

**AUGUST 2017**  
**PUBLIC POLICY REPORT**

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## **FEDERAL UPDATE**

### **FERC Nominees Confirmed by Senate**

The U.S. Senate has unanimously confirmed two Republicans nominated by President Trump to serve on the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. The votes approving Senate aide Neil Chatterjee, formerly with NRECA, and Pennsylvania utility regulator Robert Powelson restore a voting quorum for FERC.

### **EPA Plans Rewrite of Limits on Coal Power Plant Wastewater**

The Environmental Protection Agency says it plans to scrap an Obama-era measure limiting water pollution from coal-fired power plants. EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt said he will seek to revise the 2015 guidelines mandating increased treatment for wastewater from steam electric power-generating plants. Pruitt's letter was filed with the Fifth Circuit U. S. Court of Appeals in New Orleans, which is hearing legal challenges of the wastewater rule.

### **DOE Grid Reliability Report Recommends Bolstering Coal and Nuclear Power**

The Energy Department's report on grid reliability urges the government to strengthen the nation's electric grid by making it easier and cheaper to operate power plants, including coal and nuclear plants, specifically by expediting licensing and permitting for such facilities.

## **STATE UPDATE**

### **Dakota Access Pipeline Pumping**

The Dakota Access pipeline project is 100 percent finished in Iowa, including cleanup and restoration of farmland, and is now carrying 450,000 barrels of oil per day along its 346-mile path. An attorney for the company filed a letter with the Iowa Utilities Board which said all final right-of-way cleanup is done, though some repairs and reseeding not required to be reported remains in progress.

### **Iowa Utilities Board Deregulates Landline Phone Service**

The Iowa Utilities Board has deregulated landline local exchange service, citing strong competition and availability for service. Rates had been deregulated before, but the new action deregulates nearly all customer service requirements, service quality standards and elements of ending service. The change means that a customer with a complaint could ultimately choose another provider or file a complaint with the utilities board. The state also has set aside certification requirements, which makes it easy for new competitors to enter the market.

**Alliant Energy Seeks to Expand Wind Power in Iowa**

Alliant Energy applied Thursday to expand its wind power operations in Iowa, adding to a similar application approved last year. The project, which was recently submitted to the Iowa Utilities Board, could generate up to 500 megawatts of wind energy. Alliant received approval in 2016 for a different wind power project. The two projects could total up to 1,000 megawatts, which could power up to 430,000 homes a year.

**Unemployment Tax to Decrease 25 Percent on Average in 2018**

Beginning January 1, unemployment insurance taxes for Iowa employers will decrease an average of 25 percent on 2018 wages. The decrease is a result of the strength of the unemployment insurance trust fund, unemployment contributory wages and target levels of the unemployment insurance contributory wages. In 2018, Iowa's employers will be in Table 7 of eight possible tables, with Table 8 being the most favorable.

**Upcoming Activities in 2017**

NRECA Gettysburg Leadership Experience – Gettysburg, PA	September 12-14, 2017
NRECA Pre-Director & CEO Education (Region 5 & 6) – Minneapolis, MN	September 19, 2017
NRECA Regions 5 & 6 Meeting – Minneapolis, MN	September 20-21, 2017

**Consumer Price Index**

Month	Seasonally Adjusted Change from Previous Month
July 2017	0.1%
June 2017	0.0%
May 2017	-0.1%
April 2017	0.2%
March 2017	-0.3%
February 2017	0.1%
Unadjusted Rolling 12 Month Average: 1.7%	