Message

From: Smith, Bonnie [smith.bonnie@epa.gov]
Sent: 1/13/2017 3:27:10 PM
To: R3 EVERYONE [R3_EVERYONE@epa.gov]
Subject: EPA Mid-Atlantic Region Headlines - FRIDAY - January 13, 2017

EPA Mid-Atlantic Region Headlines

Friday, January 13, 2017

*** DAILY HOT LIST ***

Trump's Win Brings Hope to W.Va. Coal Country

WEST VIRGINIA PUBLIC BROADCASTING

Appalachia voted overwhelmingly for Donald Trump. He won 95% of the counties here. On this week's Inside Appalachia, we speak with Trump supporters and opponents about how a Trump presidency will impact our region. The Inside Appalachia podcast comes out on Friday. Subscribe to the podcast and the show will come straight to your device the moment it's ready. Until then, we introduce you to Jonathon Griffith and his family. He's a coal miner from Wyoming County, West Virginia. For many coal miners and their families, Trump's election means hope, pure and simple. Coal miner Jonathan Griffith describes what it was like inside the mine on Election Day. "Everybody was excited to go because they knew something better was going to happen," Griffith said.

Someone has to keep the lights on until Trump hires arrive

GREENWIRE

U.S. EPA named career senior managers today who'll hold down top political jobs on an acting basis until the Trump administration's new appointees can be put in place, according to an internal EPA memorandum obtained by E&E News. "After the inauguration, it is likely that career EPA senior managers will serve in acting roles for the assistant, associate and regional administrator positions until new appointed leaders are in place," said the Jan. 5 memo, authored by Stan Meiburg, EPA's acting deputy administrator. The career managers could be sitting in those top political positions at EPA for months after President-elect Donald Trump's inauguration. An EPA tipsheet on the transition sent out in November last year said, "During the 2008-2009 transition, most AAs [assistant administrators] and RAs [regional administrators] were nominated and arrived in the June-December timeframe following the Inauguration." As of Nov. 1, 2016, the agency had 79 political appointees, including 14 who needed Senate confirmation (*E&E News PM*, Nov. 28, 2016). Who will take on the agency's most senior leadership jobs during the changeover between administrations was not shared in the memo. "The acting senior officials in the Administrator's office, including the acting Administrator and

Deputy Administrator, will be announced soon," said the memo.

Potomac River sewage puts Alexandria in crosshairs

WASHINGTON POST

Alexandria's efforts to address its long-standing sewage discharge into the Potomac River should be addressed by mid-2020, or the city will risk losing all its state appropriations, under a bill that passed a Virginia Senate committee Thursday. The legislative action is far from complete — the bill must be voted on by the full Senate and then survive scrutiny in the House as well — but Sen. Scott A. Surovell (D-Fairfax) said that he and several of his colleagues believe the city "has the financial capacity to fix these problems, but it's dragging its feet." Alexandria is under a federal order to stop allowing sewer overflows into Hunting Creek, a Potomac River tributary, and it has given the state a $188 million plan for how it will do just that. But half of the raw sewage — about 11 million gallons — that the city sends into the Potomac each year empties into the Oronoco Bay in North Old Town, and no federal or state order demands that be stopped. Under pressure from local residents and environmentalists, however, the Alexandria City Council voted in November to speed up a study of how to address that pollution by 14 years, with a study to start in 2018 and formal planning to start in 2026.

In EPA rebuke, judge orders quick evaluation on coal jobs

ASSOCIATED PRESS (W. Va.)

WHEELING, W.Va. (AP) — A judge has ordered federal regulators to quickly evaluate how many power plant and coal mining jobs are lost because of air pollution regulations. U.S. District Judge John Preston Bailey in Wheeling made the ruling after reviewing a response from outgoing U.S. Environmental Protection Agency administrator Gina McCarthy. She responded to the judge's previous order in a lawsuit brought against her by Murray Energy Corp. that the EPA must start doing an analysis that it hadn't done in decades. According to Wednesday's order, McCarthy asserted it would take the EPA up to two years to come up with a methodology to use to try to comply with the earlier ruling. "This response is wholly insufficient, unacceptable, and unnecessary," Bailey wrote.The judge said the EPA is required by law to analyze the economic impact on a continuing basis when enforcing the Clean Air Act and McCarthy's response "evidences the continued hostility on the part of the EPA to acceptance of the mission established by Congress." Bailey ordered the EPA to identify facilities harmed by the regulations during the Obama presidency by July 1. That includes identifying facilities at risk of closure or reductions in employment.

