



President's Letter



As we approach the end of another remarkable year, I want to extend my warmest wishes to you on behalf of the Manufacturers & Employers Association and Council. The holiday season offers a meaningful opportunity to reflect on our accomplishments, appreciate the strength of our connections, and look ahead to the possibilities before us.

While the start of 2025 brought its share of challenges, your resilience, dedication, and commitment to excellence have been nothing short of inspiring. Together, we navigated uncertainty, adapted to new realities, and continued moving forward with purpose. Your support has not only strengthened our association but has also highlighted the incredible collaboration and unity within our diverse membership.

Guided by our mission, we remain committed to providing essential information, services, and training that empower our more than 306 member companies across 20 counties. From manufacturing and logistics to healthcare, engineering, and non-profits, your contributions drive the economic vitality of our region and the communities you serve.

Throughout the past year, we have been proud to witness your accomplishments, your innovation, and the positive impact you bring to Pennsylvania's workforce and economy. We are honored to stand beside you and look forward to supporting your success in the year ahead.

As we celebrate the holiday season, may we also remember the importance of giving back, lifting one another up, and spreading kindness. Our shared efforts enrich not only the world of business but also the lives of those in need.

In closing, thank you for your trust, your partnership, and your unwavering support. The Manufacturers & Employers Association is more than an organization, it is a community of dedicated individuals and companies striving for excellence together. May this season bring you peace, joy, and cherished time with loved ones.

Wishing you a bright, prosperous New Year filled with opportunity, growth, and renewed momentum. We look forward to embarking on 2025, and all it will bring together.

Warmest wishes,

Darlene J. Robbins

President

The MAEA and MAEC Team



MAEA 2026 Events



Save the Date

MAEA Legislative Roundtable

The Northeast Pennsylvania Manufacturers and Employers Association maintains close contact with our State Representatives and believes each member should have the opportunity to meet their representative and discuss the issues of

interest to them. This Roundtable will provide an opportunity for you to express your issues and concerns with our legislators in an informational sharing session.

Attending legislators and topics to be discussed will be provided closer to the event.

Date: February 6, 2026
Time: 8:00am - 10:00am
Location: Mt. Valley Clubhouse

Sponsorship Opportunities are Available!

Sponsors for this event will be recognized during the presentation, in the PowerPoint presentation, and the event program.

Event \$1,500 (includes a 3-minute presentation about company)

Gold: \$600

Silver: \$400

Bronze: \$200

For more information: Please contact Joan Trosterud at 570-622-0992 or email to jtrosterud@nepamaea.com.



For Events, to register or become a sponsor, contact Joani at:

 **Email:** jtrosterud@nepamaea.com

 **Phone:** (570) 622-0992

 **Website:** www.nepamaea.com

[CLICK HERE FOR MAEA 2026 EVENT CALENDAR](#)

Legislation

State Legislative Updates

Fiscal Office Warns of Looming Budget Crisis and Depleted Reserves

A week after the state enacted its four-month late budget, a new report from the Independent Fiscal Office suggests balancing next year's budget may not be an easy lift either.

Lawmakers shifted \$670 million from special funds to help balance the budget in 2025-26, a move that will be difficult to repeat next year and will make balancing the 2026-27 budget more difficult.

In its five-year look ahead, the IFO said that if projections hold, the state is on pace to deplete the General Fund surplus in the coming year and on pace to wipe out the \$7.5 billion Rainy Day Fund by 2027-28.

Heading into the coming year, the state is facing a projected deficit of \$5.84 billion — \$600 million more than the deficit that budget negotiators faced in 2025-26.

Increased costs associated with changes made to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program will complicate matters.

The state is facing \$100 million in increased SNAP costs in 2026-27, with the increase hitting \$306 million in 2027-28. Those increased costs will be even worse if the state does not successfully bring down its SNAP error rate, the IFO said. The state's error rate now stands at 10.8%. The IFO based its projections on an error rate of between 6%-8%.

The IFO is forecasting that state revenue will increase by 2.1% per year.

"The modest revenue growth is largely due to the phased-in corporate net income tax rate reduction from 7.99% in 2025 to 4.99% in 2031, which reduces annual revenues by \$300 to \$400 million (static estimate)," the IFO said in its report.

Spending is projected to increase 3.3% per year, largely due to increased costs in social service programming, with the costs of caring for an aging population being a huge factor.

The IFO had originally scheduled the release of the fiscal look-ahead for last week but delayed the report due to the Nov. 12 state budget deal.

Lawmakers balanced the \$50.1 billion spending plan without approving new revenue sources sought by Gov. Josh Shapiro, such as legalizing and taxing skill games or adult recreational use of marijuana.

The governor had estimated that taxing skill games could raise almost \$370 million a year in new tax revenue. Republicans who hold the majority in the state Senate had proposed skill games bills that would have used lower tax rates but still generated hundreds of millions of dollars in revenue.

But none of those plans gained traction, leaving the state with about 80,000 skill games untaxed and operating in a legal gray area. The Supreme Court, though, on Thursday, heard oral arguments in a case that could force lawmakers to act if the justices conclude that skill games are illegal under current law.

