National Coal Council (NCC) Meeting Minutes

<u>Date:</u> Tuesday, July 21, 2026

<u>Time:</u> 8:00 AM – 12:00 PM EST

<u>Location:</u> Willard Hotel, Washington, DC

<u>Chair:</u> James (Jim) Grech, President and Chief Executive Officer, Peabody Energy

<u>Vice-Chair:</u> James (Jimmy) Brock, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Core Natural Resources, Inc.

Official Proceedings

8:00 AM – 8:10 AM Welcome from the U.S. Department of Energy - Acting Assistant Secretary Hydrocarbons and Geothermal Energy Office, Curt Coccodrilli

Curt Coccodrili welcomes everyone to the second meeting of the National Coal Council (NCC) under President Trump's second term and expresses gratitude for the administration's focus on supporting the coal industry to provide affordable, reliable, abundant energy for America, including its growing quantum and artificial intelligence (AI) computing industries.

Assistant Secretary Coccodrili discusses the importance of international partnerships, specifically calling out recent visits from our allies and their stated desire for more reliable American metallurgical and thermal coal and world class terminals.

Assistant Secretary Coccodrili speaks about the importance of the planned West Coast Gateway project in Oakland, California, and the current and future U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) initiatives to support innovation, next generation mining, and the entire coal value chain.

Assistant Secretary Coccodrili introduces five new NCC members.

- Emily Arthun, Chief Executive Officer American Coal Council
- Angela Caddell, Group Vice President of Agricultural Products BNSF Railway
- Michael Gorzynski, Chairman Alpha Metallurgical Resources
- Steven J. Read, President Signal Peak Global Markets, LLC

- Tom Rice, Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer Tennessee Valley Authority

Assistant Secretary Coccodrili thanks long-term members for their continued work and support, stating that they are making a difference, as the NCC is an important partner in President Trump's energy agenda. Today's meeting will focus on maintaining and growing the nation's coal fleet, expanding export opportunities, strengthening the workforce, and ensuring coal remains central to America's energy future.

Assistant Secretary Coccodrili introduces Deputy Designated Federal Officer of the NCC, Joe Giove for administrative announcements.

8:10 AM – 8:15 AM Administrative Announcements – Joseph Giove, Director of Industry Affairs, Office of Coal, U.S. Department of Energy

Director Giove states that the NCC is a federal advisory committee and must abide by the rules of the Federal Advisory Committee Ace (FACA). Thus, the meeting is being livestreamed, recorded, and is open to the public. Mr, Giove states that the recording and meeting minutes will be available on the website in the near future. Mr. Giove states that members should also adhere to antitrust guidelines and to not discuss private company data. Mr. Giove covers the evacuation procedures in case of an emergency and the location of the restrooms. Mr. Giove thanks Mike Nasi for contributing to the coal train setup in the room on the day of the event.

Assistant Secretary Coccodrilli then welcomes the attending secretaries:

- Secretary Chris Wright, U.S. Department of Energy
- Secretary Doug Burgum, U.S. Department of the Interior
- Acting Secretary Keith Sonderling, U.S. Department of Labor
- Administrator Lee Zeldin, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- Deputy Executive Director, Blake Deeley, National Energy Dominance Council
- Under Secretary, Kyle Haustveit, U.S. Department of Energy

Assistant Secretary Cocodrilli mentions the importance of the National Energy Technology Laboratory (NETL) Coal Center of Excellence in Morgantown, WV.

8:15 AM – 9:05 AM – Remarks from Cabinet Leadership

Deputy Executive Director Blake Deeley, National Energy Dominance Council (NEDC)

Deputy Executive Director Deeley mentions the importance of long-term power purchase agreements made with the Department of War (DOW) and the Defense Production Act (DPA) and states agreements are ongoing and will be made soon.

Deputy Executive Director Deeley discusses administration initiatives, such as the maintained operation of 14 coal plants in 10 states, the Oakland export terminal, the restarting of a Maryland coal plant and plans to build additional coal plants in Alaska and West Virginia, the first since 2013.

Under Secretary of Energy Kyle Haustveit, U.S. Department of Energy (DOE)

Under Secretary Haustveit states that beautiful, clean coal is back and touts the importance of the planned $3 billion investment into the coal industry by the administration. Under Secretary Haustveit says that 2025 saw the largest use of coal in history and states that 2026 use will be larger due to the increasing fertilizer and power needs and national security challenges.