Funding problems for storm water, sewage lines project, Fluharty: 'We are striking out with any type of government loans or grants'

PRESTON COUNTY NEWS

KINGWOOD — The city of Kingwood is ahead of the curve when it comes to planning for a stormwater improvement project, but it is hitting some road bumps. Thrasher Engineering, which is doing the design work on the three-phase improvement project, said it can't find a way

to fund the project. “We are striking out with any type of government loans or grants,” Thrasher Engineering professional engineer Matthew Fluharty said. “Funding is available for areas such as Morgantown, Fairmont and Clarksburg and for areas with populations over 10,000 people. “Getting grant and public dollars for stormwater is not as easy as water or sewer projects,” Fluharty said. The first phase of removing stormwater from sewer water is projected to cost $842,000, with the first phase being in the Kingwood post office area. The city is mandated to separate stormwater from the sewage system by 2020, according to federal law. The city has a combined stormwater and sanitary sewage system. Kingwood Recorder Bill Robertson asked if the city would be able to “chisel” away at the project at about $30,000 to $40,000 a year.

PENNSYLVANIA

WITF HARRISBURGH'S NPR STATION

Harrisburg snags $1 million grant to replace Riverwalk

HARRISBURG -- Jogging along Harrisburg's Riverwalk can be a contact sport with all the broken pavement, potholes and pools of mud. And pushing a stroller across all that uneven pavement? Forget it. The wide concrete sidewalk that parallels the Susquehanna River from Interstate 83 to Maclay Street has been pounded by storms and floods over 100 years. But the city simply didn't have the money for serious repairs. Now, the entire Riverwalk will be replaced, thanks to the award of a $1 million transportation alternative grant announced this week. Work could begin as soon as this summer with construction finished in the fall, if all goes as planned. The grant will pay to replace 11,000 linear feet of damaged slab and the top step along the Riverwalk from the motel in Shipoke to Maclay, which represents the end of the loop. Other damaged steps that descend into the water will be patched, as necessary, said City Engineer Wayne Martin. The current administration used federal emergency management money from Tropical Storm Lee to replace a section of the most severely damaged Riverwalk in Shipoke about two years ago.

Pa. BUSINESS CENTRAL

DEP offers funding for stormwater management projects

Harrisburg , PA – The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is offering grants up to $200,000 to local entities in the Chesapeake Bay watershed for stormwater management projects that implement best management practices (BMP) to reduce the amount of nutrients and sediment pollution in local waterways. The program is available to counties, cities, boroughs, townships, incorporated towns and municipal authorities. Stormwater projects must be located in Blair, Cumberland, Dauphin, Franklin, Lackawanna, Lancaster, Lebanon, Luzerne, Lycoming and York counties. Some examples of eligible projects include: raingardens, bio-swales, urban nutrient management/tree planting, vegetated open channels/roofs and wet ponds and wetland preservation. The projects can be located on public or private property. Applicants can be eligible for grants of up to $200,000, and no local matching funds are required. Funding for the projects is competitive and the department will apply a scoring system whe awarding the grant money. The application must include a description of the project and timetable for the work. Grant applications are due by March 3, 2017. Application instructions and eligibility are available online. The grant program is federally funded by the Environmental Protection Agency and administered by the department.

ASSOCIATED PRESS (Pa.)

Western Pa. township Oks $6 billion ethane cracker plant Monaca -- Supervisors of a western Pennsylvania township have granted a conditional use permit for a $6 billion ethane cracker plant proposed by Shell Chemicals. A 10-hour hearing last month ended without a decision because the Potter Township supervisors wanted Shell and the Clean Air Council, an environmental group that opposes the plant, to file legal arguments about the permit. At Wednesday night's two-hour meeting the supervisors imposed noise limits, and pledged to investigate any complaints of light pollution or traffic disruptions that could occur once construction begins in the next two years. Shell has said the plant will create 6,000 construction jobs and 600 permanent jobs once the plant opens. Shell still needs state environmental regulators to modify two pollution permits held by the property's former owner, and get federal permits, before construction begins.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

WASHINGTON POST

Scientists have a new way to calculate what global warming costs. Trump's team isn't going to like it.
How we view the costs of future climate change, and more importantly how we quantify them, may soon be changing. A much-anticipated new report, just released by the National Academy of Sciences, recommends major updates to a federal metric known as the "social cost of carbon" — and its suggestions could help address a growing scientific concern that we're underestimating the damages global warming will cause. The social cost of carbon is an Obama-era metric first addressed by a federal working group in 2009. The basic premise is simple: Scientists agree that climate change will have all kinds of impacts on human societies, including natural disasters and effects on human health, productivity and agricultural output, all of which have economic consequences. The social cost of carbon, then, refers to the monetary cost of emitting a single ton of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere, given that these emissions will further contribute to global warming. The value has been used to aid in cost-benefit analyses for a variety of federal environmental rules. Currently, it's set at about $36 per ton of carbon dioxide. But the new NAS report, requested by the federal Interagency Working Group on the Social Cost of Carbon, suggests the methodology used to arrive at this value is in need of updating, both to make it more transparent and more scientifically sound. It makes a number of recommendations for future estimates aimed at helping the process "draw more readily on expertise from the wide range of scientific disciplines relevant to [the social cost of carbon] estimation."