Capitol Wire

Formal end of the state's effort to join the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI)

Republican lawmakers and labor leaders representing Pennsylvania's utility and construction trades celebrated the formal end of the state's effort to join the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI).

Although former Gov. Tom Wolf proposed joining the multistate climate initiative in 2019, Pennsylvania never officially entered due to ongoing legal challenges. The latest budget deal includes language that ends the effort entirely.

Labor and industry leaders who stood with Republican lawmakers argued that RGGI deterred investment and hindered economic growth. Patrick Henderson, vice president of government affairs and communications for the Marcellus Shale Coalition, called the initiative an "impediment" to business development. He contended that RGGI threatened jobs, increased energy costs, and did little to

reduce emissions, adding that the uncertainty over joining the initiative stalled major energy projects.

Senate President Pro Tempore Kim Ward said that stepping away from RGGI, paired with new permitting reforms in the budget should help Pennsylvania attract and expand energy-related investment. “If you left, come back. And if you're here, build on,” she said.

The budget also advances broader, permitting reforms. The updated fiscal code (House Bill 416) requires state agencies to publish full lists of required permits and expands the number of permits that may be deemed approved if an agency does not act within 30 days. The Department of Environmental Protection must also work with the Department of General Services to hire outside vendors for expedited permit reviews.

Additionally, more types of permits will now be eligible for the Streamlining Permits for Economic Expansion and Development program launched earlier this year. These include concentrated animal feeding operation permits, short-term construction mining permits, and storage tank installation permits.

Under the streamlined system, outside inspectors perform initial evaluations, which are then verified by agency staff before permits are approved or returned for technical corrections.

Federal Legislative Updates

Interior Launches Bold New Offshore Leasing Plan to Unleash American Energy

The U.S. Department of the Interior has officially moved forward with a sweeping offshore oil and gas leasing program aimed at boosting American energy production and making long-term energy security a priority.

What's New

- Interior Secretary Doug Burgum signed a secretary's order titled **“Unleashing American Offshore Energy”**, directing the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) to retire the restrictive 2024–2029 leasing

plan and replace it with an ambitious **11th National Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) Leasing Program** by October 2026.

- The draft proposal outlines up to **34 potential lease sales** across **1.27 billion acres**, spanning 21 offshore areas: 21 off Alaska, seven in the Gulf (now dubbed the “Gulf of America”), and six along the Pacific Coast.
- A public comment period of 60 days will begin shortly after the proposal is published in the Federal Register, giving stakeholders a voice in shaping the final plan.

Why This Matters

- According to the Department of the Interior, the move is designed to **restore U.S. energy dominance**, spur investment, and generate jobs across the offshore energy sector.
- BOEM data shows the Outer Continental Shelf may hold **68.8 billion barrels of oil** and **229 trillion cubic feet of natural gas**, resources that could help stabilize the nation’s energy supply.
- The proposal is already drawing industry support: The American Petroleum Institute praised the plan as a “historic step” to unlock offshore energy potential and encourage long-term investment.

What’s Next

- BOEM will conduct environmental reviews and allow **public input on each proposed lease sale**.
- Energy companies and local governments will closely follow how the plan develops, both as a business opportunity and a regulatory shift.
- Stakeholders who want to influence the final program should prepare to submit comments once the formal public review begins.

Update on the U.S. WOTUS Rule

The EPA and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers recently released a new proposed definition of *Waters of the United States* (WOTUS), following the 2023 *Sackett v.*

EPA Supreme Court decision. The goal is to provide clearer, more consistent guidance on which waters fall under federal Clean Water Act protections.

Key Highlights

- **Clearer Definitions:** The proposal refines terms such as *relatively permanent waters*, *tributaries*, and *continuous surface connection*, aligning with the *Sackett* ruling.
- **Maintained Exclusions:** Features such as certain ditches, converted cropland, and groundwater remain excluded from federal jurisdiction.
- **More State Involvement:** The rule encourages stronger coordination with state and tribal agencies to ensure consistent implementation.

Why It Matters

A more predictable WOTUS rule could help streamline permitting for development, agriculture, and industry especially where projects have historically faced delays due to uncertainty over federal jurisdiction. However, environmental advocates caution that a narrower rule may reduce protections for some wetlands and small streams.

Next Steps

The agencies are accepting public comments for 45 days before finalizing the rule. Businesses, local governments, and landowners should stay tuned, as the final definition will influence permitting and compliance for years to come.





Welcome New Members

- **Bala Energy**, 108 Colket Lane, Devon, PA 19333
- **Elevate Collaborative Insights**, 31 Deiberts Valley Road, Schuylkill Haven, PA 17972
- **ISGUS America LLC**, 155 Pompton Avenue, Verona, NJ 07044
- **Jordan Energy & Food Enterprises, LLC**, 165 Jordan Road, Troy, NY 12180
- **Norpel**, 100 Maplewood Drive, Hazleton, PA 18202
- **Rettew, 3020 Columbia Avenue, Lancaster, PA 17603**
- **Sovereign Commercial Services**, 211 N. State Street, Clarks Summit, PA 18411

Enerconnex, an SJI Company

MAEA's Group Energy Program

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NEPA MAEA's Group Energy Solutions Provider

As a trusted partner, EnerConnex has delivered significant value to **NEPA MAEA** members for nearly a decade. We combine deep industry expertise with tech-enabled processes to help businesses procure electricity, natural gas, and renewable energy. Our partnership-first approach fosters a collaborative relationship to identify and customize a wide range of solutions tailored to your company's specific energy needs and challenges.


