

WEST VIRGINIA COAL
ASSOCIATION MEMBER
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INSIDE

PAGE 2

WVCA President Pens
Letter to President
WVCA Pens Comments on
PSC Passing HB2014 Rules
Package
Trump to Reconsider CO2
Emissions Cap

PAGE 3

WVCA Vice President
Addresses KVM
WVCA President Addresses
Charleston Rotary
WVCA President Delivers
Keynote at TVMI
Scholarship Dinner

West Virginia Coal

“Shaping Public Opinion & Policy”



“We’re taking historic action to help American workers, miners, families and consumers. We’re ending Joe Biden’s War on beautiful clean coal, once and for all. All those plants that have been closed are going to be opened.”



The Heat Is On: PJM’s Summer Strain and the Case for Coal

A Note from the President’s Desk

By Chris Hamilton

As the summer sun bears down on the Appalachian hills, there’s more at stake than just the heat. The very electricity that powers our homes, keeps our industries humming, and fuels our modern conveniences is under threat. The culprit? A power grid stretched thin by rising demand, aging infrastructure, and a retreat from reliable energy sources. The Looming Threat: PJM’s

Summer Outlook
PJM Interconnection, the nation’s largest power grid operator, serves 13 states, including West Virginia. This summer, PJM forecasts a peak electricity demand of 154,000 megawatts (MW), with extreme scenarios pushing that number to over 166,000 MW. While PJM reports having 179,200 MW of generation capacity, this includes approximately 7,900

MW from demand response programs—essentially, paying consumers to reduce their usage during peak times. However, this capacity is increasingly unreliable. The grid is losing baseload power sources—coal and nuclear plants—while intermittent renewables like wind and solar struggle to fill the gap. The result? A grid that may not withstand the

See more on Page 4

Charleston Hosts Key EPA Hearing on WOTUS

CHARLESTON, W.Va. -- The US EPA and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers hosted a listening session in Charleston on May 14th to solicit public input on how “Waters of the United States” (WOTUS) should be defined under the Clean Water Act.

WVCA Vice President Jason Bostic, spoke at the session, providing the WVCA’s position on the issue.

“Under the current interpre-

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WVCA Pens Letter to President Thanking Him for Work for Coal

Dear Mr. President,

On behalf of the 60,000 West Virginians who show up at a coal mine and coal-fired power plant every day, we say Thank You!

Thank you for your kind and thoughtful comments about coal mining and for taking the necessary steps to undo the job killing, anti-coal measures enacted by your predecessor and the multitude of federal agencies that regulate virtu-

ally every aspect of coal production and consumption. With your vision and leadership, we can rebuild and sustain this great industry for all the right reasons: national security, grid stability, rebuilding American industrial might and putting more Americans to work to power our rejuvenated economy. As you are aware, West Virginia produces some of the highest quality thermal coal found anywhere in the world.

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WVCA Issues Comments on PSC Enacting HB2014 Rules Package

Charleston, W.Va. – The West Virginia Public Service Commission recently issued orders that, once implemented, will extend the life of state coal-fired power plants, and through that, reinvigorate coal production in our region.

Based on provisions included House Bill 2014, legislation to incentivize microgrid and data center development in West Virginia, the PSC orders require West Virginia’s regulated utilities to update their Integrated Resource Plans to include a detailed plant upgrade and maintenance plan,

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Certified Microgrid Tax Distribution Regular Levy On Incremental Value	
Local County General Fund	30%
State Fund - All Counties (per capita allocation)	10%
State Fund - Personal Income Tax Reduction	50%
State Fund - Grid Stabilization & Security	5%
State Fund - Economic Development Funds	5%
% distributions per completed legislation (2025 Apr 12) <small>Graphic by WV Independent Observer</small>	

Trump EPA to ‘Reconsider’ CO2 Emissions Cap on Power Plants

The US Environmental Protection Agency will “reconsider” a rule limiting CO2 emissions from power plants, the federal agency said on March 12, advancing President Donald Trump’s vow to undo the landmark climate regulation. EPA Administrator Lee Zeldin announced the agency would review the 2024 carbon standard along with more than two dozen other Biden administration actions, including its regulations on power plants’ mercury emissions and

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WVCA Vice President Addresses Kanawha Valley Mining Institute

CHARLESTON, W.VA. --In early May, WVCA Vice President Jason Bostic was the keynote speaker at the Annual Legislative dinner of the Kanawha Valley Mining Institute. Bostic apprised Institute members of coal related legislative advancing during 60-day Regular Session. Bostic also encouraged everyone to get more involved either the legislative process impacting the coal industry and how last years election altered the trends against coal that were present nationally.



West Virginia Coal Association President Addresses Capital City Rotary

Chris Hamilton, president of the West Virginia Coal Association, addressed members of the Charleston Rotary Club during their April 28 meeting in Charleston, delivering a direct message on the future of coal, the rise of data centers, and the significance of House Bill 2014. Hamilton discussed the enduring role of coal in powering the state’s economy and electric grid, noting that coal remains not only reliable but essential in meeting industrial and residential energy demands. He emphasized that West Virginia’s coal-fired power plants are critical for energy-intensive industries, including emerging data centers, which require massive,

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WVCA President Provides the Keynote Address at TVMI Dinner

WVCA' President Chris Hamilton provided the keynote address during the Institutes Annual Scholarship Dinner at the the Country Club in Chapmanville WV.