Administrator Lee Zeldin, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

Administrator Zeldin states that the NCC has persevered over the years, despite attacks from previous administrations. Administrator Zeldin discusses the importance of limiting federal power and states that the Trump EPA will work to undo recent damage to the coal industry.

Acting Secretary Keith Sonderling, U.S. Department of Labor (DOL)

Acting Secretary Sonderling discusses the importance of worker safety and prosperity during America's planned reindustrialization. Components of reindustrialization such as manufacturing and computer infrastructure, including AI and quantum, need energy. President Trump recently announced $700 million plan to spur demand for coal fired power plants and coal exports. Acting Secretary Sonderling says the DOL is to build a workforce by preparing workers for jobs then protecting them at the workplace. The DOL has a planned $10 million investment in mining training and safety.

DOL is placing importance on working with mines to begin before inspections and on compliance assistance. The DOL has worked with 46 new and reopened mines before inspection. Last year, mining reported the lowest injury rate in history.

The DOL and DOE have a planned memorandum of understanding (MOU) to support partnership, support NCC, and make America the leader in safety culture and mining. Better data, partnerships, and technologies make mining safe and productive.

Secretary Doug Burgum, U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI)

Secretary Burgum expresses gratitude to the NCC and current administration. As the former governor of North Dakota, Secretary Burgum says he knows how much work was occurring to shut down the coal industry and move to unreliable, foreign sources of energy which could not provide enough power to the grid.

Secretary Burgum says the cost of energy is important to high tech billionaires, spurring their support of Trump in the 2024 Presidential election. The tech industry requires additional, affordable power to keep up with China. Coal power played an important role during Winter Storm Fern. Without coal, millions of homes would have been without power, and hundreds or thousands of people would have died.

Secretary Burgum states that the American energy dominance is about having the energy to sell to allies, so they don't have to buy from enemies. DOI manages 500 million acres of land, only some of which were set aside as national parks. Trump has opened 13 million acres for coal leasing. The Office of Surface Mining and Bureau of Land Management reviews leases "at the speed of Trump," approving the Hurricane Creek Mine in 15 days and Black Butte Mine in 28 days.

Secretary Burgum discusses the proliferation of AI as an arms race and the importance of building data centers next to coal plants. The U.S. Geological Survey estimates that America has an additional 356 billion shorts tons of coal resources and that the country should replace politics of scarcity with politics of abundance.

Secretary Chris Wright, U.S. DOE

Secretary Wright states that for the past 17 years the government has waged a war on coal. This administration supports coal because they believe in American industry and want to be a global leader in industry. The country was built as an industrial powerhouse using coal. In the last 50 years energy demand has grown 1.6–1.7% compound year over year. Coal's percent of the demand has also grown. Coal and natural gas are chipping away at the market share of oil.

Secretary Wright states the electricity grid balances supply and demand all the time. Normally, the grid has hundreds of gigawatts of extra power. Winter Storm Fern set power demand records at 25% higher than a typical January week. While solar power is the biggest receiver of government subsidies, it is irrelevant in the winter. Coal is dispatchable power. Coal is the reason people did not die. Secretary Wright notes that Florida almost had to close schools to conserve electricity. If President Trump had not won the election, 17 gigawatts of coal power would have closed, the country would have had blackouts, and people would have lost power.

Utility companies are happy to keep coal power open. Coal has been the largest source of electricity for the last 125 years. Secretary Wright is excited to see the study results to lower the cost of coal mining in the U.S. The next study will focus on the entire supply chain.

9:05 AM – 9:20 AM Questions from the Press

Assistant Secretary Coccodrilli states there is no media in the room and they will submit questions electronically.

9:20 AM – 9:30 AM U.S. Department of Energy and U.S. Department of Labor Memorandum of Understanding Signing Ceremony

The partnership will focus on:

- **Fostering Collaborative Research and Development**: Conducting joint research, testing, and demonstration projects involving AI, automation, advanced sensors, and other technologies that improve mining operations.
- **Leveraging Federal Expertise:** Working with multidisciplinary teams at DOE's National Energy Technology Laboratory Coal Center of Excellence to accelerate technology development and deployment.
- **Improving Mine Safety:** Applying advanced technologies to strengthen hazard detection, reduce mining accidents, and enhance emergency preparedness and response.
- **Facilitating Workforce Development:** Identifying future workforce needs and supporting education and training opportunities that equip miners with the skills needed for increasingly technology-driven operations.
- **Enhancing Data Access and Digitization:** Working with stakeholders to digitize legacy mining data and improve public datasets that support characterization of domestic mineral resources, including federally managed lands.

