

Clay Rikard Congressional Testimony - One-Page Summary

Southern Company, SVP System Planning

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Southern Company is experiencing unprecedented load growth, and our electric utilities are moving with speed to provide power to our customers that is reliable and affordable.

- 23 GW of large load (data centers, manufacturers) contracted or in late stage, with 75+ GW in the pipeline.
- 10+ GW of new, dispatchable resources under construction; no interconnection queue backlog.
- Today, our retail rates remain over 10% below the national average. In addition, our non-storm retail base rates are frozen through at least 2028 in Alabama and 2029 in Georgia, and Georgia Power has further committed to customer savings of at least \$1.6 billion over a three-year period as a direct result of revenues that we are receiving from large customers. We are demonstrating that this extraordinary growth opportunity can have mutual benefits for all stakeholders today and into the future.

Why It Works

- Vertically integrated structure: generation, transmission, distribution, and fuel planned together through a rigorous planning process.
- State PSCs provide direct oversight to hold utilities accountable for achieving least-cost, most-reliable outcomes.
- Large customers pay their full cost to serve, through minimum “take or pay” bill requirements under long-term contracts that include robust collateral protections.

Congress Should

- Preserve state authority over generation and transmission planning.
- Pass targeted permitting reform (NEPA, judicial review, Clean Water Act, etc.).
- Avoid mandates that raise energy costs without a demonstrated reliability or economic need.
- Avoid federalizing siting and permitting - one-size-fits-all mandates would raise costs and delay speed to power.
- Avoid mandating interregional transmission - uneconomic lines won't fix resource adequacy.
- Avoid socializing transmission costs to states that receive no benefit or do not want or need the power.