Hamilton talked about the industry having a once in a lifetime opportunity and how important the southern coal fields are to the overall health of the state.



HAMILTON (cont.)

pressure of a scorching summer.

In the face of this challenge, coal-fired power plants stand as the last bastion of reliability. These plants provide consistent, around-the-clock power, unlike their renewable counterparts that depend on weather conditions. Yet, coal plants are being shuttered at an alarming rate, driven by regulatory pressures and market forces favoring natural gas and renewables. This trend is shortsighted. As we've seen in past winters, when coal plants were called upon to more than double their output during extreme cold, they delivered. In contrast, natural gas plants have faltered due to fuel supply issues and equipment failures. The lesson is clear: we need to preserve and enhance our coal-fired generation capacity to ensure grid reliability. Adding to the strain are the burgeoning data centers and artificial intelligence systems that consume vast amounts of electricity. These facilities are rapidly approaching saturation in neighboring Virginia, presenting a golden opportunity for West Virginia to step in. Our state generates more electricity than it consumes and has the capacity to accommodate new growth. Large-scale data centers require land, water, and—most importantly—reliable and adequate power. West Virginia has all three.

Instead of entertaining proposals from out-of-state solar, nuclear, and other alternative energy developers, we should be leveraging our existing, proven energy infrastructure. By plugging data centers into West Virginia's coal-powered grid, we can meet their energy needs while bolstering our own economy.

Despite the clear advantages of coal, some policymakers continue to push for a transition to renewable energy sources. This approach is not only impractical but also dangerous. As we've seen, the grid's reliability is compromised when coal plants are retired prematurely. The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) has warned that the U.S. power grid could face significant stress this summer due to extreme heat and surging electricity demand, especially from the expansion of data centers.

The solution is not to abandon coal but to support it. We need policies that incentivize the maintenance and modernization of coal-fired plants, ensuring they can oper-

ate efficiently and meet the demands of a growing population. The coal provisions in HB 2014 provide a framework to reinvest in our nine in-state coal facilities.

A Cascade Effect: What Happens if PJM Fails?

If PJM's grid were to experience a failure due to extreme demand during the high summer heat, the effects would be far-reaching. A grid failure in PJM wouldn't be limited to one state or even a single region—it would have a cascading effect, potentially affecting neighboring Regional Transmission Organizations (RTOs) and even the entire Eastern Interconnection.

Here's what could happen:

- **Immediate Power Outages:** With temperatures soaring and air conditioning use at an all-time high, power outages would be the first consequence. Households, businesses, and critical infrastructure—hospitals, schools, government facilities—would be left in the dark. For vulnerable populations, especially the elderly, disabled, and low-income families, the consequences could be life-threatening.
- **Strained Neighboring RTOs:** PJM is interconnected with other RTOs, including MISO (Midcontinent Independent System Operator) and NYISO (New York Independent System Operator). A failure in PJM could overload these neighboring grids, causing them to face their own reliability issues. For example, if PJM cannot meet demand, electricity would be drawn from MISO, which may not have enough capacity to handle the additional load, leading to a ripple effect across the Eastern and Midwestern U.S.
- **Economic Disruption:** Power outages lasting more than a few hours would disrupt manufacturing, retail, transportation, and even the stock market. Industries that rely on steady power supply, such as data centers, factories, and retail chains, would be forced to shut down, leading to a significant economic loss. Businesses could lose millions in sales and production, and the recovery from a widespread outage could take weeks.
- **Public Health Emergencies:** Power

outages would also disrupt hospitals, nursing homes, and other health-care facilities that rely on electricity to power life-saving equipment like ventilators and oxygen machines.

Without power, the ability to provide critical care could be severely compromised. In areas already struggling with healthcare access, the effects could be deadly.

- **Water and Sewage Failures:** In many areas, power is required for the operation of water treatment plants, sewage systems, and pumps that ensure clean water and proper waste disposal. Without power, these systems could fail, leading to widespread water contamination and sanitation crises. In a hot summer, this could also lead to an increased risk of waterborne diseases.
- **Widespread Social Unrest:** Prolonged blackouts would result in more than just economic disruptions. Public frustration could turn to unrest, with citizens and communities demanding answers from state and federal leaders. Prolonged heat without power could lead to angry protests, looting, and social upheaval, as people grow increasingly desperate for resources.

A Call to Action

The time to act is now. We must:

- Implement a "Baseload Reliability Tax Credit" to incentivize the preservation and enhancement of coal-fired generation.
- Halt the premature retirement of coal plants and support their modernization.
- Invest in infrastructure to connect West Virginia's abundant coal power to data centers and other high-demand users.
- Advocate for policies that recognize the value of baseload power in maintaining grid stability.

In conclusion, as the mercury rises this summer, so too does the risk of power shortages. To safeguard our energy future, we must embrace the reliability of coal, not retreat from it. Let's ensure that when the heat is on, our lights stay bright.