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Energy Events

[Ag Progress Days](#)

Aug 12-14, Rock Springs, PA

[Climate Change Advisory Committee](#)

The committee's August 12 meeting has been cancelled. The CCAC will next meet on Sept. 16.

News Clips

[Tax Extenders: A Harbinger for Tax Reform?](#)

[A revenue-neutral carbon tax is a win for consumers](#)

[Gas industry survey shows job growth slowing](#)

[Our Opinion: Is Pennsylvania's 'energy revolution' shaping up as you expected?](#)

[PA earns international energy recognition](#)

[U.S. Department of Energy seeks to curb methane emissions from gas infrastructure](#)

House Cancels Mid-Summer Session

House GOP leaders announced Thursday that they will not return to Session next week to vote on a bill that would enable Philadelphia to increase its cigarette tax as a means to funding its public schools, nor to address pension issues.

The House and Senate not now slated to return until September 15, one week after the start of the school year. In the background, behind the decision were a large group of Representatives who were unwilling to vote for any tax increases, others who were holding out support pending other issues in the legislation, and even a few who advised leaders they were unwilling to forego scheduled vacations with families.

Earlier in the week, House Majority Whip Stan Saylor (R-York) had said he and fellow York County Representative Seth Grove would oppose the bill unless provisions for hotel room tax increases to generate tourism dollars and the City Revitalization and Improvement Zone (CRIZ) expansions were included. The Speaker had called those provisions issues which require more in depth discussion.

And of course, as is often the case, several others said they would oppose the bill if those provisions were included. It was unlikely that the bill could have gotten the 102 votes necessary for passage without amendments.

Philadelphia school officials said that the schools will not be able to open safely without the ability to generate additional revenue through the cigarette tax increase, noting that they would begin sending layoff notices to teachers unless the legislature passed the tax – expected to raise about \$83 million – before August 15. House Speaker Sam Smith and Majority Leader Mike Turzai asked Governor Corbett to advance funds to the School District of Philadelphia to ensure an on-time opening.

The House GOP leaders also said a vote on a public pension overhaul proposal is expected the chamber returns to session this fall.

Corbett, Officials Join Coal Industry to Rally against EPA Regulations

On Wednesday Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Corbett, West Virginia Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin and Ohio Lt. Gov. Mary Taylor joined more than 2,000 coal industry union workers and others from those states to rally against proposed stricter federal pollution regulations for coal-burning power plants.

The Rally to Support American Energy came just one day before the Environmental Protection Agency began two days of public hearings in Pittsburgh to discuss the proposed rules. Corbett and others at the rally argued that the rules will hurt jobs and increase electric costs, while the Obama administration has argued that rules are necessary to cut carbon emissions that pose a threat to human health, the environment, and long term financial goals.

“We don’t have the technology today to be able to burn the coal they way that they’re proposing,” said Tomblin. “We’re just simply asking that they back off, work with the states, so that we can come to a compromise, so we can keep you coal miners working, so we can keep this country working.”

Pennsylvania is the fourth-largest coal-producing state in the country. Corbett argued that “clean coal” technologies already developed by energy companies should be given a chance to further cut pollution. “What are we supposed to do? Abandon it?” Corbett said of clean coal. “I don’t think so.”

Organized by the Pennsylvania Coal Alliance, the American Coalition for Clean Coal Electricity and the National Miners Association, the rally drew employees of companies such as Consol Energy as well as rank-and-file miners, steamfitters and boilermakers who contend the new regulations will shut down coal-fired plants and cost them jobs.

The EPA also held hearings in Atlanta, Denver and Washington this week.

Coal and Environmental Advocates Clash at EPA Hearing

EPA’s hearings in Pittsburgh Thursday and Friday on a proposed rule to cut greenhouse gas emissions from power plants were quiet but forceful inside, but led to loud confrontations outside the building.

