

Chairman Brett Guthrie
Opening Statement—Subcommittee on Energy
“Keeping the Lights On: Examining the State of Regional Grid Reliability.”
March 25, 2025
As prepared for delivery

Thank you, Chairman Latta, and thank you to our witnesses for being here today.

We all agree that the affordable, reliable delivery of electric power is essential for a strong and secure American economy and to fortify our competition with China.

The complicated question of how to deliver power effectively is compounded by the tremendous increase in demand projected over coming years, both for specific purposes like AI data centers and broader increases in consumer demand.

Ensuring affordable, reliable delivery of power to meet the needs in our communities requires tremendous amounts of planning and oversight by the engineers and operators of the electric system—from utilities to the regional grid operators joining us this morning.

Here in Congress, we must identify and understand the forces impacting the ability of engineers to plan and operate this system—for better or worse.

And we must address the commonsense policy reforms that will allow utilities and operators to do their work cost-effectively.

Over the past decade, certain federal and state policies have made it more difficult for operators to keep the lights on.

The thrust of the Biden Administration’s electricity policy was to shut down baseload coal and limit natural gas generation with onerous rules and regulations.

During this time, many states also established policies to transition away from fossil generation that is essential for maintaining grid reliability.

Momentum behind this so-called “transition” continues, just as a generational increase in power demand is emerging.

Consider how new demand growth is clashing with residual Biden-Harris policies today.

In December, the North American Electric Reliability Corporation – NERC – projected [peak power](#) demand to grow by 151 gigawatts over the next ten years.

Over this same period, NERC reports expected retirements of dispatchable generation, which is needed for reliability, to be as much as 115 gigawatts.

This gap between retirements and growth in demand in the United States alone amounts to over 240 gigawatts, or an equivalent amount of power needed to support over 195 million homes for an entire year.

Ensuring the availability of reliable power will require stopping and reversing retirements of dispatchable resources and building out new natural gas generation, and eventually nuclear and other reliable sources.

Yet the vast amount of the new generation that is in line today to connect to the grid is intermittent wind and solar, which cannot be relied upon to be there when you need it the most.

As a result, half the nation is at risk of power short falls over the next ten years.

For all the benefits of all-of-the-above resource policies, the current path that incentivizes a massive renewable build out is putting the electric system out-of-balance and dramatically increasing risk.

Today, we will talk to the grid operators that are caught at the center of the clash between failing policies and strong economic demand affecting our nation's generation mix.

They must deal with the consequences, so understanding the challenges they face and how they plan to meet growing demand is essential for our work.

Last week, the Secretary of Energy noted the existential security implications of our race with China on AI and other advanced technologies.

A focus on meeting the China challenge raises serious questions about what is really necessary to clear the way in permitting and in regulatory policy, which will enable tremendous energy and power growth in the coming years.

We can start by recognizing that we are only going meet this challenge if we fully appreciate the scale and pace of change that will be necessary to ensure a reliable system in the future.

With that, I yield back.