed process in much of US: experts](#) - Many transmission providers already use a cluster study approach, the just-issued rule’s central reform, lawyers and industry experts say.

[FERC weighs including Texas in new interconnection rules for power grids](#) - Two years after Winter Storm Uri knocked out power to millions and killed hundreds of Texans, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission is weighing whether to institute tough new rules that could force power grids in Texas and other states to connect with one another to reduce the chance of a large-scale blackout.

[FirstEnergy investigated by Ohio organized crime commission over bribes on energy bill](#) - FirstEnergy has received a subpoena from the Ohio Organized Crime Investigations Commission related to the company’s bribery scandal, Brian Tierney, the company’s new president and CEO said Wednesday during an earnings conference call.

[US POWER TRACKER: PJM Gas-fired power output up on year, power forwards decline](#) - Natural gas-fired generation continues to surge in PJM Interconnection, rising more than 8% and reaching record levels in July, while forward power prices declined 64% on year and forward gas prices declined 77%.

[Restart delayed at Texas coal unit linked to Petra Nova CCS project](#) - A coal-fired unit at a Texas power station, expected to host a carbon capture project that was shuttered in 2020, will return to service in late August, months later than originally planned, the utility NRG said on Tuesday.

## LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY ISSUES: FEDERAL

[DOE offers \\$300M to boost transmission siting and permitting, support affected communities](#) - The U.S. Department of Energy is offering up to \$300 million for states, tribes and local governments to bolster transmission siting and permitting processes while supporting economic development.

[After Supreme Court curtails federal power, Biden administration weakens clean water protections](#) - The Biden administration weakened regulations protecting millions of acres of wetlands Tuesday, saying it had no choice after the Supreme Court sharply limited the federal government's jurisdiction over them.

[NASA Shares First Images from US Pollution-Monitoring Instrument](#) - On Thursday, NASA released the first data maps from its new instrument launched to space earlier this year, which now is successfully transmitting information about major air pollutants over North America.

[‘Drill, frack, burn coal’: Republicans echo Trump at presidential debate](#) - Former President Donald Trump might not have been at Wednesday's Republican presidential debate, but his energy policy and rejection of climate science took center stage.

[Biden-Harris Administration Announces \\$30 Million to Build Up Domestic Supply Chain for Critical Mineral](#) - In support of President Biden's Investing in America agenda, the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) today announced up to \$30 million to help lower the costs of the onshore production of rare earths and other critical minerals and materials from domestic coal-based resources.

[EPA punts ozone standard review](#) - EPA is restarting review of a high-stakes decision on ground-level ozone standards in a step that short-circuits the prospects for any imminent action to tighten limits on the lung-damaging pollutant.

[Joe Manchin vows ‘unrelenting fight’ against US climate law he helped pass](#) - The Democratic West Virginia senator Joe Manchin marked the first anniversary of a major US climate crisis law he helped pass by saying he would mount an “unrelenting fight against the Biden administration's efforts to implement the IRA as a radical climate agenda”.

[DOE proposes 2-year reviews for transmission projects on federal land](#) - The Department of Energy on Thursday proposed a two-year review process for interstate transmission projects on federal land, a move renewable energy trade groups supported.

[DOE Invests Over \\$13 Million for Projects That Capture Carbon Emissions from Industrial Facilities, Power Plants, Air, and Oceans](#) - The U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) Office of Fossil Energy and Carbon Management (FECM) today announced 23 projects to receive a total of more than \$13 million in funding supporting research and development (R&D) for carbon management technologies and applications that will reduce carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions to address the impacts of climate change.

[FERC strains to get big transmission plan moving](#) - After approving changes to help connect wind and solar to the grid, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission faces another daunting task: getting more power lines built.

[EPA smog plan takes hold — with a big asterisk](#) - A high-stakes EPA bid to tackle the nation's smog problem anew took effect Friday. Sort of.

