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ARIPPA PERIODIC MEDIA NEWS – 2-2-26

(News clips from the previous month)

CFB, COAL REFUSE, ENERGY INDUSTRY

[NERC Warns Long-Term Grid Reliability Risks Mounting from Surging Demand, Lagging Resources](#) - The North American electric grid faces intensifying reliability risks over the next decade as demand growth driven by data centers and artificial intelligence threatens to outpace resource additions, according to the 2025 Long-Term Reliability Assessment (LTRA) released Jan. 29 by the North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC).

[Coal-fired generation rose to meet demand during Winter Storm Fern](#) - In the week ending January 25, 2026, as Winter Storm Fern affected significant portions of the country, coal-fired electricity generation in the Lower 48 states increased 31% from the previous week.

[PJM Begins Discussion on Creating a Backstop Auction](#) - Interim PJM President and CEO David Mills opened a conversation with stakeholders Jan. 22 about how PJM will approach directives from the PJM Board of Managers, the White House and the 13 governors in the PJM footprint to design and implement a backstop auction in the near term.

[Frigid weather stresses US electric grid](#) - U.S. electric grid operators on Saturday stepped up precautions to avoid rotating blackouts, as frigid weather hitting half of the country's population stressed their operations.

[PJM cost concerns bleed into transmission planning](#) - The PJM Interconnection's board should reject a proposal from NextEra Energy and Exelon to build a \$1.7-billion transmission line across central Pennsylvania, partly due to the uncertainty around data center demand forecasts, according to the Pennsylvania ratepayer advocate.

[America's next big critical minerals source could be coal mine pollution – if we can agree on who owns it](#) - Across Appalachia, rust-colored water seeps from abandoned coal mines, staining rocks orange and coating stream beds with metals.

[Appeals court vacates FERC decision on PJM capacity results for Delmarva zone](#) - Following an appeals court ruling Tuesday, Maryland's ratepayer advocate and others will have a second chance to overturn a decision by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission that led to a surge in capacity costs for part of the PJM Interconnection.

[2025 Year in Review: Planning Prepares for Burgeoning Electricity Demand](#) - The 2025 Long-Term Load Forecast set the stage for the year's focus on planning for an unprecedented increase in electricity demand, driven primarily by the proliferation of data centers in the PJM footprint, while maintaining an adequate power supply.

[Utilities under pressure: 6 power sector trends to watch in 2026](#) - 2026 will be a year of reckoning for the electric power industry.

[Data centers were 40% of PJM capacity costs in last auction: market monitor](#) - Data center load accounted for \$6.5 billion, or 40%, of the \$16.4 billion in costs from the PJM Interconnection's December capacity auction, according to the grid operator's independent market monitor.

[Constellation Completes Calpine Transaction, Powering America's Clean Energy Future](#) - Constellation (Nasdaq: CEG) today announced it has completed its acquisition of Calpine Corporation from Energy Capital Partners (ECP), creating the nation's largest producer of electricity.

[2025 in Review: PJM Market Rules Support Efficiency, Resource Adequacy](#) - Competitive PJM markets procure electricity supplies needed in real time and in the future. In 2025, PJM collaborated with its stakeholders to consider and act upon modifications needed to keep pace with the changing grid and ensure that reliable electricity continues to be delivered cost-effectively.

[Vistra Adds to its Industry-Leading Generation Portfolio with Acquisition of Cogentrix](#) - Vistra Corp. (NYSE: VST) today announced it has executed definitive agreements to acquire Cogentrix Energy, consisting of 10 modern natural gas generation facilities totaling approximately 5,500 MW of capacity.

[Meeting the Moment: Industry Leaders Chart the Course for Power in 2026](#) - From artificial intelligence-driven efficiency to transmission bottlenecks, power industry insiders share their perspectives on the opportunities and obstacles shaping 2026 and beyond.

[The Age of Electricity and 5 Other Forces Reshaping the Global Energy Outlook](#) - IEA's World Energy Outlook 2025 shows the global power system entering the "Age of Electricity," with demand accelerating faster than grids, reshaping fuel mixes, investment flows, and energy security priorities.

[Why Gecko Robotics leaned into artificial intelligence](#) - Earlier this year, a Massachusetts Institute of Technology study found that 95% of companies leaning into generative AI saw zero return on investment, despite spending as much as \$40 billion on the nascent technology.

LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY ISSUES: FEDERAL

[A Secret Panel to Question Climate Science Was Unlawful, Judge Rules](#) - A federal judge on Friday ruled the Energy Department violated the law when Secretary Chris Wright handpicked five researchers who reject the scientific consensus on climate change to work in secret on a sweeping government report on global warming.

[FERC in 2026: Rising costs cloud regulators' options on data centers, transmission and more](#) - The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission faces a challenging year as it comes under pressure from the Trump administration to accelerate data center development amid rising concerns about energy affordability and grid reliability.

[Republican, Democratic senators call for project certainty at permitting reform hearing](#) - Senators on Wednesday touted their desire to advance permitting reforms, but a key Democrat said progress hinges on the Trump administration ending its moves to halt renewable energy development, including for projects that are fully permitted and being built.

[DOE expands use of emergency orders amid winter freeze](#) - The snow and ice of Winter Storm Fern have passed, but utilities and grid operators are still struggling to meet higher electric demand amid a prolonged cold snap in parts of the country.

[Winter peak demand could hit new highs, prompting DOE emergency orders](#) - The U.S. Department of Energy on Saturday and Sunday issued a series of emergency orders intended to help grid operators in New England, Texas and the Mid-Atlantic meet higher anticipated electricity demand during and after Winter Storm Fern.

[DOE orders diesel generators to be ready as electric sector prepares for Winter Storm Fern](#) - Secretary of Energy Chris Wright asked grid operators to be prepared to utilize up to 35 GW of backup generation. A consumer advocate warned the plan is unworkable.

[FERC commissioners see progress in PJM data center, power supply plans](#) - Federal Energy Regulatory Commission members on Thursday said they saw progress in recently proposed frameworks for ensuring the PJM Interconnection has adequate power supplies and protects consumers from rising utility costs.

[Trump signs bill increasing DOE's wind and solar spending by \\$250M](#) - The White House asked that the Department of Energy's Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy solar and wind energy programs not be funded, but Congress provided \$320 million total.

[Trump administration pushes PJM to hold 'emergency' auction to supply data centers](#) - The Trump administration and a bipartisan group of governors on Friday asked the country's largest wholesale electricity market to hold a one-time "emergency" auction to provide data centers with new sources of power.

[Lawmakers propose \\$2.5B agency to boost production of rare earths and other critical minerals](#) - A bipartisan group of lawmakers have proposed creating a new agency with \$2.5 billion to spur production of rare earths and the other critical minerals, while the Trump administration has already taken aggressive actions to break China's grip on the market for these materials that are crucial to high-tech products, including cellphones, electric vehicles, jet fighters and missiles.

[After a year of uncertainty, federal mine safety research employees in Pa. get good news](#) - Hundreds of federal employees at the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) received an email Tuesday notifying them they're no longer subject to layoffs announced last spring.

[EPA denies reports it will no longer consider harm to humans in pollution regulation: 'BS headline'](#) - Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Lee Zeldin denied a report from The New York Times that his department will no longer consider the cost to human life incurred from two pollutants when making regulatory decisions.

[EPA final rule on NOx limits emphasizes cost savings to turbine owners](#) - The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency on Friday issued a final rule on nitrogen oxide standards for new gas-fired power plants and other stationary turbines.

[EPA proposes limiting power of states and tribes to block major projects over water concerns](#) - The Environmental Protection Agency on Tuesday proposed limiting states' and Native American tribes' power to wield the Clean Water Act to block major projects like natural gas pipelines, advancing the Trump administration's goal of accelerating the construction of new fossil fuel infrastructure and data centers.

[Trump administration unlawfully cut clean energy grants, court rules](#) - The Trump administration violated the Fifth Amendment when it canceled clean energy grants last year based on whether the projects were located in states that voted for the president in 2024, a federal court judge ruled on Monday.

[Federal budget bill would raid fund for cleaning up abandoned coal mines](#) - A bill aimed at averting another government shutdown this month would divert \$500 million for states and tribal governments to repair landscapes damaged by coal mining.