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DELAWARE

WILMINGTON NEWS JOURNAL

New Journal Awards grants to 16 non-profits

The News Journal Media Group held its annual Gannett Foundation luncheon to award grants to 16 Delaware nonprofits on Thursday. Since its inception, the foundation has given more than $170 million to thousands of charitable projects across the United States and the United Kingdom. Gannett employees help the foundation carry out its goals, including having employees volunteer in their communities. In 2016, The News Journal Media Group – through the Gannett Foundation – provided money to the following 16 Delaware-based nonprofits:

DELAWARE CAPE GAZETTE

NEX Transport relocates plant to city

An East Liberty-based company relocated one of its plants to Delaware's industrial park over the holidays. NEX Transport Inc. started operations over 163,000-square-foot at 1076 Pittsburgh Drive on Jan. 3, said Tod Johnson, vice president of the company. The company is a logistics solutions provider for companies such as Honda and provide contract packaging, distribution, kitting, sequencing, line-side delivery, export and mass production. The company's Delaware plant relocated from Marion to be closer to its East Liberty plant. The company has two facilities in Bellefontaine. NEX employs more than 35 employees in forklift and packaging and repackaging positions, Johnson said, and there are plans for expansion. The "employment base in Delaware was good for us as a company," he said.

DOVER POST

Green company shares energy auditing techniques

Don Scott plans on making the world a better place by focusing on conservation. "Certain things aren't going to be here forever like the rain forest," he said. "At the rate that we're going it won't be here much longer because of all the pollution." To help the planet, the Milford High School senior is learning how his school can save energy. Energy audits aren't a new concept - having students conduct them is. Philadelphia-based Practical Energy Solutions is helping students across Delaware perform energy audits in their schools. The company's participation is due to their involvement in a new Energy Management Pathway, a partnership between Delaware Technical Community College and Milford, Smyrna and Christina school districts. The 10 students in the pathway earn college credits while in high school. Six are earned at the high school, while the other six are earned at Delaware Tech's Georgetown campus

ASSOCIATED PRESS (Del.)

5 Delaware towns share $3.6M in downtown grants

(Wed.) DOVER, Del. (AP) — Another round of redevelopment projects in five downtown areas across Delaware will move forward, thanks in part to support from state taxpayers. Gov. Jack Markell announced Tuesday that 16 commercial, residential and mixed-use projects throughout the state will share nearly $3.6 million in state grants provided by the Downtown Development Districts program. Towns recently chosen for the program are Smyrna, Milford, Harrington, Georgetown and Laurel. The goal is to use a small amount of public funding to attract larger investments from private developers in towns that want to revitalize their downtown areas. The grants are awarded to developers after all the work is complete, matching 20 percent in construction costs. Planned projects include turning an old bank building in downtown Milford into a restaurant.

WEST VIRGINIA

CHARLESTON GAZETTE-MAIL

Aide: New WV governor to support outgoing governor's Boone County project -

Jim Justice's chief of staff said Thursday that the new West Virginia governor is committed to pursuing development of the massive Rock Creek Development Park, in Boone County, which outgoing Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin has touted as his major economic development initiative for the past year. "The Justice administration's perspective is: You've got to think big. This is big," Nick Casey said Thursday during what likely was Tomblin's last news conference as governor. Tomblin announced plans to develop the former Hobet surface mine into a multi-use industrial, commercial and residential site last January, in his State of the State address. In his farewell address Wednesday, he said development of the complex is a key to diversifying the state's economy. "I'm grateful to have the support of Gov.-elect Jim Justice as I pass the torch for this project that means so much to me and will give so much back to the hardworking men and women of Southern West Virginia," Tomblin said. googletag.cmd.push(function() { googletag.display('bigbox1'); }); Last month, the government sold $58 million in bonds to help finance the $93 million project to build a 2.6-mile four-lane highway linking the development with U.S. 119 and W.Va. 3 near Foster, in Boone County — a project criticized by some legislators for potentially "jumping" highways projects that have been on the books for years.

WEST VIRGINIA PUBLIC BROADCASTING

Trump's Win Brings Hope to W.Va. Coal Country

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WSAZ -NEWS CHANNEL 3

UPDATE: Industrial site project moving forward in southern West Virginia

Gov.-elect Jim Justice says he is all in for the redevelopment of the former Hobet mine site. The development, to be called the Rock Creek Development Park, was spearheaded by outgoing Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin. Thursday, just days before Justice takes the oath of office, his chief of staff pledged the Justice administration's support for the Rock Creek Development Park. "It's hard not to get behind this project, so Governor Justice is enthusiastic," Chief of Staff Nick Casey said Thursday. "Governor-elect Justice is very excited about this. It's the kind of big thing that he also wants to bring to the state." The park will span 12,000 acres in both Boone and Lincoln counties. It is estimated to cost about $100 million, but state leaders expect federal money to fund most of the project. Tomblin's hope is that the industrial park will diversify the state's economy and create jobs for southern West Virginia residents and the surrounding regions. Casey says the new site will have housing sites, retail sites and industry sites. "The footprint of this project is nearly the same footprint as the size of Charleston, West Virginia," he says. "This isn't just a road to nowhere. This is an opportunity," Casey says. The National Guard was the first unit to invest in the project. Maj. Gen. Jim Hoyer with the National Guard says they plan to have military units training on the site early spring.