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**Energy
Efficiency**


Renewables



Contact **Thomas Dufraigne** for your organization's energy needs:

 TDufraigne@enerconnex.com

 610-331-3869

 www.enerconnex.com

 @Thomas Dufraigne

What Is Peak Demand, and Why Does It Matter for Your Energy Strategy?

Understanding when peak demand is in your region can help you craft an effective energy strategy.

Peak Demand Meaning

When an electrical grid experiences peak demand, this is when electrical power demand is the highest over a given period. Every grid experiences a period of peak demand every day, week, month, and year. The moment of peak demand depends on the window you're assessing.

Peak demand is the level of capacity necessary during the precise moment when the grid experiences its highest demand for power. The typical peak demand for the year for an electrical grid in the U.S. occurs on a hot summer weekday in the late afternoon.

For example, the classic peak demand occurs a couple of days into a heat wave in July, when people who work nine-to-five jobs are at work and running their air conditioning. AC units are some of the most energy-intensive appliances widely available, so peak demand typically occurs during summer, not winter.

[CLICK HERE](#) to read the entire article

MAEA Training / Consulting

DECEMBER TRAININGS ARE NOW OPEN FOR REGISTRATION December is the perfect time to invest in yourself and your team. Our upcoming training programs are built to inspire growth, strengthen leadership, and provide practical tools you can apply right away. Whether you're tackling new challenges, refreshing your knowledge, or preparing your company's staff for what's next, these sessions are your opportunity to learn, connect, and lead with confidence.

[Click here](#) for the training schedule

For questions or to discuss tailored training for your team, contact:

Eileen Kuperavage | ekuperavage@nepamaea.com | 570-622-0992



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Consulting Services

MAEA consultants will conduct on-site or virtual evaluations, provide proposed solutions, and assist in the implementation. The areas of expertise include, but are not limited to:

- Communications
- Data Management and Development,
- Extended DISC and Team Building
- Human Resources
- Information Technology
- Process Improvement
- Safety

For further information, contact Eileen Kuperavage:

ekuperavage@nepamaea.com

570-622-0992

MAEA Roundtable Recap

We had a fantastic Virtual Executive Roundtable on October 21, 2025, with 14 attendees joining us for an engaging and informative session. Ed Kollar from Baker Tilly delivered an excellent presentation on “The Big Beautiful Bill,” offering valuable insights and perspectives on its implications and opportunities.

Our members had the opportunity to ask questions and engage in meaningful discussion around the bill, leading to a lively and productive exchange of ideas.

Feedback from attendees was overwhelmingly positive, with many noting the clarity and expertise Ed brought to such a complex topic.

Upcoming Roundtable

Safety Schuylkill Roundtable

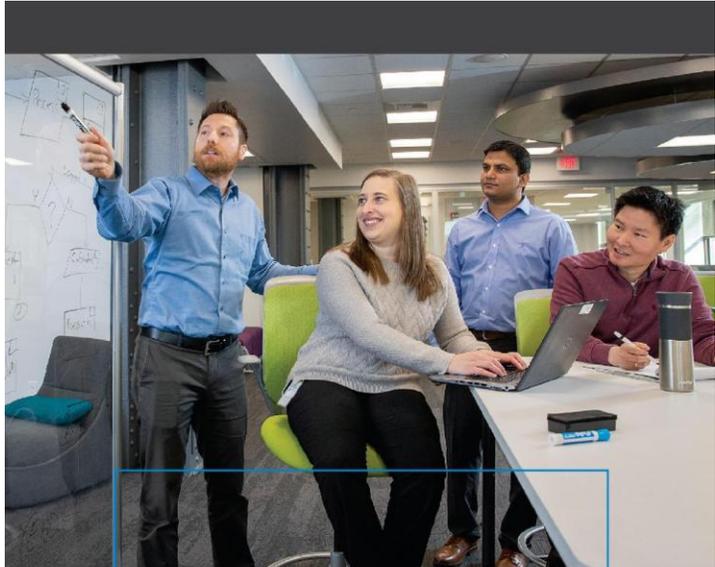
Date: January 22, 2026

Topic: Psychosocial Hazards: Mental Health, Stress and OSHA's role

Location: MAEA Conference Room, Pottsville

Member Cost: \$45





THE POWER OF INCLUSION

Celebrating people
because of who they are.



Participate in a YES Mock Interview Event!

MOCK INTERVIEW YES STUDENTS!

We're currently searching for business professionals willing to participate in mock interviews with our YES students! This is a great opportunity to speak directly with your future workforce and share valuable career information.

For more details, call the Council office at 570-622-0940 or email Courtney Fasnacht at cfnacht@nepamaec.com or Matt Shuey at mshuey@nepamaec.com.



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