[Senate bill exempts fully isolated large loads from FERC, DOE regulation](#) - Fully off-grid power suppliers would be exempt from Federal Power Act and U.S. Department of Energy regulations under a bill introduced Thursday by Sen. Tom Cotton, R-Ark.

[Trump moves to pull US out of bedrock global climate treaty, becoming first country to do so](#) - The Trump administration is pulling the United States out of the bedrock treaty that underpins international cooperation on climate change, along with dozens of other global bodies, according to a memorandum released by the White House Wednesday evening and an accompanying social media post.

LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY ISSUES: STATE

[Governor Shapiro Responds to PJM, Calls for Extension of Price Collar to Protect Consumers and Build Lasting PJM Reform](#) - Today, Governor Josh Shapiro submitted (opens in a new tab) a formal response to PJM Interconnection's call for feedback, urging the PJM Board to protect consumers by extending the existing price floor and ceiling — known as the "price collar" — for the 2028/29 and 2029/30 capacity auctions, as PJM undertakes a holistic market review in 2026.

[DEP Eliminates Longstanding Permitting Backlog In 2025, Launches New Bureau of Permitting Coordination](#) - On January 27, the Department of Environmental Protection announced it had reviewed and acted on more than 40,000 permit applications and conducted more than 116,000 inspections of regulated facilities in 2025, capping a historic year for permitting efficiency and reform.

[Spanberger, Democratic lawmakers are pressing for Virginia to rejoin RGGI. Here's how it would work.](#) - In her first address to the joint General Assembly, Gov. Abigail Spanberger stated that Virginia will rejoin the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, or RGGI.

[Shapiro Administration Invests More Than \\$17 Million for Conservation Projects Across Pennsylvania](#) - The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is investing \$17,325,163 for 89 projects across Pennsylvania that will restore streams, improve fish and wildlife habitat, and reclaim mine lands.

[Pennsylvania lawmakers hold hearing on how to make energy more affordable](#) - The Pennsylvania House Energy and Consumer Protection committees held a joint hearing focused on rising energy costs and how the General Assembly can help make electricity more affordable for consumers on Tuesday.

[House Appropriations Chairman Jim Struzzi Submits Comments Supporting Key-Con Consent Decree, Urges Approval to Protect Jobs and Grid Reliability](#) - House Appropriations Committee Republican Chairman Jim Struzzi (R-Indiana) today submitted public comments in strong support of the proposed Consent Decree between the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and Keystone-Conemaugh Projects, LLC (Key-Con), operator of the Keystone and Conemaugh Generating Stations.

[PJM tells West Virginia lawmakers new transmission lines needed for power growth](#) - Officials with PJM Interconnection told West Virginia lawmakers Tuesday that major new electric transmission lines will be necessary if the state is to significantly expand power generation and attract new industry, aligning with Gov. Patrick Morrisey's long-term energy goals.

[Sen. Gene Yaw Elected Chair Of Interstate Chesapeake Bay Commission](#) - On January 9, Sen. Gene Yaw (R-Lycoming) was elected to chair the tri-state Chesapeake Bay Commission for 2026.

[Pa. Supreme Court dismisses appeals to revive RGGI carbon credit program](#) - The Pennsylvania Supreme Court on Tuesday ended appeals of a lower court's ruling that the commonwealth's participation in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative was illegal.

[As Pa. energy prices rise, advocates skeptical that lawmakers will put aside partisan differences](#) - Democrats and Republicans who lead the Pennsylvania legislature have singled out increasing energy production as a goal for the year, as electricity prices rise and demand increases.

[Pennsylvania, Ohio Officials Meet to Discuss PJM Market Outlook](#) - In a collaborative effort to strengthen regional energy planning, market coordination and grid reliability, Pennsylvania Sen. Gene Yaw (R-23), Ohio Sen. Brian Chavez (R-30) and Ohio Rep. Adam Holmes (R-97) convened with PJM Interconnection leadership last month to discuss the evolving electricity market landscape.

[New year, old challenges as AI faces uncertain path to power](#) - Pennsylvania's electrical grid sits at a critical crossroads, buckling under the pressure of rising demand with not enough supply or time to stabilize it.

[Pennsylvania's power plan battles rage on in 2026](#) - Officials in Pennsylvania spent much of 2025 grappling with ways to modernize the state's energy mix while preparing for a surge of new demand.