

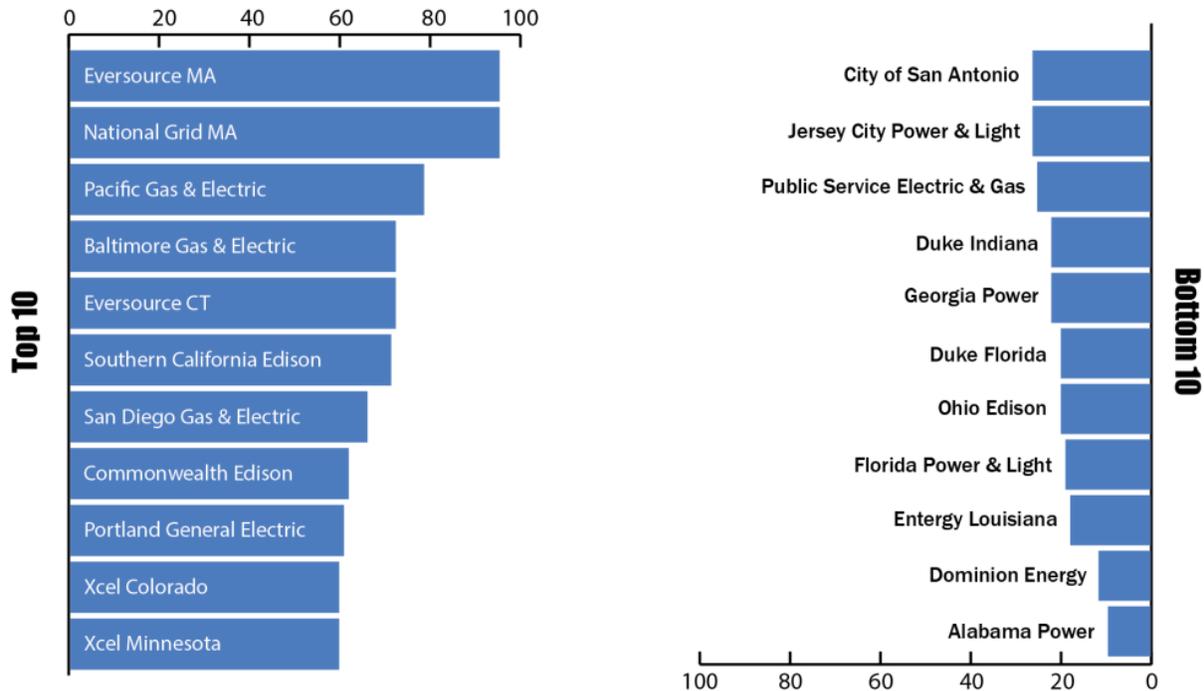


ABRA Update #134 – June 15, 2017

New Utility Energy Efficiency Scorecard Out: Dominion at the Bottom

Dominion ranks next to last in energy efficiency in a new study of the 51 largest U.S. electric utilities. The study, released June 13 by the American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy (ACEEE), is the first in-depth study of its kind. In previous, less comprehensive studies, Dominion has also ranked quite low among the nation’s utility companies.

[Utility Energy Efficiency Scorecard](#) assesses the utilities across a range of 18 energy efficiency metrics in three categories critical to utility-sector efficiency: (1) quantitative savings and spending performance, (2) program diversity and emerging areas, and (3) targets, business models, and evaluation. The metrics used span a wide range of vital utility-sector efficiency programs and performance, each with a point value relative to its importance to utility-sector energy efficiency. Below is a list of the top and bottom ten companies and their scorecard rankings.



Top and bottom 10 utilities and percentage of available points earned

Please support ABRA’s important work by clicking [here](#).

[ACEEE](#) is a nonprofit research organization that specializes in developing energy efficiency resources for public policy. The report received no utility funding. It specifically looks at state jurisdictional utilities rather than parent or holding companies. All 51 utilities were provided the opportunity to review the report before its publication.

Virginia DEQ Sets Forth 401 Review Criteria for ACP and MVP

The Virginia Department of Environmental Quality has created a new webpage that describes how the agency is proceeding in its evaluation of the water quality certification applications for the Atlantic Coast Pipeline and the Mountain Valley Pipeline under Section 401 of the federal Clean Water Act.

The opening paragraphs, under the heading “Water Protection for Pipelines,” state:

Due to the size and scope of proposed natural gas pipeline projects in Virginia, DEQ is developing additional requirements to ensure that Virginia water quality standards are maintained in all areas affected by the construction of these pipelines.