WEST VIRGINIA METRO NEWS

The 167th Airlift Wing base source of Martinsburg water contamination

MARTINSBURG, W.Va. — The federal government will pay millions of dollars for cleanup after it was determined the 167th Airlift Wing was the source of industrial chemicals that contaminated a groundwater source for Martinsburg's public-water system. Martinsburg City Manager Mark Bladwin told Metro News affiliate WEPM the city has been working with the guard for several months discussing the issue. "The city is pleased the guard is making the effort to correct that contamination so the Big Springs water plant can be used to its full capacity," Baldwin said. The Big Springs water-filtration plant closed in May 2015 after PFCs, or perfluorinated compounds, were discovered. The Environmental Protection Agency issued new lifetime exposure health advisories for the chemicals, which have been linked to cancer, liver damage and birth defects in recent scientific studies. Baldwin said an agreement between the city and the government providing for reimbursement of incurred costs and future costs is expected to be finalized in the next couple of months.

WEST VIRGINIA STATE JOURNAL

Judge upholds Huntington's major sewer rate increase

A Cabell Circuit Court judge has refused to grant an injunction that would block Huntington City's Council approval of a major increase in the city's sewer fee. The injunction has been sought by Steel of West Virginia. In his ruling, issued Jan. 10, Judge Chris Chiles said he was of the opinion that the city had acted properly in approving the 57.7 rate increase. In seeking an injunction to block the increase, Steel of West Virginia argued that adequate public notice was not provided before the vote. "We are disappointed in Judge Chiles' ruling today," Tim Duke, Steel of West Virginia president and CEO, said. "The money raised by the rate increase is well in excess of the amount needed to fund the Sanitary Board's ordinary expenses and should not have been pushed through without proper notice two days after Christmas." On Dec. 27, Huntington City Council approved a three-phase rate increase spread out over two years. The first rate increase of about 25 percent is scheduled to take effect Feb. 10. By the end of the final increase, the average customer, based on about 3,200 gallons of water used, can expect to see his or her monthly bill go from about $17.37 to $27.39.

WEIRTON TIMES

http://www.weirtondailytimes.com/news/local-news/2017/01/judge-epa-must-identify-coal-job-losses/

unable to provide, but story can be accessed through the link above

PRESTON COUNTY NEWS

Funding problems for storm water, sewage lines project, Fluharty: 'We are striking out with any type of government loans or grants' KINGWOOD — The city of Kingwood is ahead of the curve when it comes to planning for a stormwater improvement project, but it is hitting some road bumps. Thrasher Engineering, which is doing the design work on the three-phase improvement project, said it can't find a way to fund the project. "We are striking out with any type of government loans or grants," Thrasher Engineering professional engineer Matthew Fluharty said. "Funding is available for areas such as Morgantown, Fairmont and Clarksburg and for areas with populations over 10,000 people. "Getting grant and public dollars for stormwater is not as easy as water or sewer projects," Fluharty said. The first phase of removing stormwater from sewer water is projected to cost $842,000, with the first phase being in the Kingwood post office area. The city is mandated to separate stormwater from the sewage system by 2020, according to federal law. The city has a combined stormwater and sanitary sewage system. Kingwood Recorder Bill Robertson asked if the city would be able to "chisel" away at the project at about $30,000 to $40,000 a year.

ASSOCIATED PRESS (W. Va.)

In EPA rebuke, judge orders quick evaluation on coal jobs

WHEELING, W.Va. (AP) — A judge has ordered federal regulators to quickly evaluate how many power plant and coal mining jobs are lost because of air pollution regulations. U.S. District Judge John Preston Bailey in Wheeling made the ruling after reviewing a response from outgoing U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

administrator Gina McCarthy. She responded to the judge's previous order in a lawsuit brought against her by Murray Energy Corp. that the EPA must start doing an analysis that it hadn't done in decades. According to Wednesday's order, McCarthy asserted it would take the EPA up to two years to come up with a methodology to use to try to comply with the earlier ruling. "This response is wholly insufficient, unacceptable, and unnecessary," Bailey wrote.The judge said the EPA is required by law to analyze the economic impact on a continuing basis when enforcing the Clean Air Act and McCarthy's response "evidences the continued hostility on the part of the EPA to acceptance of the mission established by Congress." Bailey ordered the EPA to identify facilities harmed by the regulations during the Obama presidency by July 1. That includes identifying facilities at risk of closure or reductions in employment.

MARYLAND

BALTIMORE SUN

EPA tentatively rejects request from Maryland, other states, to act on interstate smog

The Environmental Protection Agency has tentatively denied a request from Maryland and seven other states that it crack down on pollution that blows across state borders — though not because regulators don't recognize that interstate smog is a problem. The states had asked in 2013 that nine Midwestern and Southern states be included as part of the region that's held responsible for the summertime smog they send elsewhere around the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic. While acknowledging the problem, the EPA said Wednesday there are other strategies the states could take under federal air pollution laws to address it. EPA officials said the federal Clean Air Act "provides other, more effective mechanisms to address the transport of ozone between states and the impact this pollution has on the states." Maryland officials called the decision disappointing, but said they are focused on other tactics to clean polluted air that blows into the state with the wind. That includes a petition the state made to EPA in November calling for the agency to force 19 coal power plants in five states to more consistently use emission-cleaning technology they have installed.

