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Dominion-NextEra hearings begin

Utility companies make case for planned $67B merger before State Corporation Commission

By Maggie Allwein
STAFF WRITER

Virginia regulators began formal hearings Tuesday to decide whether to approve a $67 billion merger proposal between Dominion Energy and NextEra Energy that would create the world's largest regulated electric utility.

The State Corporation Commission, which regulates utilities in Virginia and is the state decision-maker on the proposal, is hearing the case this week.

The process kicked off with general arguments by case participants, including Dominion and NextEra, the governor's and attorney general's offices, businesses such as Amazon and Google and nonprofits like Clean Virginia and Sierra Club.

The companies said their combined operation would cost effectively handle increased electricity demand for its more than 10 million utility customer accounts in Virginia, the Carolinas and Florida.

DOMINION, NEXTERA

John Reed, representing Dominion and NextEra, began by addressing several recommendations by SCC staff. In its filed testimony, the SCC recommended rejection of the merger unless a series of recommendations were approved.

The companies accepted 47 out of 57 recommendations, Reed said, but do not believe all are necessary. And some they "flat out oppose," he said.

The utility executives view

See **HEARINGS** on Page A4



A proposed $67 billion merger between Virginia-based Dominion Energy and Florida-based NextEra would create world's largest regulated electric utility. **KENDALL WARNER/ STAFF FILE**



Virginia's Hung Cao, the acting secretary of the Navy, arrives to testify Tuesday during his confirmation hearing before the Senate Armed Services Committee. **ALEX KENT/THE NEW YORK TIMES**

'I know it's a strain'

Virginia's Cao, the Navy secretary nominee, acknowledges Iran war is stretching resources

By Ben Finley and Konstantin Toropin
ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump's pick to lead the Navy acknowledged the strain of the Iran war as senators from both political parties pressed him at his confirmation hearing Tuesday about the impact of long ship deployments on sailors, drawdowns to stockpiles of advanced weapons and resources being shifted away from countering China.

Acting Navy Secretary Hung Cao — a Virginia resident, Trump loyalist and combat veteran — is seeking the permanent top civilian job during a particularly volatile time in Washington. He also faces the extra hurdle of needing a waiver from Congress, because he left active-duty service less than seven years ago.

"This war, again, I know it's a strain on our Navy," Cao told the Senate Armed Services Committee, but he insisted that "it's really set China back on their heels" to see all the military services work together.

Sen. Elizabeth Warren, D-Mass., grilled Cao on the costs of the Iran war, noting that independent estimates or media reports say the naval blockade on Iranian shipping costs about $32.5 million a day and Iranian strikes on the Navy's regional headquarters in Bahrain did at least $400

See **CAO** on Page A4

ICE 'flagrantly ignoring federal law,' lawsuit says

Officers accused of making unlawful arrests across Virginia

By Emma Rose Brown
STAFF WRITER

A Newport News man said he was driving to work when federal immigration officers stopped his car and handcuffed him.

He said the officers never asked about his immigration status or showed him a warrant. He was taken to an ICE office in Norfolk.

He is one of six people and a Virginia immigrant-services organization suing the Department of Homeland Security and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, accusing federal immigration officers of making unlawful arrests across the state.

The lawsuit, filed Monday in federal court in Alexandria, argues ICE has routinely made arrests without warrants and without determining whether the people being detained were likely to flee before officers could obtain one. Federal law allows immigration officers to make warrantless arrests only when they have probable cause to believe someone is in the country illegally and is likely to escape before a warrant can be obtained.

The complaint alleges that ICE has abandoned safeguards meant to ensure officers make that determination on a case-by-case basis. DHS did not respond to a request for comment about the lawsuit.

"ICE agents are arresting people first and assuming they'll figure out a reason to justify it later, flagrantly ignoring federal law that's been in place for decades," said American Civil Liberties

See **ICE** on Page A4

Lucas seeks sanctions against top DOJ leaders

Lawyers Blanche, Patel opined on senator's guilt with comments

By Peter Dujardin and Nori Leybengrub
STAFF WRITERS

Attorneys for state Sen. Louise Lucas are asking a federal judge to sanction top U.S. Justice Department officials over comments they made about a pending marijuana conspiracy case against her the day she was charged.

The motion, filed Sunday, asks U.S. District Judge Jamar K. Walker to sanction U.S. Attorney General Todd Blanche and FBI Director Kash Patel, over comments about Lucas at an Oct. 22 news conference.



Lucas

Blanche and Patel flew to Hampton Roads that morning to announce the 45-page indictment. They spoke at the U.S. Attorney's Office in downtown Norfolk.

Earlier that day, Lucas was charged with orchestrating a racketeering conspiracy to illegally sell marijuana.

She was also accused of attempting to manipulate the state's fledgling marijuana licensure process so her family could benefit. Lucas' two daughters, grandson and three

See **LUCAS** on Page A4

Inside

Making history
Colonial Williamsburg Foundation announces plan for significant investments in core programming. **Page 3**

Measles returns
Highly contagious virus, previously eradicated in U.S., spreads at highest rate in over 30 years. **Nation & World, Page 10**

Sweet holiday fun
Virginia Beach's Atlantic Park plans to host Cocoa Crawl every Friday through Dec. 18. **Flavor**

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FULL WEATHER REPORT A18

INDEX

Business A12, 13
Classified A16
Comics B10
Lottery A2
Obituaries A15
Puzzles B11, 12
Sports B1
TV B9
Weather A18

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