[Billions for clean energy caught in a partisan tug of war](#) - The next few months will be critical for the success or failure of the biggest environmental program in last year's climate, tax and health care law: the \$27 billion Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund.

[Key Republican casts doubt on bipartisan permitting deal over dispute with White House](#) - A dispute between Republicans and the White House over environmental policy could throw a wrench into ongoing talks about how to reform the nation's infrastructure.

[FERC Adopts 'Historic' Reforms to Ease Nationwide Generation Interconnection Backlog](#) - The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) has approved key transmission reforms aimed at clearing a staggering backlog of more than 10,000 generation and storage projects—more than 2,000 GW—stalled in interconnection queues across the country.

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

[PUC Elects Commissioner Kim Barrow as Vice Chair](#) - Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission (PUC) Chairman Stephen M. DeFrank today announced the commissioners' election of Kim Barrow as vice chair of the PUC, effective immediately.

[Pennsylvania's Senate returns for an unusual August session and a budget stalemate](#) - Pennsylvania's Republican-controlled Senate reconvened Wednesday for an unusual August session mired in a two-month budget stalemate with the Democratic-controlled House.

[DEP Expands Environmental Justice Protections With Updated Policy, Improved Mapping Tool; Enhanced Permit Reviews Start Sept. 16](#) - On August 29, the Shapiro Administration announced it will adopt an updated Environmental Justice (EJ) Policy, which expands environmental safeguards throughout the Commonwealth, a milestone in updating a 20-year-old policy the Department of Environmental Protection has used to guide protections for communities most vulnerable to environmental challenges.

[Legislators from Pennsylvania, Ohio Testify Before PJM Board of Managers](#) - Pennsylvania State Sen. Gene Yaw (R-23), Chair of the Environmental Resources and Energy Committee and Ohio State Rep. Dick Stein (R-54), Chair of the Public Utilities Committee, were among the testifiers at this week's PJM Board of Managers Critical Issue Fast Path (CIFP) – Resource Adequacy Stage 4 meeting.

[Jennifer Berrier Appointed as PUC Executive Director](#) - The Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission (PUC) today announced the appointment of Jennifer Berrier, of Harrisburg, as executive director for the PUC, effective September 11, 2023.

[Rare earth minerals could bring new industry to Pennsylvania](#) - The House Republican Policy Committee is bringing light to reclaiming land and the use of rare earth minerals to bring jobs and revenue to local economies.

[Pennsylvania Battle Over Climate-Warming Crypto Mines Intensifies](#) - Legislation aims to rein in an unregulated industry with ballooning environmental effects.

[Business leaders, lawmakers hope for bipartisan action on permitting reform](#) - Leaders from the Pennsylvania Chamber of Business and Industry and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce partnered with two state senators on Tuesday to push for state-level permitting reforms, making the case that a streamlined and more transparent permitting process will keep more businesses and workers in the state and ultimately pay dividends for the state's economy.

[Pa. participation in RGGI has been held up for more than a year. What has the state lost?](#) - Former Gov. Tom Wolf's signature climate program has been on hold for more than a year.

[National Climate Litigation Campaign Targets Pennsylvania, Faces Uphill Battle](#) - A wealthy national anti-fossil fuel organization that recruits municipal and state plaintiffs to file lawsuits against energy companies for the effects of climate change now appears to have its sights on Pennsylvania, America's second largest natural gas producing state.

[DEP Publishes Final Chapter 105 Environmental Assessment Alternatives Analysis Technical Guidance](#) - On August 5, the Department of Environmental Protection published the final Chapter 105 Environmental Assessment Alternatives Analysis technical guidance related to projects impacting waterways and wetlands in Pennsylvania.

[Documents Reveal New Details about Pennsylvania Governor's Secret Working Group on Greenhouse Gas Emissions](#) - Materials released under the state's Right to Know Act underline the political balancing act facing Gov. Josh Shapiro as he solicits views on the state's membership in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative. But many are unhappy with the secrecy surrounding his advisory "working group."