WJZ- CBS BALTIMORE

How To Get Grant Money To Help Pay Heat, Energy Bills

BALTIMORE (WJZ) — Maryland's Office of Home Energy Programs is offering grant money to help low-income families pay their heating and energy bills. According to a release from the Maryland Department of Human Resources, this grant program offers households more than $1,000 per year to help pay their heating and electric bills. More than 100,000 households enroll in the program every year, according to DHR. Residents can apply every year, at any time throughout the year. Applicants do not need to be behind on their bills in order to apply for help.

CHESAPEAKE BAY JOURNAL

Volunteer pilots offer environmentalists an eye in the sky -*Southwings provide access to sites/sights not available on the ground*

Jeremy Jacobsohn guided his Piper Arrow down a runway at Lee Airport toward a kaleidoscope of fall color in the woods ahead. As the plane ascended, leaving suburban Edgewater behind, the houses became tiny dots and the Chesapeake Bay came slowly into view. "This is the roller coaster part," he said with a laugh. Soon, Jacobsohn swooped south over the white-capped Chesapeake, then past the forested haven of Parker's Creek in Calvert County toward Dominion's liquefied natural gas plant under construction at Cove Point. He climbed to 2,000 feet for a panorama, then back down to 1,000 feet and east across the Bay for a closer look at the amber marshes hugging Deal and Hooper's islands. Soon, he could see all of Ocean City out one window, then Chincoteague Bay and the long narrow buildings that hold the millions of chickens grown on the Delmarva Peninsula. There's nothing quite like seeing the Bay watershed from a small plane, both to appreciate its beauty

and the coming threats. Environmental advocates have been using aerial photography to press pollution cases in courts, lobby for tougher laws and expose truths about disasters such as the hog waste from ruptured farm lagoons contaminating floodwaters in North Carolina this fall after Hurricane Matthew. Those flights are about to become more frequent. Southwings, one of three national organizations of pilots who fly volunteer environmental missions, just opened an office in Annapolis in August. It is the first such group to set up in the Bay watershed. The effort is directed by Shannon Lyons, a longtime Bay policy analyst with a Ph.D. in marine policy. She has recruited seven pilots to take activists, journalists, scientists and policy makers into the air.

Funding common theme as Bay states confront 2017 environmental issues
Fracking, renewable energy, sewage overflows, pollution trading, oysters, cownose rays. These contentious topics, and more — some with implications for the health of the Chesapeake Bay — awaited legislators in Maryland, Pennsylvania and Virginia as they returned to work in January. Each state has a slightly different menu of environmental legislation to consider. But funding — or the lack thereof — for Bay restoration efforts looms as a common hurdle for lawmakers in Annapolis, Harrisburg and Richmond. The three key Bay watershed states face revenue shortfalls ranging from $400 million to $1.7 billion each, and spending cuts appear likely in the near term to close those gaps. Environmental activists worry that if Bay-related programs and projects are not spared, the restoration effort could lose steam at a critical juncture. The "pollution diet" imposed by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is due for reassessment this year, and when the new president, takes office in January, he may be less inclined than his predecessor to play an assertive federal role in pressing the states to reduce nutrient and sediment pollution in the Chesapeake. As a result, the Bay cleanup may be more dependent than ever on what the states do. But with one possible exception, they seem headed toward yet another round of belt-tightening. Maryland must find a way to make up a revenue shortfall of about $400 million for the next fiscal year — though budget forecasters are warning that state coffers may be short a combined $800 million over the next two years. While acknowledging that spending has to be cut somewhere, Alison Prost, Maryland director of the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, pointed out that state environment and natural resources agencies are already overstretched.

ASSOCIATED PRESS (Md.)

Baltimore, others added to Bloomberg 'innovation team' grant list
Associated Press (Thursday) NEW YORK — Baltimore is among seven cities in the U.S., Canada and Israel that stand to get up to $1.5 million apiece from former New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg's foundation to create "innovation teams." The cities will work on issues ranging from reducing poverty to recruiting public workers. Bloomberg Philanthropies announced the selections Thursday. ... *note: to read full story you need to log in*