DEQ will require Mountain Valley Pipeline and Atlantic Coast Pipeline to provide details and site plans to assess whether construction activities in adjacent areas will adversely affect water quality during construction and to ensure that water quality is maintained into the future. This additional certification goes well beyond other regulatory requirements and will protect water quality across the range of pipeline activities, not just temporary construction impacts to streams and wetlands.

Details at: <http://www.deq.virginia.gov/Programs/Water/ProtectionRequirementsforPipelines.aspx>.

Primary Reflections: Few Determined So Much

This week’s Virginia gubernatorial primaries generated national attention (see article below from *The Hill* and *Politico*). Among the issues that received prominent attention, particularly in the Democrat primary, was the issue of proposed natural gas pipelines. It remains to be seen the degree of attention that issue will receive in the general election campaign. The choices made by Virginia voters on November 7 are important, but they were shaped by choices made in the June 13 primary. And, the number of people making those choices was . . . well . . . abysmal.

There 7 million persons of voting age in Virginia and 78% are registered. In last Fall’s Presidential election, the percentage of registered voters who cast ballots was 72% (56% of the voting age population). In last Tuesday’s primary elections to choose Republican and Democrat gubernatorial candidates, a total of 909,000 showed up to vote (543,000 in the Democrat Primary; 366,000 in the Republican Primary). That’s 16% of the registered voters in the Commonwealth and just under 13% of the voting age population.

We can do better. We must do better!

In the News:

Local/Atlantic Coast Pipeline

River groups follow up with questions for DEQ

- The Recorder – 6/15/17

[http://www.abralliance.org/wp-](http://www.abralliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/River_groups_follow_up_with_questions_for_DEQ-Recorder_20170615.pdf)

[content/uploads/2017/06/River_groups_follow_up_with_questions_for_DEQ-Recorder_20170615.pdf](http://www.abralliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/River_groups_follow_up_with_questions_for_DEQ-Recorder_20170615.pdf)

The letter was sent to David Paylor, director of the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, following Paylor's visit last week to Bath and Highland counties to see areas affected by the proposed Atlantic Coast Pipeline.

Senators press for FERC reform

- The Recorder – 6/15/17

http://www.abralliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Senators_press_for_FERC_reform-Recorder_20170615.pdf

Sponsor Sen. Tim Kaine and co-sponsor Sen. Mark Warner crafted the legislation to strengthen the public's ability to evaluate impacts of gas pipelines FERC considers.

Pipeline route walk to start near Bolar on Saturday senators press for FERC reform

- The Recorder – 6/15/17

http://www.abralliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Pipeline_route_walk_to_start_near_Bolar_on_Saturday-Recorder_20170615.pdf

This Saturday, June 17, "Walking the Line: Into the Heart of Virginia" will step out for a two-week walk along the Virginia portion of the proposed Atlantic Coast Pipeline route that will span five counties and 150 miles.

Address transparency concerns, Goodlatte asks

- The Recorder – 6/15/17

[http://www.abralliance.org/wp-](http://www.abralliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Address_transparency_concerns_Goodlatte_asks-Recorder_20170615.pdf)

[content/uploads/2017/06/Address_transparency_concerns_Goodlatte_asks-Recorder_20170615.pdf](http://www.abralliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Address_transparency_concerns_Goodlatte_asks-Recorder_20170615.pdf)

Michael J. Hirrel: Atlantic Coast Pipeline won't help Virginians

- The Virginian-Pilot – 6/11/17

http://pilotonline.com/opinion/columnist/guest/michael-j-hirrel-atlantic-coast-pipeline-won-t-help-virginians/article_ca0c2d9f-8f18-5866-b6a6-c61300bcd4.html

Virginia faith leaders oppose fracked-gas pipelines

- Augusta Free press – 6/8/17

<http://augustafreepress.com/virginia-faith-leaders-oppose-fracked-gas-pipelines/>

Regional/Mountain Valley Pipeline, other

5 takeaways from the Virginia primaries

- The Hill – 6/14/17

<http://thehill.com/homenews/campaign/337874-5-takeaways-from-the-virginia-primaries>

Democrats' hotly anticipated contested primary for Virginia governor was supposed to be the race to watch when Virginians went to the polls Tuesday, but the surprise of the night was the unexpectedly close race for the GOP nomination.

Related:

<http://www.politico.com/story/2017/06/14/virginia-primary-gillespie-northam-239530>

Environmental groups ask court to review W.Va. decision to issue pipeline water quality permit

- The Roanoke Times – 6/9/17

http://www.roanoke.com/business/news/environmental-groups-ask-court-to-review-w-va-decision-to/article_e071b612-7fb8-586e-be99-ecf97c11c45d.html

Five environmental watchdog organizations filed a petition Friday with the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit that seeks a review of a water quality permit issued in West Virginia for the proposed Mountain Valley Pipeline.