Secretary Wright and Acting Secretary Sonderling sign the MOU.

- Acting Assistant Secretary Curt Coccodrilli announces a picture will be taken followed by a short break. During the break, Secretary Doug Burgum, Acting Secretary Keith Sonderling, and Administrator Lee Zeldin departed, while Secretary Chris Wright, Deputy Executive Director, Blake Deeley, and Under Secretary, Kyle Haustveit remained in the meeting.

9:40 AM – 10:00 AM Welcome from Chair and Vice-Chair

After the break, Acting Assistant Secretary Curt Coccodrilli introduces Jim Grech and Jimmy Brock for their remarks.

Jim Grech, NCC Chair, states that the reports were compiled in fewer than six months and expresses gratitude to the chairs and sub-chairs. Mr. Grech expresses that any country gifted with a large energy asset should be happy to use that asset to propel the nation's quality of life. The U.S. coal reserves are larger than any other single nation's energy reserves.

Jimmy Brock, NCC Vice-Chair, thanked the Trump administration for adding pride back into the coal industry. He then congratulates Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Michele Bloodworth, America's Power, and President and CEO Rich Nolan, National Mining Association, for their work in preparing the reports.

Mr. Brock advises that at the start of the AI revolution, it would be folly to turn our backs on coal, likening the AI revolution to an arms race, with American competitiveness hinged on the outcome. Energy dominance is a clearly stated priority of this administration.

10:00 AM – 11:10 AM Presentation, Discussion, and Vote on Draft National Coal Council Reports

Review of Draft Report: Outlook and Opportunities for U.S. Coal Exports

Report Chair Rich Nolan thanks President Trump, Secretary Wright, and the administration for re-establishing the NCC and recognizing important role NCC plays in advising the administration.

Coal is underrepresented in global markets and could help strengthen economic security of world.

Global electricity demand is rising, with data centers, electrification, and industrial growth adding pressure. More than 1,200 coal generating units are under development globally, primarily in Asia. Metallurgical coal demand is expected to remain strong as steel production grows in India and Southeast Asia. Further, coal exports function as an "energy hedge" for allies and trade partners while supporting U.S. jobs and balance of trade.

Asian markets are the largest growth opportunity, but the U.S. is farther away than Australia, Indonesia, and Russia. U.S. western coal, especially Powder River Basin and Uinta Basin coal, lacks efficient, large-scale U.S.-controlled trans-Pacific access. Without new West Coast capacity, western producers rely on constrained Canadian outlets or less efficient alternatives. Market access is the decisive constraint.

Hampton Roads and Baltimore are the dominant East Coast arteries; Gulf ports support Illinois Basin and Southern Appalachia. The Baltimore bridge collapse and Black Warrior River lock outages show why alternate routes and modernized assets matter.

Recommendation one is to develop and modernize export infrastructure, including increasing West Coast coal port capacity capable of serving large oceangoing vessels;

supporting the Western Gateway/Oakland terminal while exploring additional West Coast, Pacific Northwest, and Mexico options such as Guaymas, and expand East Coast and Gulf capacity; deepen channels; modernize locks and dams; and coordinate with U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT), U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), and states.

Recommendation two is to reduce excess costs and regulatory friction, including taxes and fees, federal leasing, permitting, and transportation.

Recommendation three is to improve trade terms and market access to make U.S. coal easier to buy—not more expensive to ship. This can be achieved by eliminating barriers, using trade agreements, addressing Russia (including the use of sanctions), and fixing shipping fees.

The report's final recommendation is to enhance technology and productivity by adopting international standards to accelerate deployment of mining and OEM technologies; considering tax credits or grants for operators that trial technologies improving productivity and safety and extending U.S. leadership in high-efficiency boilers, advanced mining equipment, and rare earth extraction from coal byproducts.

Open Period for Comments/Questions

- Emily Arthun expresses gratitude for her appointment to the NCC. She has seen how coal supports rural economics and has seen the devastation the loss of coal industry has had on rural communities. West Coast port access is essential to compete with Indonesia and Australia to meet the Asian demand. The freight disadvantage requires coordinated federal and industry support.
- President, CEO and Director Joe Craft, Alliance Resource Partners, L.P., states that his company is primarily known for electricity. He is happy to see the administration's speed for evaluating and getting technologies to work. His hope is that there will be a focus on AI in the future.