What is everyone arguing about? The proposal would require a 32 percent reduction of carbon pollution from Pennsylvania power plants by 2030 from 2012 levels. About three-quarters of all carbon dioxide emissions in the power sector come from burning coal. A study produced by the EPA shows that an emissions reduction of 30 percent of 2005 levels by 2030 would lead to coal production decline in Appalachia, but would lead to overall economic benefit, mainly through growth in other energy sectors such as natural gas.

And the Obama Administration has moved forward with regulations on electric generation emissions that have been labeled either “job killing” or “lifesaving,” depending on the point of view of the observer.

The plan faces serious opposition from the coal industry along with the many Republicans and coal-state Democrats. On the other side, environmental groups welcome the rule but say it doesn’t go far enough.

Following the rally noted above, protesters on both sides remained in Pittsburgh this week leading to several arrests. During a lunch break on Thursday, hundreds of protesters fresh from a clean-air rally with Pittsburgh Mayor Bill Peduto confronted thousands of union workers marching through what Allegheny County Labor Council President Jack Shea told them is a “union city.”

Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection Deputy Secretary Vincent Brisini testified before the EPA that “Pennsylvania does support efforts to reduce carbon dioxide emissions. We believe, however, that it must be done in a lawful manner that results in cleaner air, more jobs and lower energy prices.” Brisini also noted that “These decisions should be made by elected officials.”

West Virginia lawmaker Cindy Frich said she felt the rule was a threat to her state, noting that, “We’re already having problems with our state budget. I really see problems ahead if these rules are implemented.”

Supporters of the rule made cases surrounding job impacts in non-coal industries, health concerns from doctors and the general public, environmental issues, and long-term economic viability.

Former Toledo, Ohio city council member Frank Szollosi testified about an Ohio water plant had to close because of Lake Erie algae blooms caused by warmer weather and heavier rains flushing nutrients into the lake.

Some testified that the EPA must consider the negative impacts on agriculture, Pennsylvania’s largest industry. Others testified that Pennsylvania’s wildlife, tourism, and game and fishing industries are being harmed by pollution, noting the destruction of 35 percent of the state’s brook trout habitat, decreases ruffed grouse, and other wildlife staples.

Under the EPA proposed rule, each state would have the ability to come up with their own plan to cut carbon emissions using combinations of renewables, natural gas, nuclear, and energy efficiency measures. Deputy Secretary Brisini said of the EPA’s state level requirements that “any purported flexibility is illusory.”

More 400 people were slated to testify at the two day hearing, which continued Friday. The EPA is accepting written comments on the proposal through October, and its deadline for a final version of the rule is June of 2015.

More Information:

[DEP Written Testimony](#)

[EPA Carbon Pollution Standards](#)

[Protests, Arrests at EPA Hearings in Pittsburgh](#)

Federal Regulators to Hold Meetings on Proposed Pipeline

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, the agency that regulates interstate pipelines, has announced four public meetings throughout Pennsylvania next week to discuss a proposed expansion of the Transco natural gas pipeline system. FERC will also conduct an environmental impact statement on the project and is accepting public comments through August 18th.

Oklahoma-based Williams Partners operates the Transco system, which has over 10,000 miles of existing pipeline. As part of a \$3 billion project called Atlantic Sunrise, Williams is proposing 177 miles through Pennsylvania of new pipeline to connect Marcellus Shale gas to markets along the East Coast.

If approved by FERC, the pipeline would run through 10 Pennsylvania counties, including

Columbia, Lancaster, Lebanon, Luzerne, Northumberland, Schuylkill, Susquehanna, Wyoming, Clinton and Lycoming.

All of the meetings will be from 7 to 10pm. Williams representatives will be available at an open house from 6-7pm, prior to the FERC meeting:

- Monday, August 4: Lancaster County, Millersville University
- Tuesday, August 5: Lebanon County, Lebanon Valley College
- Wednesday, August 6: Columbia County, Bloomsburg University
- Thursday, August 7: Luzerne County, Lake Lehman High School

Kane's Office to Probe Handling of Fracking-Related Medical Complaints

State environmental activists said Tuesday that the Attorney General's Office has told them it will look into how state officials handled complaints by residents on the possible health impacts of natural gas drilling.

