

# United Mine Workers of America

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INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT



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President Donald J. Trump  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Trump:

The imminent closure of dozens of coal-fired power plants is a crisis that needs to be addressed right away. As you know, a recent Department of Energy (DOE) proposal to correct electricity markets to properly value baseload energy sources would have prevented these closures while ensuring grid reliability and resilience. Unfortunately, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) rejected the proposal.

However, the Commission's inaction does not mean the problem has gone away. The plants in question will not re-open once they are offline. They will be added to the hundreds of coal-fired plants that have closed for good in recent years. The warning signs for the coming crisis have been on the horizon for years. It is no longer a far-off possibility: FERC's own projections show that 20,650 MW of coal capacity will close by 2020.

The American power grid is fueled by a diverse mix of resources, including natural gas, wind, and solar power. However, at its core, the grid relies on baseload sources like coal and nuclear power. Without these baseload sources, the grid becomes instantly vulnerable to extreme weather events, natural disasters, fuel supply chain disruptions, and terrorist attacks.

The closure of additional coal-fired plants means our grid will face a crisis scenario – possibly very soon. Such a crisis nearly took place in 2014, when the polar vortex stretched the natural gas supply beyond its limits and communities across the country faced electricity shortages and extreme spikes in price for available fuel. The scenario would have been deadly, but baseload power resources were able to supplement natural gas pipeline constraints and provide adequate power to distressed areas.

That was four years ago. The situation is now even more dire. Coal-fired plants can store weeks' worth of fuel on-site and therefore do not have the same supply chain vulnerabilities as

other resources such as natural gas. But the availability of these stockpiled resources is diminishing by the day.

Coal mining, transportation, and related electric power generation account for more than 800,000 direct and indirect jobs, many in economically distressed regions of the nation. We cannot afford to lose these good middle-class jobs, or the coal mines and power plants that provide the bulk of community tax bases supporting essential services such as education, firefighters and police.

In addition, any more plant closings will only exacerbate the looming crisis with respect to the pensions of more than 107,000 current and future retired miners and surviving spouses. Coal industry bankruptcies over the last several years – caused by the premature plant closings and utility fuel switching – have eliminated more than \$100 million in annual contributions to the retirees' pension plan. Any further bankruptcies of contributing employers will cause the plan to collapse.

FERC's inaction leaves few options to stave off serious problems for our electric grid and economic disaster for hundreds of thousands of our nation's energy workers, retirees and those who live in their communities. I urge you to take the necessary steps to prevent the closure of additional coal-fired power plants.

The security and stability of our power grid is at risk, along with thousands of jobs in already hard-hit parts of our nation. Emergency action – now – is only way to prevent further deterioration of our country's reliable and affordable energy supply.

Sincerely,



Cecil E. Roberts

cc: Rick Perry, Secretary of Energy  
Levi Allen, International Secretary-Treasurer  
International Executive Board  
Regional Directors  
Department Heads