Vote on Opportunities to Expand U.S. Coal Export Options Report

Chair Grech called on Deputy Designated Federal Officer Joseph Giove to conduct the vote. Mr. Giove noted that a quorum was necessary to conduct a vote. He stated there were 63 registered members of the NCC and thus, 32 must be present for a quorum. Mr. Giove noted that 50 members were present, so a quorum was achieved. Mr. Giove next recorded the following voting options:

- Yes — for finalization of the report
- No — against finalization of the report
- Abstain from voting

Members can vote yes, then add comments to the report up to ten days later, which will be added to the end of the report as an addendum. Fifty members are present. Twenty-six are needed to finalize the report.

Results:

- No — 0 votes
- Abstain — 0 votes
- Yes — 50 votes.

The report is finalized and will be posted to the NCC website in 15 minutes.

Review of Draft Report: Maximizing the Value of the U.S. Coal Fleet

Report Chair Michele Bloodworth expresses thanks to Secretary Wright, President Trump, and the NCC. Ms. Bloodworth mentioned that the last NCC report was six years ago, when electricity demand was flat. With the expected growth of coal, the U.S. needs clear answers to building a sustainable coal fleet.

Coal generation remains an important part of the U.S. electric system, providing reliable, affordable power across much of the country. A significant portion of the coal fleet has already retired over the past decade and warns that many additional plants are scheduled to close unless actions are taken to support them.

Comparing the cost of keeping existing coal plants in operation with the cost of replacing them, Michelle argues that continuing to operate existing coal plants is considerably less expensive than replacing them with new generation resources and notes that the comparison does not include additional costs such as new transmission infrastructure.

The report contains 19 recommendations intended to preserve and modernize the coal fleet while strengthening its supporting supply chain, building on current federal efforts and are organized into four major categories, regulatory reforms, electricity market reforms, financial support and new coal power plants. Together, the recommendations are designed to preserve existing generation, modernize the fleet and improve the resilience of the coal supply chain.

The regulatory recommendations focus on streamlining federal policies and improving regulatory certainty. The market reform recommendations seek to better recognize the reliability value of coal plants and encourage market changes that support their continued operation. The financial recommendations call for grants, loans, and other federal support for both coal plants and the broader supply chain. Finally, the report recommends reducing barriers to constructing new coal-fired power plants.

Ms. Bloodworth concludes by highlighting the specific topics addressed throughout the report, including environmental regulations, federal coal leasing, electricity market rules, financial incentives, Department of Defense (DOD) support, and policies intended to encourage the development of new coal generation. Together, these recommendations provide a comprehensive strategy for maintaining the nation's coal fleet and improving its long-term competitiveness.

Open Period for Comments/Questions

- Chief Executive Officer and General Manager Todd Brickhouse, Basin Electric Cooperative, states that the previous day, the Southwest Power Pool (SPP) and their western interconnect experienced an Energy Emergency Alert Level 3, which was not during a particularly severe weather event. The takeaway is that without Basin Electric Cooperative's four coal units in Wyoming, there would have been load shed events.
- Tony Campbell, East Kentucky Power Cooperative, states that we are racing towards a reliability challenge, exacerbated by the data centers. This report provides direction for the administration but can also be used by the public to prove coal is a necessity to the nation's energy portfolio.
- President and CEO Buddy Hasten, Arkansas Electric Cooperative Corporation, states that he spent the first half of his career in a nuclear submarine and the next half in utilities. His whole life has been dedicated to war: the Cold War, war against terrorism, and the war on Coal. He states that 45% of troops are down, and he considers actions by the government as friendly fire. He states that he supports the actions of this report.
- Senior Vice President, Marketing and Sales, Jason Hess, Union Pacific Railroad, states that he supports the recommendations made in the report.
- Joe Craft endorses the report and expresses gratitude to the administration.
- Secretary Wright thanks to Michelle and is glad to hear the contributions and feedback. He expresses that we need a growing reliable, affordable, secure electricity grid and to remove barriers to opening coal fleets and exports.

Vote on Maximizing the Value of the U.S. Coal Fleet

Chair Grech called on Deputy Designated Federal Officer Joseph Giove to conduct the vote. Mr. Giove noted that the quorum was still active. Mr. Giove again conducted the vote and recorded the following results:

- No — 0 votes
- Abstain — 0 votes
- Yes — 50 votes.