Virginia Supreme Court temporarily halts pipeline surveying of 3 Bent Mountain properties

- The Roanoke Times – 6/9/17

http://www.roanoke.com/business/news/roanoke_county/virginia-supreme-court-temporarily-halts-pipeline-surveying-of-bent-mountain/article_8841942f-7724-5c4f-82d2-07f975e14b80.html

Montgomery County asks Virginia DEQ to reconsider pipeline permit policy

- WDBJ7 News – 6/14/17

<http://www.wdbj7.com/content/news/Montgomery-County-to-ask-Virginia-DEQ-to-reconsider-pipeline-permit-policy-428085203.html>

Pipelines; A Bird's Eye View Part 1 & 2

- WVTF Radio IQ – 6/13/17

<http://wvtf.org/post/pipelines-birds-eye-view-part-1-0#stream/0>

The debate about how pipelines are planned, approved and whether they are necessary continues.

Related:

- <http://wvtf.org/post/pipelines-birds-eye-view-part-2>

Edwards: Clean energy is the future; climate change demands action

- The Roanoke Times – 6/10/17

http://www.roanoke.com/opinion/commentary/edwards-clean-energy-is-the-future-climate-change-demands-action/article_100f44df-645c-596f-b8bc-a1713883abb5.html

The interfaith ritual was part of “Defend the Sacred,” an afternoon-long festival held at Elmwood Park on Saturday in opposition to the Mountain Valley and Atlantic Coast natural gas pipelines.

Festival opposing pipeline projects draws hundreds to Elmwood Park

- The Roanoke Times – 6/14/17

http://www.roanoke.com/news/festival-opposing-pipeline-projects-draws-hundreds-to-elmwood-park/article_ef60e636-68c4-5313-a093-1af58d906e52.html

Natural gas association launches front group to oppose climate activists

- ThinkProgress – 6/14/17

<https://thinkprogress.org/natural-gas-front-group-comes-to-virginia-f9013d32ce81>

The group wants to create grassroots opposition to anti-pipeline movements.

Related:

- <https://www.desmogblog.com/2017/06/14/your-energy-america-ddc-advocacy-atlantic-coast-pipeline>

Big Picture:

Energy Department Closes Office Working on Climate Change Abroad

- The New York Times – 6/15/17

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/06/15/climate/energy-department-closes-office-working-on-climate-change-abroad.html>

The office being eliminated specialized in applying the agency’s technical expertise to other nations’ efforts to advance clean energy projects.

Pence Promises Quicker Federal Permitting of Infrastructure Projects

- Natural Gas Intelligence – 6/9/17

<http://www.naturalgasintel.com/articles/110733-pence-promises-quicker-federal-permitting-of-infrastructure-projects>

How Retiring Nuclear Power Plants May Undercut U.S. Climate Goals

- The New York Times – 6/13/17

https://www.nytimes.com/2017/06/13/climate/nuclear-power-retirements-us-climate-goals.html?_r=0

Recently, the gas boom has started pushing many of America's nuclear reactors into early retirement – a trend with adverse consequences for climate change.

Trump won't protect the environment – Congress must

- The Hill – 6/9/17

<http://thehill.com/blogs/pundits-blog/energy-environment/337148-trump-wont-protect-the-environment-congress-must>

First U.S. Natural Gas Shipped to Poland

- Foreign Policy – 6/8/17

<http://foreignpolicy.com/2017/06/08/first-u-s-natural-gas-shipped-to-poland/>

European countries, especially in the east, are anxious to diversify their energy supplies away from Russian dominance. Increased exports to Europe and other regions will likely result in increases of the price of gas here.

How Do We Get to 100% Renewable Energy? Could be Storage, Storage, Storage

- Union of Concerned Scientists – 6/15/17

<http://blog.ucsusa.org/mike-jacobs/how-do-we-get-to-100-percent-renewable-energy-the-role-of-storage>

At present, grid operators are showing they can maintain reliability when renewable energy has reached 40-60% of electricity demand in particular hours.

Related:

<http://www.marketwatch.com/story/this-giant-battery-is-whats-been-missing-in-the-renewable-energy-revolution-2017-06-14>

India's renewable energy revolution is racing ahead

- PRI – 6/14/17

<https://www.pri.org/stories/2017-06-14/indias-renewable-energy-revolution-racing-ahead>

What India can do...surely *we* can do!