



Issue 27, 2019

● [Judge Rules Against Oil Companies to Keep Climate Liability Case in Rhode Island](#)

"The ruling will allow Rhode Island prosecutors to continue to bring charges against 21 oil and gas producers including Chevron, Shell and BP as the state tries to get the companies to help pay for damages caused by climate change."

Why this is important: The lawsuits brought by Rhode Island and other state and local jurisdictions against fossil fuel companies are curious, to say the least. All those government entities have used fossil fuels, despite having known for at least the last quarter century that fossil fuels were producing greenhouse gases. They could have imposed taxes that would have dampened demand for the fuel in their locality, refused to buy gasoline for their trucks and buses, and they could have restricted the use of cement and steel in buildings, as those are tremendous users of fossil fuels. Instead, they benefited from them and did nothing until, like Captain Renault in Casablanca, they were shocked, shocked to find out what is going on, and filed suit. ---

[David L. Yaussy](#)

● ['We Can't Sit on the Sidelines and be Climate Deniers,' Dominion VP Warns Natural Gas Industry](#)

"But Raikes also warned that the oil and gas industry was doing itself no favors by denying that it affects the environment, and he even dipped his toes into the issue of climate science denial."

Why this is important: Denying the existence of climate change only plays into the position of environmental organizations and governmental entities whose goal is the short-term elimination of all fossil fuels. The oil and gas industry is better served by the promotion of natural gas as an affordable, reliable and environmentally desirable energy source to bridge the gap of several decades before renewables can meet the energy needs of our country. --- [William M. Herlihy](#)

● [Appeals Court Upholds Trump Move to Drop Mine Pollution Rule](#)

"A U.S. appeals court panel sided with the Trump administration in a mining pollution dispute, ruling that state and federal programs already in place ensure that companies take financial responsibility for future cleanups."

Why this is important: The federal U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia has upheld the Trump administration's changes to Obama rules on what hard rock mining companies must post for possible future water treatment obligations from mining. The Trump administration determined current programs already have calculated the costs of cleanups and potential bankruptcies into bonding and financial assurances posted to mine. The Court of Appeals agreed. The old Obama administration rules would have imposed an additional \$7.1 billion (\$171 million a year) in increased bonds and deposits mining companies must post to mine hard rock minerals in the U.S. --- [Mark E. Heath](#)

● [Citing Greta Thunberg, Merkel Backs National CO2 Price](#)

"With Germany set to miss its 2020 emissions reduction targets, Chancellor Angela Merkel says a national price on CO2 will be the only way to reach targets for 2030."

Why this is important: Regardless of whether you agree with its premise that climate change is an existential threat, Germany deserves props for taking concrete action to reduce greenhouse gases, even to the extent of affecting its economy. After acknowledging it would miss its 2020 emission reduction targets, Chancellor Angela Merkel is talking about a carbon tax in order to reduce demand and encourage shifting away from coal to more expensive, less reliable renewables. If she does so, it will be at some cost to Germany's economy, although the reduction in CO2 emissions will probably be far offset by the growth rate of CO2 emissions in the developing world. --- [David L. Yaussy](#)

● [Appalachian Storage Hub Bill Introduced by WV's Manchin Passes in Senate Committee](#)

"Legislation that would commit the federal government to conduct a study on the potential benefits of the proposed Appalachian Storage Hub came one step closer to becoming law as it passed out of committee in the U.S. Senate."

Why this is important: The Appalachian Storage Hub would bolster the stability of this country's national energy supply as well as the renewed economic prosperity of the Appalachian Basin. Substantial support by federal and state governments in the region will help assure the development of this valuable resource. The passage of Senator Manchin's Appalachian Energy for National Security Act would be a significant step to promote this initiative. --- [William M. Herlihy](#)

● [The World Can't Let Nuclear Energy Die](#)

"Nuclear power could help solve that problem, because it is the only large-scale firm power source that doesn't generate carbon emissions during its operation."

Why this is important: The author details why nuclear power is key to reducing carbon emissions, particularly given its character as a baseload source of power that cannot be replicated by ever-growing solar and wind power assets. But the author correctly points out that because of nuclear reactor emergencies at Chernobyl and Fukushima, the consuming public lacks confidence in the inherent safety of nuclear power plants (not to mention concerns with nuclear waste storage). Notwithstanding, he argues efforts must be made to ensure its viability as a carbon-free fuel source in the face of growing fossil-fuel production. Although not stated in the article, the general perspective to reduce carbon emissions is relied on by elements of the nuclear lobby in the U.S. to seek state-level legislation that would artificially support and subsidize the nuclear industry to the likely detriment of the competitive wholesale market for electric power. Ultimately, the viability of the nuclear industry should rest on its ability to perform economically in the market. If there is political will to control carbon emissions, then that should be addressed by imposing a cost on those who emit and that can be assimilated into the market, not by artificially supporting one fuel source over another through subsidization. --- [Derrick Price Williamson](#)

● [Coal Miners to Hit Capitol Hill for Black Lung Funding](#)

"The fund is already billions of dollars in debt, and that will likely grow as more miners develop the disease and coal companies pay less into the fund."

Why this is important: With new claims rising, the federal black lung trust fund is now about \$4 billion underfunded and that figure could rise to \$15 billion by 2050. Currently, 25,000 miners and dependents receive benefits and healthcare from the fund. In 2018, a tax increase in effect since 1981 expired, and the tax rate per ton of coal dropped 50 percent. Miners on Tuesday traveled to Washington to meet with Congressional leaders and members to discuss ways to restore funding to the trust fund, but a bill to do so has not passed Congress to date. The proposed return to the higher tax comes at a time of a number of coal producers filing bankruptcy. --- [Mark E. Heath](#)

● [GE Reveals New Parts for the 'World's Largest Offshore Wind Turbine'](#)

"GE Renewable Energy, a subsidiary of General Electric based in Paris, revealed 'the first manufactured components' for its gigantic Haliade-X 12 megawatt offshore wind turbine."

Why this is important: GE's massive, 12 megawatt turbines for offshore wind development, are impressive feats of engineering. Presumably, the cost per megawatt drops sharply if such a turbine replaces six two megawatt turbine installations. Offshore wind is an expensive proposition, and scaling up installations may be the best means of achieving a favorable cost/benefit result. ---
[David. L. Yaussy](#)

EIA Energy Statistics

Here is a round-up of the latest statistics concerning the energy industry.

PETROLEUM

This Week in Petroleum

Weekly Petroleum Status Report

NATURAL GAS

Short-Term Energy Outlook - Natural Gas

Natural Gas Weekly Update

Natural Gas Futures Prices

COAL

Short-Term Energy Outlook - Coal

Coal Markets

Weekly Coal Production

RENEWABLES

Short-Term Energy Outlook

Monthly Biodiesel Production Report

Monthly Densified Biomass Fuel Report

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