

Andy McAllister

May 14, 2025

LEGISLATIVE ROUNDUP

STATE

State Senator Doug Mastriano (R-Adams) introduced **Senate Bill 524** late last month 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.

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.

Senate Bills

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>

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.

Reauthorization and 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.

OSMRE Resignations

About 80 people at OSMRE have accepted the early retirement. We understand also that the Administration is asking some of those who took the early retirement deal to come back to work.

Tom Shope, the previous field office director in Pittsburgh, is now the acting director of OSMRE. At this time, the remaining OSMRE staff have been instructed to turn in resumes.

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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 intend to apply 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. Due to the holdback on our 319 funding (which provides the bulk of our payroll and benefits expenses, we had to draw upon our Operational Reserve Account and in July, begin withdrawing from our Line of Credit. The end of any 319 grant cycle is challenging due to the holdback. Also, our new 319 grant which started in July, only pays for most of our payroll. There is no funding for travel or administrative costs (insurances, other bills). Additionally, another challenge is the fact that we haven't received any Administrative funding from most of our WCAP grants because the projects haven't begun yet. The only WCAP grant where we got some administrative funding is the WCAP Quick Response grant which is no longer available. As a result of all these issues, we've made cuts in the proposed 2025 budget.

We did however, get a donation of \$10,000 from Conifer Infrastructure Partners in western PA. This donation came at a critical time for our organization and we are very grateful.

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.

Now that we have gotten some additional general operating funds, I would like to amend our Travel budget to \$3,000.

Other Meetings

- PA annual AMR conference planning committee
- PA AML campaign
- Phone call with a filmmaker who would like to film old abandoned structures in coal areas. Let Andy know if you have suggestions for sites.
- Weekly AML Campaign phone calls ongoing.
- Various phone calls from watershed groups and/or others.