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ONE HUNDRED NINETEENTH CONGRESS

# Congress of the United States

## House of Representatives

### COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE

2125 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6115

Majority (202) 225-3641

Minority (202) 225-2927

April 22, 2025

Mr. Noel W. Black  
Senior Vice President of Regulatory Affairs  
Southern Company  
601 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20004

Dear Mr. Black:

Thank you for appearing before the Subcommittee on Energy on Wednesday, March 5, 2025, to testify at the hearing entitled “Scaling for Growth: Meeting the Demand for Reliable, Affordable Electricity.”

Pursuant to the Rules of the Committee on Energy and Commerce, the hearing record remains open for ten business days to permit Members to submit additional questions for the record, which are attached. The format of your responses to these questions should be as follows: (1) the name of the Member whose question you are addressing, (2) the complete text of the question you are addressing in bold, and (3) your answer to that question in plain text.

To facilitate the printing of the hearing record, please respond to these questions with a transmittal letter by the close of business on Tuesday, May 6, 2025. Your responses should be mailed to Calvin Huggins Legislative Clerk, Committee on Energy and Commerce, 2125 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, DC 20515 and e-mailed to [Calvin.Huggins1@mail.house.gov](mailto:Calvin.Huggins1@mail.house.gov).

Thank you again for your time and effort preparing and delivering testimony before the Subcommittee.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Robert E. Latta". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Robert" and last name "Latta" being more prominent than the middle initial "E".

Robert E. Latta  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Energy

cc: Kathy Castor, Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Energy

Attachment

## **Additional Questions for the Record**

### **The Honorable Robert E. Latta**

1. We all agree on the importance of modernizing our infrastructure to ensure we reliably get power to AI data centers. As the co-chair of the Grid Innovation Caucus, I am interested in grid enhancing technologies that improve the performance of the transmission system. An example is the use of advanced power conductors that can double capacity of the grid using the same right of way.
  - a. Can you please comment on this approach to ensure we get the most out of the current grid by deploying modern technology?
2. Economic Development and Forecasting Consistency: Accurate and transparent electricity load forecasting is a linchpin of modern economic development. States rely on these forecasts to plan new industrial parks, data centers, and manufacturing hubs, while utilities use them to schedule grid expansions and major infrastructure investments. Despite the vital role of load forecasts in spurring economic growth, practices vary widely among states, often leading to inconsistent data, misaligned investment signals, and unnecessary risk for both utilities, and both large and residential customers. Concerns have been raised that a patchwork of forecasting methodologies can exacerbate speculation in large load interconnection requests, inflate demand projections, and drive-up costs.
  - a. Recognizing these issues cross both state and federal jurisdictions and regional differences, how do you think Congress can play a role in establishing a baseline of consistency across state jurisdictions that will help align economic development strategies with reliable, cost-effective grid planning?
3. AI's Impact on Demand Growth: How do you anticipate AI-driven applications—such as advanced data analytics, machine learning, and robotics—will change overall electricity load profiles, and what specific policies or grid modernization efforts might be needed to manage these new demand patterns?
4. Does your company have the tools that it needs to build the generation necessary to meet both the energy demands of large customers and the energy needs of your everyday customers? And please explain why?
5. When a generation customer connects to the system what is expected from them and what are the impacts to the system? Is Southern Company's interconnection process working quickly to get projects studied then interconnected if a customer decides to move forward?
  - a. Please explain the importance of natural gas pipelines and specifically firm gas.

- b. What areas of the country develop firm gas? What happens if firm gas is not developed?
- 6. The Southeast is not in an RTO. Why not?
  - a. Are there alternative enhancements to the Southeastern market that you are exploring?
- 7. Regarding planning for transmission, what specific impediments have you identified to current state and regional planning for the siting of transmission projects?
  - a. What are examples of impediments you have identified and what is necessary for system planners to overcome these impediments?
  - b. What reforms do you recommend to improve state and regional planning to overcome these impediments?
- 8. In the last Congress and the previous administration, there was a lot of talk about transmission policy reform.
  - a. How does Southern plan transmission in your region and with other regions? What should Members understand about the nature of transmission planning as it exists today?
  - b. Does a top-down approach, through FERC, serve the interests of utilities and grid operators that are already expending tremendous time and engineering resources on design new transmission?
- 9. Please explain the value and challenges of colocation, as well as the value of an interconnected grid.
- 10. Is colocation alone the solution for meeting rising energy needs?
  - a. Do colocation arrangements support an interconnected grid? Why or why not?
- 11. Please explain the value of firm transmission and the importance of firm transmission for reliability.
- 12. Do PURPA qualified facility assets support an interconnected grid?
  - a. Do such assets result in lower energy costs for customers or greater reliability?
- 13. What permitting changes are necessary to get additional energy infrastructure built?
- 14. You mentioned AP1000 technology in your testimony. Please explain the importance of this technology as we look to meet rising energy demand.

- a. What will be necessary to get the next tranche of nuclear units developed?
15. Please explain how large loads served by system assets can benefit all retail customers within the construct of an integrated utility regulated by a state public utilities commission or public service commission.
16. The report co-authored by Mr. Norris and referenced in hearing testimony notes that, “[o]ther considerations important for planning—such as ensuring adequate transmission capacity, ramping capability, and ramp-feasible reserves, among others—are beyond the scope of this study and therefore the results cannot be taken as an accurate estimate of the load that can be added to the system.”
- a. In utility system planning for an integrated utility regulated by a state public utilities commission or public service commission, are these types of considerations evaluated and planned for? If so, how?