The Power Sector Continues to Cut Carbon Pollution and Invest in Clean Energy Resources

A number of states and power companies reaffirmed their commitment to clean energy progress in the wake of the 2016 election. For example, shortly after the election American Electric Power CEO Nick Akins said, “We’re moving to a cleaner-energy economy and we’re still getting pressure from investors to reduce carbon emissions. I don’t see that changing.”

Many other power companies remain similarly undeterred from moving towards a low-carbon future, even with the election of a President who has called climate change a hoax.

Here is a list of statements by power company executives demonstrating their continued commitment to clean energy progress:

- **American Electric Power (AEP):** No matter who occupies the White House, “it’s [coal’s] not coming back,” said AEP CEO Nick Akins. “We’re moving to a cleaner-energy economy and we’re still getting pressure from investors to reduce carbon emissions. I don’t see that changing.” These statements came at nearly the same time that Ohio regulators approved a settlement with AEP, which means AEP will decommission 1,500 MW of coal-fired electricity while also adding 900 MW of clean energy in Ohio.
- **Cloud Peak Energy**: “It can't just be, ‘We're going to get rid of these regulations, and you guys can party until the next administration comes,’” Cloud Peak Energy VP Richard Reavey said. “There are serious global concerns about climate emissions. We have to recognize that's a political reality and work within that framework.”
- **Dominion Virginia Power** plans to shut down two coal units, totaling 327 MW capacity, in 2017 to comply with EPA’s Mercury and Air Toxics Standards (MATS). “It's important to know that the MATS rule, which led to the closure of the coal units at Yorktown, is a final rule that has been in place for several years,” said Dominion spokeswoman Bonita Harris. “It would take several months if not a year or more for the EPA to propose revisions, accept comment, review and respond to comments, and adopt the final language. So a new administration couldn't just change it easily.”
- **DTE Energy** is moving forward with plans to retire eight units at three coal-fired power plants between 2020 and 2023. “Many of our coal plants are aging and need to be replaced with cleaner, modern generating technologies, which is what our customers are asking of us and we plan to continue working to achieve these goals,” DTE spokesman Brian Corbett said.
- **Duke Energy**: “Markets are driving a lot of the behavior,” said Tom Williams, a spokesman for Duke. “Regardless of what happens to the Clean Power Plan, we’ll continue to move toward a lower carbon energy mix.”
- **FirstEnergy Corp.:** “Our plans for those plants have not changed,” said FirstEnergy spokeswoman Stephanie Walton when asked after Trump’s election whether the company will re-evaluate plans to sell or shut down coal units.

- **Salt River Project**: "While President-elect Trump has indicated a desire to address certain environmental regulations, it is much too early to make any assumptions and determine if that will indeed occur and what it would look like," said SRP spokesman Scott Harelson. "Our current plans for future operations are not impacted by the election results in the near-term; operations of our facilities and efforts to meet environmental regulations continue as planned."
- **Southern Company**: "We've always had a point of view at Southern that there's a reasonable trajectory in which to move the portfolio of the United States to a lower carbon future," said Southern Co. CEO Tom Fanning. "There's a way to transition the fleet now."
- **Xcel Energy**: Said Frank Prager, Xcel's Vice President of Policy and Federal Affairs: "Regardless of the outcome of the election, Xcel Energy will continue pursuing energy and environmental strategies that appeal to policymakers across the political spectrum because we are focused on renewable and other infrastructure projects that will reduce carbon dioxide emissions without increasing prices or sacrificing reliability."

Many power companies are also moving ahead with plans to retire coal units and transition to cleaner sources of energy:

- **Duke Energy:** Duke plans to retire two Crystal River coal units in Florida in 2018 and all five units at its G.G. Allen facility by 2028. The company is also retiring its 384-MW Asheville coal plant in North Carolina in 2019 and will replace it with the 560-MW Asheville combined-cycle gas plant.
- **PacifiCorp** said it has obligations to comply with multiple state laws and has fixed long-term schedules for capital costs, so nothing can change on short notice. PacifiCorp owns a stake in the Craig and Colstrip coal plants. Colstrip Units 1 and 2, with combined 614 MW capacity, will retire in 2022.
- **PNM Resources**: Spokesman Pahl Shipley said the company has no change in plans for retiring two of the four units at the San Juan coal plant in New Mexico by the end of 2017, accounting for 837 MW of capacity. The plans were developed with the EPA and the New Mexico Environment Department to comply with regional haze regulations of the Clean Air Act, Shipley said.
- **Portland General Electric (PGE)**: On November 15—a week after the election—PGE filed its 2016 Integrated Resource Plan with the Oregon Public Utility Commission. The plan sets a path to achieve Oregon's renewable energy goal, which requires 50% of the electricity PGE delivers to come from renewable sources by 2040. Under this new plan, PGE would be on track to meet the state law by 2020. The plan also proposes an increase in energy efficiency and demand response. The Integrated Resource Plan executive summary can be found here.
- **Tennessee Valley Authority** is moving forward with plans to retire two coal plants in 2017, as well as a third 750-MW plant in 2018.
- **Tri-State Generation** will move forward with plans to retire its 100-MW Nucla coal plant and Unit 1 of the Craig coal plant per an agreement with EPA under the regional haze rule. "We are moving forward with retirement activities and developing a transition plan for the employees and communities," said Tri-State spokesman Lee Boughey.