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LEGISLATIVE ROUNDUP

STATE

State Senator Doug Mastriano (R-Adams) introduced **Senate Bill 524** this past Spring that aims to stabilize energy costs for Pennsylvanians. Among other things, the bill would require legislative approval for any new regulations affecting the natural gas and coal industries; exempt Pennsylvania from certain EPA regulations that would lead to the closure of coal-fired power plants; and immediately suspend the state's participation in the RGGI program. The bill has been referred to the Senate Environmental Resources and Energy Committee. While the legislation could potentially pass the Senate, it will likely lack support in the Democratic-controlled House.

State Senator Vitali (D-Delaware), chairman of the House Environmental & Natural Resource Protection Committee is planning to hold a hearing on subsidizing the remediation of waste coal piles at 10:00 AM on August 11, 2025. The purpose of this meeting is to educate members on waste coal, such as why waste coal is a problem and what problems are caused by waste coal. However, we anticipate that the hearing will focus heavily on the coal refuse reclamation to energy industry and particularly the support they receive from the Coal Refuse Energy and Reclamation Tax Credit and the Alternative Energy Portfolio Standards (AEPS) program.

ARIPPA will be testifying on behalf of the industry should the hearing go forward. They'll focus their testimony on the environmental and economic benefits of the ARIPPA plants by highlighting the findings of their latest Econsult Solutions report. They requested a letter of support for the work that the industry does. We sent that to Sen. Vitali last week.

FEDERAL

House Bills.

House Passes Senate Amended Budget Plan

By a 216-214 vote, the U.S. House of Representatives approved the U.S. Senate's amendments to the budget resolution that was passed by the House. This allows Republicans to advance tax reform legislation under the budget reconciliation process to avoid needing 60 votes to pass the measure in the Senate. The final budget resolution extends key provisions of the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act and includes a \$5 trillion increase to the federal debt limit. It also calls for at least \$4 billion in spending cuts and authorizes increased investments in defense and immigration enforcement. Lawmakers will now begin the challenging work of crafting a reconciliation bill that can gain approval from both the House and Senate. Specific to our community, 319 proposed funding was zeroed out as it was in the President's proposal.

Senate Bills

Senate Passes Budget Plan

The Senate Appropriations Committee held a markup on its Interior appropriations bill a few weeks ago. As expected, the cuts proposed by the Senate were not as severe as the ones proposed by the House. Specific to our concerns, the Senate Bill proposes funding of about \$175M nationwide for EPA to fund Section 319 work. This work includes operations funding for EP/WPCAMR and various 319 projects in the state. So, unlike the House Bill, 319 funding is not zeroed out in the Senate Bill. This is encouraging for the future of the *PCAMRs operational funding and for future 319-funded AML/AMD work however, we aren't sure of what portion of the \$175M will go to PA. If we find out that WPCAMR's 319 funding will be cut significantly or totally, we may have to look at funding sources from AMR/Philanthropy/other sources for operations funding for the future.

Lawmakers will now begin the challenging work of crafting a reconciliation bill that can gain approval from both the House and Senate. However, the minority party will need to have members sign on to any budget proposal if it intends to pass.

Some have said that the likely scenario will be the passing of a continuing resolution. But, the majority party doesn't want to have funding at the level of the previous administration and is trying to get consensus so a continuing resolution won't be passed. Time will tell.

Mining Schools Act

The bipartisan and bicameral Mining Schools Act was recently reintroduced in the U.S. Senate by Senators John Barrasso (R-WY) and John Hickenlooper (D-CO) and in the U.S. House by Representatives Burgess Owens (R-UT) and Jim Costa (D-CA). It requires the DOE to establish a grant program to support domestic mining education and training programs. Under the program, DOE must award up to 10 technology grants each year to mining schools for recruitment efforts and education to help meet future energy and mineral needs.

<https://www.hickenlooper.senate.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/Mining-Schools-Act-of-2025.pdf>

Relevant Executive Orders

Reinvigorating America's Beautiful Clean Coal Industry and Amending Executive Order 14241

This order calls for removing federal regulatory barriers that undermine coal production, encouraging the utilization of coal to meet growing energy demands, increasing coal exports, and ensuring that federal policy does not discriminate against coal production or coal-fired electricity generation.

Strengthening the Reliability and Security of the United States Electric Grid

This aims to ensure the reliability, resilience, and security of the electric power grid, while ensuring adequate and reliable electric generation in America to meet growing electricity demand. View a White House fact sheet [here](#).

Protecting American Energy from State Overreach

This directs the U.S. Attorney General to identify state and local policies burdening the identification, development, siting, production, or use of domestic energy resources and recommend actions to stop the enforcement of such policies.

Regulatory Relief for Certain Stationary Sources to Promote American Energy

This exempts coal-fired power plants from compliance with the Biden administration's strengthened MATS rule for two years.

AML Campaign Work

With reauthorization having passed and the Infrastructure funding secured along with the STREAM Act passed, the AML Campaign continues to meet weekly with regard to understanding and potentially mitigating issues surrounding implementation of the Infrastructure funding . With the coming of the new Administration in January and the myriad of Executive orders that could affect our community, we are shifting to keeping abreast of the ever-changing landscape with regard to BIL as well as any implementation issues that come about. At this point, all eyes are on the budget process.

Specific to the budget, the repurposing of IIJA funds is proposed. The Office of Inspector General's IIJA funding to oversee IIJA spending is proposed to be repurposed to another role. That will mean that OIG will not have IIJA funding to inspect IIJA-specific spending.

OSMRE

Efforts to advance Lanny Erdos nomination for OSMRE director were stalled temporarily due to more pressing issues in the Senate. Tom Shope, the previous field office director in Pittsburgh, is still the acting director of OSMRE.

OTHER ITEMS**Growing Greener Quick Response Program**

We are taking applications for funding to conduct urgent repairs to water quality BMPs, not just for AMD-related projects but other water quality BMPs under our Growing Greener-funded QR10 grant. I applied for a QR11 grant this spring round due in June.

2025 Statewide AMR Conference

The conference will be held in mid October at Toftrees in State college. Anne will have more information about our conference and the planning.

Administrative

I continued to perform the usual administrative duties and work with our Treasurer Kelly Williams on account reconciliations, check signing, etc. Kelly and I are just about finished assembling documents for our accountant to do a financial review for 2024 and to prepare our taxes for that year.

Due to oversights from section 319 staff and us, we will be getting our 319 funding around Oct/November 2026 instead of July 1 2026 (when our current grant expires). I will be requesting an amendment to our 319 contract this fall to bridge the gap between where our current grant ends (June 2026) and fall 2026. However, in order to amend the current grant, we will have to go without reimbursements for about 3 or 4 months. Those funds will come to us but only once the approval process is completed. That timeframe will be approximately Dec 2025, Jan and Feb (and maybe March) of 2026. In order to pay for those months' salary and benefits, we will have to come up with some funding. Therefore, today I will be requesting permission from the Board to apply to FPW for a working capital grant for our operations while we wait on our extension request to be approved. Once our extension is approved, we will get the backlogged reimbursements from DEP and use those to pay back the working capital grant from FPW.

I continue to look for additional grant funding to help pay for our general operational expenses. FPW has generously granted WPCAMR \$5,000 in general operating expenses this past spring.

Other Meetings

- PA annual AMR conference planning committee
- PA AML campaign
- Took a filmmaker out to AML sites for recon.
- Weekly AML Campaign phone calls ongoing.
- Various phone calls from watershed groups and/or others.