Mr. Giove stated that the report is finalized and will be posted to the NCC website in 15 minutes.

11:10 AM – 11:30 AM Announcement of new NCC Study: Regulatory Certainty for the Entire Coal Value Stream

Chair Grech introduces a new National Coal Council study titled "Regulatory Certainty for the Entire Coal Value Stream." He explains that the report will examine the nation's coal regulations while identifying a pathway toward modernization. He notes that the final report is expected to be delivered by December 1, 2026.

The U.S. has abundant coal resources, but a complex regulatory framework creates uncertainty and discourages investment across the coal value chain. This study is intended to identify opportunities to streamline regulations while continuing to protect public health, the environment, and worker safety. Executive Order 14241 calls for removing unnecessary federal regulatory barriers affecting the domestic coal industry.

Next, he outlines the structure of the report. The study will first examine the current regulatory landscape across the coal value stream, then identify opportunities to modernize regulations and improve regulatory certainty and finally describe the benefits of a more streamlined regulatory framework. Throughout the report, the goal is to recommend durable, long-term improvements rather than temporary changes.

Vice Chair Brock then explains that the study will evaluate regulations affecting every stage of the coal value stream, including mining, transportation, electric power generation, and industrial and export activities, identifying unnecessary burdens and recommending improvements such as streamlined permitting, performance-based regulations, better coordination among agencies, and more durable regulatory frameworks.

He describes the expected benefits of these reforms, greater regulatory certainty would encourage investment, support economic growth, foster technological innovation, and continue protecting public health and the environment. He emphasizes that the recommendations will seek to reduce unnecessary regulatory burdens without compromising safety or environmental protection.

Finally, Vice Chair Brock reviews the study schedule. He encourages NCC members to complete the member survey by July 28, 2026. He explained that the subcommittee will begin meeting in early August to develop the report.

11:30 AM – 11:40 AM Public Comment Period (as time permits)

Chair Grech called on Deputy Designated Federal Officer Joseph Giove to conduct the Public Comment Period. Mr. Giove reads the public comment section published on June 16th, 2026, as part of the NCC's Federal Register Notice, "he meeting will be accessible to the public via live stream and will be conducted by the Council Chair to ensure an orderly flow of business. To make an oral statement on any agenda item, please contact Mr. Joseph Giove at least seven days prior to the meeting. Approximately 10 minutes will be reserved for public comments; individual speaking times will depend on the number of requests received but will not exceed three minutes per speaker."

Mr. Giove noted that two individuals submitted a request to address the NCC before the deadline, and both were present. The first was Mr. Greg Henthorn, Chief Business Officer, Americarbon Products LLC. Mr. Giove stated that he was recognized for three minutes:

- Greg Henthorn Chief Business Officer, Americarbon Products LLC, stated that his company, based in West Virginia and North Dakota produces a product using coal tar pitch. He stated that he believes coal can be the basis for business, which would strengthen America's manufacturing base. The current challenge is technology scale-up and commercialization. He believes the NCC has an important role to play in bridging this gap by recommending support of policies in support of a new industrial sector and to create a new demand for coal.

Mr. Giove noted that the second individual was Dr. Jason Trembly, Department Chair, Mechanical Engineering and Russ Endowed Chair and Director, Institute for Sustainable Energy and the Environment, Ohio University. Mr. Giove stated that he was recognized for three minutes:

- Department Chair, Mechanical Engineering and Russ Endowed Chair and Director, Institute for Sustainable Energy and the Environment Dr. Jason Trembly, Ohio University states that he has a long-standing partnership with DOE in developing innovating coal technologies, which led to a partnership with Core Natural Resources to develop a coal-derived carbon composite decking product that is entering the final commercialization stage. Ohio University recently convened a coal innovation summit. He encourages the NCC to make coal-to-products a national priority. Many technologies are sitting in the valley of death. He recommends the development of a commercialization strategy.

Mr. Giove reported that no written comments were received before the deadline, and the public comment period had been satisfied and completed.

Chair Grech thanks Secretary Wright.

Secretary Wright thanks the NCC and their efforts to ensure that future generations enjoy the American way of life.

Chair Grech states that the next NCC meeting will be held January 11–12, 2027, In Manalapan, Florida.

11:45 AM Meeting Adjourns

Note: These minutes were approved by Chairman Jim Grech on 8/17/26, and Vice-Chairman Jimmy Brock on 8/17/26.