Sam Bernhardt, an organizer for the advocacy group Food & Water Watch, said an agent from the office's Environmental Crimes Unit asked him for contact information for individuals who contend the Department of Health never responded to their inquiries about symptoms they believed were related to natural gas drilling. Attorney General's Office spokesman J.J. Abbott declined to comment.

The Health Department and the Department of Environmental Protection have come under fire in recent months by some critics who believe they have not done enough to protect residents from potentially harmful effects of natural gas drilling. [More...](#)

PPL Electric Proposes Major New Regional Transmission Project

PPL Electric Utilities Corporation has announced plans to build a major new regional transmission line that it says would make electric service more reliable and enhance the security of the electric grid while reducing the cost of electricity for consumers.

PPL submitted the project to PJM Interconnection as part of the competitive solicitation process. As currently proposed, the 500-kilovolt line would run about 725 miles from western PA into New York and New Jersey, and also south into Maryland. By delivering lower-cost electricity into the region, and by enabling the development of new power plants fueled by lower-cost and cleaner-burning natural gas, the project is expected to create savings for millions of electric customers in several states.

The project is in the preliminary planning stages. The company has begun a comprehensive regional planning effort to determine the best route and final details of the proposed line. PPL said if approved and built as proposed, the line would help replace supplies of electricity that will be lost when existing power plants retire.

Massachusetts Passes Bill to Boost Renewable Energy, Increase Net Metering Caps

In the final hours of its legislative session, the Massachusetts legislature passed legislation to create a thermal energy REC program in the Commonwealth, lift the caps on the Commonwealth's existing net metering regime and appoint a 17-member "Net Metering Task Force" to study the "future of net metering." [More...](#)

New Report: Golden Opportunity of Atlantic Offshore Wind Power Finally Within Reach

Over 1.5 million acres off the Atlantic coast already designated for wind energy development could generate over 16,000 megawatts of electricity (MW), enough to power over five million homes, according to a new report from the National Wildlife Federation released in July with the support of over 40 cosponsoring organizations and leaders from business, labor, state, and local governments. Catching the Wind: State Actions Needed to Seize the Golden Opportunity of Atlantic Offshore Wind Power. This also contains a new analysis showing how the strong, consistent winds offshore can provide power to coastal states right when we need it most, bringing down energy costs and local pollution. [More...](#)

Federal News

Energy Secretary Visits Southwest Pennsylvania

The topic of grid reliability and natural gas infrastructure was the focus of a special program at Carnegie Mellon University on July 21, featuring Secretary of Energy Dr. Ernest Moniz and Congressman Tim Murphy. The program was held as part of DOE's Quadrennial Energy Review, which is included in the President's Climate Action Plan. The meeting in Pittsburgh was one of more than a dozen to be held across the country to gather recommendations on infrastructure improvements.

"Pennsylvania...highlight(s) one of the very important features of this shale gas and oil revolution, namely that we are seeing booming production in areas that, at least not in the recent past, have been major centers of production," Mr. Moniz said. "With that comes infrastructure challenges that have to catch up with a whole bunch of issues that come with gas and oil flowing in very different directions from source to market."

Murphy discussed natural gas pipeline challenges at the CMU energy forum. With Pennsylvania now the nation's second-largest natural gas producer, Rep. Murphy said the Marcellus Shale has the potential to reinvigorate the country's economy and improve our leverage in global affairs. For example, Russia has notoriously exercised political influence in Ukraine by stopping the flow of natural gas to the country during the winter months. But the US has to be able to get the gas to consumers, industrial users, and foreign markets.

"The major areas that we need natural gas, in particular is for exports, manufacturing, thermal electricity and energy production and transportation," said Murphy.