VIRGINIA

NEWPORT NEWS DAILY PRESS

Dominion's 100-acre solar site powers up in Isle of Wight The solar panels blanketing more than 100 acres of farmland in Isle of Wight County, a project that launched early last year, went live in December, Dominion Virginia Power announced Wednesday. The facility at Woodland and Longview drives cost $44 million to build and is owned by Dominion Virginia Power. It is a 19-megawatt facility, and it will power roughly 4,700 homes. The project's conclusion is right on time for the power company, which predicted a December finish line. Woodland Solar is one of three Dominion solar energy facilities to go live in December. The others are in Louisa and Powhatan. Together, the three sites will produce 56 megawatts of generation, enough to power 14,000 homes, according to Dominion. "Our customers have told us they want us to invest in renewable

energy," said Daisy Pridgen, a Dominion spokeswoman. "And solar is a big part of that." Woodland Solar sits on a little more than 100 acres of land on the Oliver Farms, a 1,000-acre site Dominion chose for its flat land and proximity to a power line. The land that hosts the site's 79,648 panels is leased by Dominion from owners Jesse V. Oliver and James (Jimmy) N. Oliver Jr. The solar farm would be one of the largest of its kind in the state, Pridgen said. Oliver Farm has been family owned and operated since 1934, and used to grow broccoli, collards, peas, strawberries and butter beans. "We're pleased – we made the right decision," Jimmy Oliver said by phone. "The thing is, with farming, we're at the mercy of Mother Nature. She's been rather cruel to us these last two years. This is guaranteed income for my family; therefore, that's why I say we made the right choice."

FREDERICKSBURG FREE LANCE STAR

Editorial: It's no accident that bay is improving - EDITORIAL

IF YOUR child brings home a C-minus from school, about the best you can say is that, well, at least it's not a D. That's what advocates for the restoration of the Chesapeake Bay are saying these days. The Chesapeake Bay Foundation says its biannual bay "report card" for 2016 found measurable improvement over the D-plus it scored two years ago. But only to the extent that it earns a C-minus. There are clear indications why the overall score improved from 32 to 34 over the two-year period. One of them, the report acknowledges, is luck. There was somewhat less precipitation over that time, and rainfall is what washes nutrient pollution into the bay. Less rain, less pollution. The fact is, however, that when it does rain, there are fewer pollutants running off because they either don't exist to begin with, or they are captured before they run off—thanks to the best management practices employed by farmers, industries and municipalities. The progress we're seeing now reflects anti-pollution efforts that have grown more intense over time—starting well before EPA involvement put some regulatory teeth in the cleanup effort. Many farmers, watermen and municipal planners have long understood that a healthy bay is a regional economic engine that generates jobs as well as recreational and tourism revenue. Also responsible for this improvement is the Environmental Protection Agency's establishment of the bay's "pollution diet," the Total Maximum Daily Load of pollutants that's allowable without sacrificing progress toward a cleaner Chesapeake. It takes coordination to clean up the largest estuary in the United States and its many tributaries. Helping bay advocates make their case for the cleanup is that the science is not rocket science, but rather a straightforward series of steps that lead to readily identifiable results. By reducing nutrient pollution, which is generally from the nitrogen and phosphorus found in fertilizers, as well as human and animal waste, the algae blooms that feed on the pollution and reduce water quality are diminished as well.

MISCELLANEOUS

BLOOMBERG NEWS

Ports Turn to Natural Gas in Quest for Cleaner Marine Fuel

The tightening of emissions limits for deep-water ships has some of North America's busiest ports chasing a new opportunity. The UN's International Maritime Organization last year cut limits on sulfur in marine fuels to 0.5 percent from 3.5 percent, starting in 2020. The target: So-called bunker fuel, a cheap, tar-like oil residue used by most ships. Now ports in Vancouver, Los Angeles and Tacoma are all studying whether they can profit from supplying liquefied natural gas, which emits virtually no sulfur, as a cleaner alternative fuel that's almost as cheap. While the use of more expensive fuel oil or bolt-on scrubbers can help existing ships slip under the limit, LNG is the fuel of the future for new vessels, according to Norway-based DNV GL, which certifies ships for safety. Exxon Mobil Corp.'s 2016 energy outlook sees use of LNG growing to 10 percent of marine fuels by

2040 from 1 percent in 2016. "It's something that we want to be at the leading edge of," said Robin Silvester, chief executive officer of Vancouver's port authority, which is set to issue a study shortly on the potential market. "That will be the next way that marine emissions can be significantly reduced."

GREENWIRE

FEDERAL WORKFORCE: 'Everybody's kind of waiting for the hammer to fall'

Federal workers are freaking out. Donald Trump's election in November sparked concerns throughout the government workforce about the fate of programs the Republican targeted on the campaign trail, like climate change regulations. He also promised a pay freeze and cuts to the federal workforce. And the return of the GOP-led Congress this month ushered in a new wave of fears as lawmakers moved quickly to make it easier to fire federal workers, slash their pay and target their benefits. Government employees have been fending off these efforts for years and counted on President Obama's veto pen as a reliable firewall. But that defense will vanish in eight days, and Trump could begin signing workforce legislation that's been languishing. It's going to be "open season" on federal workers, said J. David Cox, president of the American Federation of Government Employees, the largest federal workers union. "There's already been legislation that's going after federal workers. We're going to see more of it coming up." At energy and environmental agencies in particular, employees are worried about their budgets getting slashed. Trump and his team have vowed to unravel many of the Obama administration's signature energy policies and have signaled that drastic restructuring could be in store for agencies like U.S. EPA.