Murphy said regulatory delays within the Department of Energy have hindered the ability to move natural gas efficiently within the US and help to meet domestic demand. This past year, the House of Representatives passed the Natural Gas Pipeline Permitting Reform Act (H.R. 1900), which Rep. Murphy co-sponsored. The legislation accelerates the construction of new natural gas pipelines by modernizing the permitting process and removing needless bureaucratic delays without impacting safety. The Natural Gas Pipeline Permitting Reform Act is one of more than 330 House-passed bills awaiting action in the Senate.

Natural Gas Going Global

The Obama administration this week gave the thumbs up to two liquefied natural gas export facilities in a 24 hour time span. The Energy Department conditionally approved the Oregon LNG terminal, authorizing it to export up to 1.25 billion standard cubic feet per day of natural gas for 20 years to non-Free Trade Agreement countries. That means it can export to the Ukraine and other Eastern European destinations. On Wednesday, a

Texas project became the third export facility to gain complete federal approval. The project already had a green light from the Energy Department to export LNG to non-free trade agreement countries, but the go-ahead from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission was the final step.

Grassley Files Amendments to Restore Wind, Biodiesel Tax Credits

Sen. Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa) has proposed amendments that would restore the tax credits for wind energy and biodiesel production. Both measures would amend the Bring Jobs Home Act, which seeks to discourage outsourcing jobs by ending certain tax credits. The wind and biodiesel incentives expired last year.

“Renewable energy supports thousands of jobs and generates billions of dollars in investment across the country,” Grassley said in a statement. “If the Senate truly wants to create and retain jobs, restoring clean energy tax incentives should be at the top of the list.”

Both credits were in a package of tax measures that failed in the Senate in May. It is not expected that Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.) will allow any amendments to be considered.

EPA Delays Renewable Fuel Compliance Deadline Again

For the third time this year, the EPA has delayed the deadline for gasoline and diesel refiners to blend renewable fuels into their products. The agency announced this week that the new deadline for companies to show compliance with the 2013 blending mandates will be 30 days after the EPA finalizes the 2014 mandate. In a statement EPA said the action is being taken because “we are taking the time to get them right”. EPA is struggling to complete 2014’s standards that would trigger a decrease for ethanol and stay flat for biodiesel – something that has come as a relief for the petroleum industry and to the ire of renewable fuel advocates and corn farmers.

Funding Opportunities

DEP Extends Alternative Fuel Vehicle Rebate Program

The Department of Environmental Protection has announced an extension for the Alternative Fuel Vehicle Rebate program, which will continue to provide \$2,000 rebates for 500 additional large-battery system plug-in hybrid electric and battery-electric vehicles, or until Dec. 31.

Large-battery vehicles that have battery system capacities equal or greater than 10 kilowatt hours (kWh), including models such as the Nissan Leaf, Ford Focus, BMW, Tesla and Chevy Volt, are eligible for the highest rebate amount of \$2,000. DEP is also extending rebates of \$1,000 for plug-in hybrid electric vehicles and battery-electric vehicles with battery system capacities of less than 10 kWh, including models such as the Toyota Prius plug-in, Ford C-Max Energi, Ford Fusion and Honda Accord.

Rebates of \$1,000 are being extended for natural gas, propane, hydrogen or fuel-cell vehicles, such as the CNG powered Honda Civic or any 2014 CNG powered car or pickup truck. CNG original equipment, manufacturer retrofits or certified conversions to CNG or propane are also eligible for the \$1,000 rebate. A \$500 rebate is available for electric motorcycles and scooters.

DEP provides these rebates as incentives to assist Pennsylvanians with the incremental cost of purchasing an alternative fuel vehicle. To qualify, the vehicle must be registered in Pennsylvania, operated primarily in-state and be purchased no more than six months before the rebate application is submitted. The rebates are funded by the Alternative Fuels Incentive Grant Program, which is supported by a gross receipts tax on utilities. Rebate applications and updated guidelines are available on DEP's website, www.dep.state.pa.us, keyword: Alternative Fuel Vehicle Rebates.

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