Someone has to keep the lights on until Trump hires arrive U.S. EPA named career senior managers today who'll hold down top political jobs on an acting basis until the Trump administration's new appointees can be put in place, according to an internal EPA memorandum obtained by E&E News. "After the inauguration, it is likely that career EPA senior managers will serve in acting roles for the assistant, associate and regional administrator positions until new appointed leaders are in place," said the Jan. 5 memo, authored by Stan Meiburg, EPA's acting deputy administrator. The career managers could be sitting in those top political positions at EPA for months after President-elect Donald Trump's inauguration. An EPA tipsheet on the transition sent out in November last year said, "During the 2008-2009 transition, most AAs [assistant administrators] and RAs [regional administrators] were nominated and arrived in the June-December timeframe following the Inauguration." As of Nov. 1, 2016, the agency had 79 political appointees, including 14 who needed Senate confirmation (*E&E News PM*, Nov. 28, 2016). Who will take on the agency's most senior leadership jobs during the changeover between administrations was not shared in the memo. "The acting senior officials in the Administrator's office, including the acting Administrator and Deputy Administrator, will be announced soon," said the memo.

MARYLAND: Energy efficiency program saves billions — report

A Maryland subsidy program that supports energy efficiency investments has saved utility customers $1.8 billion on electrical bills, according to a report by a nonprofit released yesterday. The EmPOWER program has received $1.3 billion from utilities and their customers since 2008. The money has paid for energy-efficient appliances, home energy evaluation rebates and bill credits for cutting energy consumption. The utilities kick in funds from a surcharge on customers' bills, about $5 monthly for the average Baltimore Gas and Electric Co. customer. For each dollar, the state has averaged a $1.81 benefit through energy use and energy price reduction, according to the report by the American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy.

COAL: Judge gives EPA deadline to review rule's jobs impacts

A West Virginia federal judge yesterday ordered U.S. EPA to quantify the impact on the coal industry of its air regulations under the current administration. U.S. District Court Judge John Preston Bailey for the Northern District of West Virginia sided with Murray Energy Corp. in the long-running litigation. The contentious suit is just one of many filed by the coal company over what CEO Bob Murray and the rest of his industry call the Obama administration's "war on coal." Murray Energy's goal in filing the complaint was to, at least, force the agency to revisit its economic impact analyses for various pollution regulations. EPA argued that it had satisfied

Clean Air Act requirements, but in October, Bailey ordered the agency to draft a plan for a more thorough review. EPA contended that it would take roughly two years to come up with a satisfactory methodology.

TOXICS: EPA proposes further restrictions on carcinogen
U.S. EPA yesterday proposed further restrictions on the carcinogen trichloroethylene, or TCE, prohibiting its use in vapor degreasing. The proposed rule follows close on the heels of the agency's other TCE rule, which would ban the compound in aerosol degreasing and dry cleaning operations (*Greenwire*, Dec. 7, 2016). EPA's December move was the first time in 27 years the agency had proposed banning a chemical. The Toxic Substances Control Act reforms, signed into law last summer, give EPA the power to restrict hazardous chemicals. The agency included TCE on its list of priority compounds in the fall (*E&E News PM*, Nov. 29, 2016). Coupled with the December proposal, yesterday's proposed rule would effectively neuter the largest remaining application of TCE — that of degreasing. Public health advocates have long called for a full ban on TCE. The rule would prohibit the manufacture, processing and distribution of TCE for vapor degreasing.

NEW YORK TIMES

E.P.A. Accuses Fiat Chrysler of Secretly Violating Emissions Standards The Environmental Protection Agency on Thursday accused Fiat Chrysler of using secret software that allowed illegal excess emissions from at least 104,000 diesel vehicles. Affected models include the light-duty model year 2014, 2015 and 2016 Jeep Grand Cherokees and Dodge Ram 1500 trucks with 3-liter diesel engines sold in the United States, the agency said. The software resulted in excess emissions of nitrogen oxides, which have harmful health effects, from the vehicles, the agency said. The excess in emissions "threatens public health by polluting the air we breathe," said Cynthia Giles, an assistant administrator at the E.P.A. Ms. Giles stopped short of calling the software "defeat devices," which Volkswagen used to cheat on diesel emissions tests. Volkswagen is now engulfed in a scandal over the devices. But she said there was no doubt that Fiat Chrysler's software "is contributing to illegal pollution."

REUTERS NEWS SERVICE

USDA analysis says ethanol's environmental benefits better than forecast
The U.S. government on Thursday said that ethanol made from corn is better for the environment than previously expected in a report boosting the country's biggest biofuel a week ahead of a new administration that has some in the industry concerned. The report, the first of its kind from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to examine the actual impact of ethanol, said the biofuel reduces greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 43 percent relative to gasoline, significantly more than the 21 percent estimated by the Environmental Protection Agency in 2010. That marks a potential blow to critics who have questioned whether ethanol, the foundation of the country's biofuels program, is better for the environment than petroleum-based fuels. The analysis, prepared for USDA by Washington consultancy ICF International, comes just a week ahead of the inauguration of President-elect Donald Trump. (Ethanol analysis: bit.ly/2jIZuso) Trump voiced support for ethanol on the campaign trail, especially in Iowa, but at least two of the major players in the incoming administration are critics of the country's biofuels program and environmental regulations. The Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS) was signed into law by President George W. Bush in 2005 and sets annual requirements for used of biofuels including ethanol. It has become a battleground for entrenched oil and corn interests in Washington.

EPA NATIONAL NEWS BULLETIN

Judge Orders EPA TO Hasten Assessment Of Coal Job Impacts.
The AP (1/12) reports that a federal judge has ordered the EPA to "quickly evaluate" the impact of air pollution regulations on power plant and coal mining jobs. U.S. District Judge John Preston Bailey previously ordered the EPA to begin an analysis into the lost jobs, but EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy "asserted it would take the agency up to two years to devise a methodology to use to try to comply with the earlier ruling." Judge Baily

wrote that her response is "wholly insufficient, unacceptable, and unnecessary," and that it "evidences the continued hostility on the part of the EPA to acceptance of the mission established by Congress."

Senate Democrats Raise Conflict-Of-Interest Questions About Pruitt.
Politico (1/12, Schor) reports that Senate Democrats "are leveling new conflict-of-interest charges" against EPA Administrator-designate Scott Pruitt, asking if his ethics agreement "adequately guards against the influence of his fossil-fuel industry donors." Democrats asked the Office of Government Ethics "for more information about the Republican Attorneys General Association, which he led for two years during a time when the GOP stepped up its use of the courts to undercut" President Obama's regulatory agenda. The Democrats "also asked EPA's ethics official to explain when Pruitt would get clearance to work on environmental issues that he is currently suing EPA over in his current job as Oklahoma's attorney general."

Pruitt Blasted For PAC's Political Efforts, Ties To Energy Industry. In an op-ed in the Huffington Post, (1/12, Surgey) Nick Surgey, Director of Research at The Center for Media & Democracy, claims that EPA Administrator nominee Scott Pruitt "coordinated an effort by Republican state attorneys general to oppose the confirmation of Merrick Garland to the Supreme Court." Moreover, Surgey says he "used this effort as a basis to request financial support for his federal Political Action Committee," called Oklahoma Strong. He also notes that according to Politico, "Oklahoma Strong has raised more than a third of its total funds from the energy industry."

Sierra Club Launches Second Ad Campaign Against Pruitt.
The Hill (1/12, Cama) reports a new ad campaign has been launched by the Sierra Club "pushing senators to vote against President-elect Donald Trump's choice to lead the Environmental Protection Agency, Scott Pruitt." The ad campaign "is running in 14 states with senators who environmentalists want to try to sway, and in Washington, D.C." It is the second campaign by the Sierra Club that targets Pruitt, "who has also drawn the ire of numerous other environmental groups, like the Environmental Defense Action Fund, the League of Conservation Voters and 350.org." The Senate Environment and Public Works Committee will hold his confirmation hearing on Jan. 18.

Green, Industry Groups Make Opposing Cases Regarding Pruitt's Nomination. The Hill (1/12, Henry) reports that green groups opposing Pruitt's nomination and industry groups supporting it have both sent separate letters to senators aimed at making their case. While the League of Conservative Voters urged senators to vote against Pruitt's and his "radical record and the far-reaching damage he could do at the helm of the EPA," the conservative and fossil fuel-funded organizations wrote that "Mr. Pruitt has demonstrated his commitment to upholding the Constitution and ensuring the EPA works for American families and consumers."

Tennessee AG Defends Scott Pruitt To Lead EPA.
Tennessee Attorney General Herbert H. Slatery III writes in the Tennessean (1/12, Slatery) that Scott Pruitt is a "bold" and "encouraging" pick to lead the EPA. Slatery defends Pruitt against common criticisms, such as that "he does believe in climate change; he does not believe in the EPA's mission; he favors the oil and gas industry," stating that he doesn't think Pruitt "fits any of those descriptions."

Judge Orders ExxonMobil To Hand Over 40 Years Of Climate Change Research.
The AP (1/12) reports ExxonMobil "has been ordered to hand over documents related to a state investigation into whether it misled the public about the impact of fossil fuels on the climate." In Wednesday's decision, Judge Heidi Brieger wrote, "There is no requirement that the Attorney General have probable cause to believe that a violation [of the law] has occurred," but need only "have a belief that a person has engaged in or is engaging in conduct declared to be unlawful." ClimateWire (1/12) reports attorneys for Exxon "say politics are driving Healey's investigation" and a similar probe by New York AG Eric Schneiderman. Brieger wasn't persuaded Healey had "acted arbitrarily or capriciously" and that the dispute between Healey and Exxon should be heard in Massachusetts.

TIME (1/12, Worland), the Dallas Morning News (1/12) and the website of CNN Money (1/12, Egan) also cover this story.

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