COUNTONCOAL

A Groundbreaking Sign of the Times

July 16th, 2025

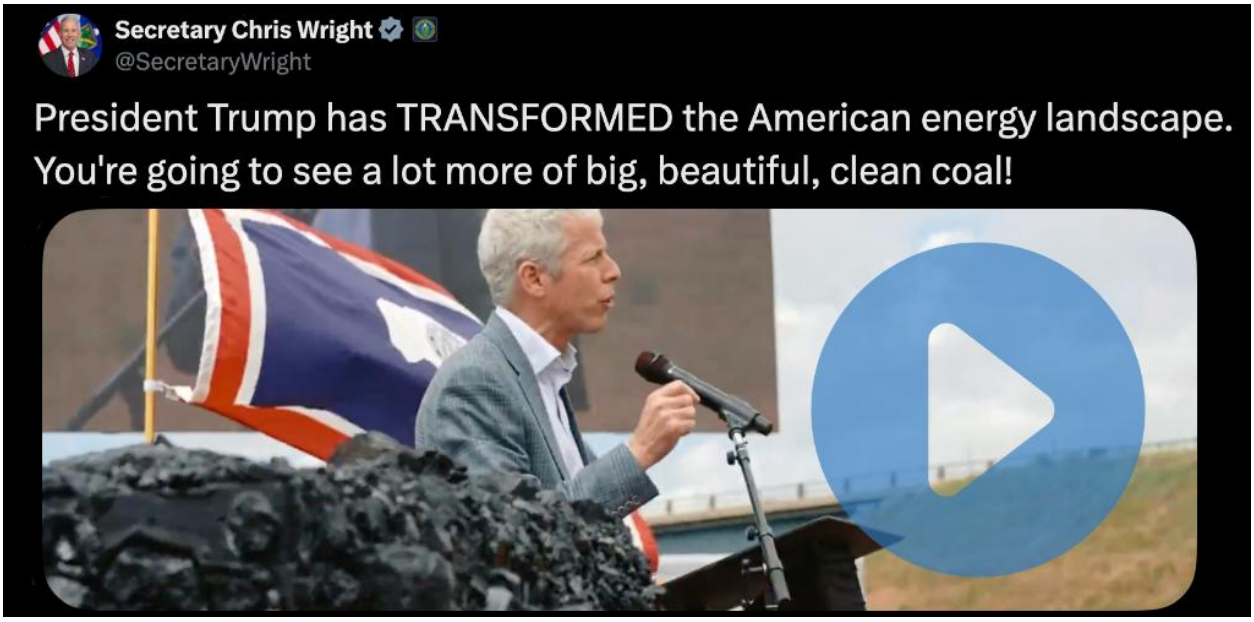
Last week, the nation's eyes were on the groundbreaking of Ramaco Resources' Brook Mine in northeastern Wyoming, the first new coal mine in the state in 50 years and the first new U.S. rare earth mine in 70 years.

Standing shoulder to shoulder with Energy Secretary Chris Wright and the Wyoming delegation, Ramaco's CEO Randy Atkins said, "This is a very exciting thing for Wyoming. It's an exciting thing for the West. It's an exciting thing for our country. A rising tide carries all boats, and this is definitely a rising tide for our country."

The mine will produce rare earth elements alongside coal to feed domestic supply chains for a host advanced technologies from semiconductors to the nation's most critical defense systems.

The Brook Mine is a symbol of the sea change we're now seeing for the coal industry since the Trump administration took office. Instead of being demonized as was the case with the prior administration, the Trump administration has made the industry and the nation's vast coal resources a foundational piece of their energy abundance agenda. Unthinkable but a few short months ago, interest in coal leasing is rapidly picking up and new mines are opening. U.S. electricity generation from coal is even up 23% year-over-year through April.

"We want to see the coal production grow in this country. This particular mine — and I'm sure there will be more — also is going to bring rare earth element production," said Energy Secretary Chris Wright in a video posted to social media. "Let's celebrate American hydrocarbon production and the renaissance we're entering."



COUNTONCOAL

A Novel Idea: Fact-based Energy Policy

July 8th, 2025

The Department of Energy (DOE) is finally doing something almost unheard of in government in recent years: policymaking based on reality and facts.

This week, DOE released a new "Resource Adequacy Report," evaluating the reliability and security of the U.S. grid. The report is a direct response to President Trump's Executive Order, "Strengthening the Reliability and Security of the United States Electric Grid," which mandates the development of a uniform methodology to analyze current and future electricity capacity and identify at-risk regions.

As hard as it is to believe, instead of setting energy policy based on quota systems, pledges and artificial deadlines, we have an administration that is actually taking a hard look at the data on what it takes to keep the lights on. The report's findings are clear and demand immediate action:

1. **The path we're on simply won't work**. Continuing to retire well-operating coal power plants, replacing them with less reliable

generation, will not allow the U.S. to keep up with the power demands of the global AI race and keep energy prices affordable, much less keep the lights on.

2. **We're not growing our grid in the right ways**. Given how quickly electricity demand is increasing, we need what the report calls "radical change" in how we are approaching capacity growth and grid management.
3. **Retirements are digging the hole deeper**. The fossil fuel power plants currently set to retire are not being replaced with comparable generation, increasing the risk of outages by 100x in 2030.
4. **We need every megawatt of energy we have, and more.** Even if all of the planned retirements stopped, given expected increases in demand, the risk of outages is still up 34x by 2030. We must grow reliable capacity.
5. **It's a new age in power generation analysis**. We can't examine resource adequacy the way we used to. We need to better account for the demands on the grid, future needs and how we're meeting them, and the attributes of the power sources we have.

China is already the world's manufacturing superpower, and it has set its sights on taking the lead in the global AI race, and has the all-of-the-above rapid growth energy policy to support its ambitions. This bold report from the Department of Energy makes it clear that we need not just a policy shift, but a transformation in our thinking and approach to tackle resource adequacy issues across the country and secure our position as a leader in the global AI race. Absent bold action we'll be watching from the benches.

COUNTONCOAL

Happy American Energy Independence Day

July 2nd, 2025

Energy abundance. Energy security. Energy independence. As we approach July 4th, our Independence Day, it's worth taking a moment to recognize the leap forward the One Big Beautiful Bill (OBBB) provides to boosting American energy production and reversing the damaging legacy left by the prior administration.

In the closing months of the Biden administration, the Department of Interior issued Resource Management Plans that essentially halted future coal leasing on federal land. These were remarkable actions considering soaring electricity demand, mounting challenges to bringing new energy capacity online and our recent brush with a global energy crisis that saw U.S. coal producers surge production to shore up the energy supplies of overseas allies and reduce soaring electricity prices in the U.S.

The Biden administration's actions were just one more gut punch to American energy affordability, energy security and to mining states and communities that have thrived thanks to the federal coal leasing program.

Fortunately, commonsense is prevailing. Building off President Trump's executive actions to reinvigorate the domestic coal industry, the OBBB restores and solidifies regular coal leasing, and it mandates coal lease sales are available on 4 million acres with "known recoverable coal resources." In other words, the bill addresses the cumulative impacts of the Biden-era federal Resource Management Plan restrictions, once again allowing coal leasing to respond to market needs.

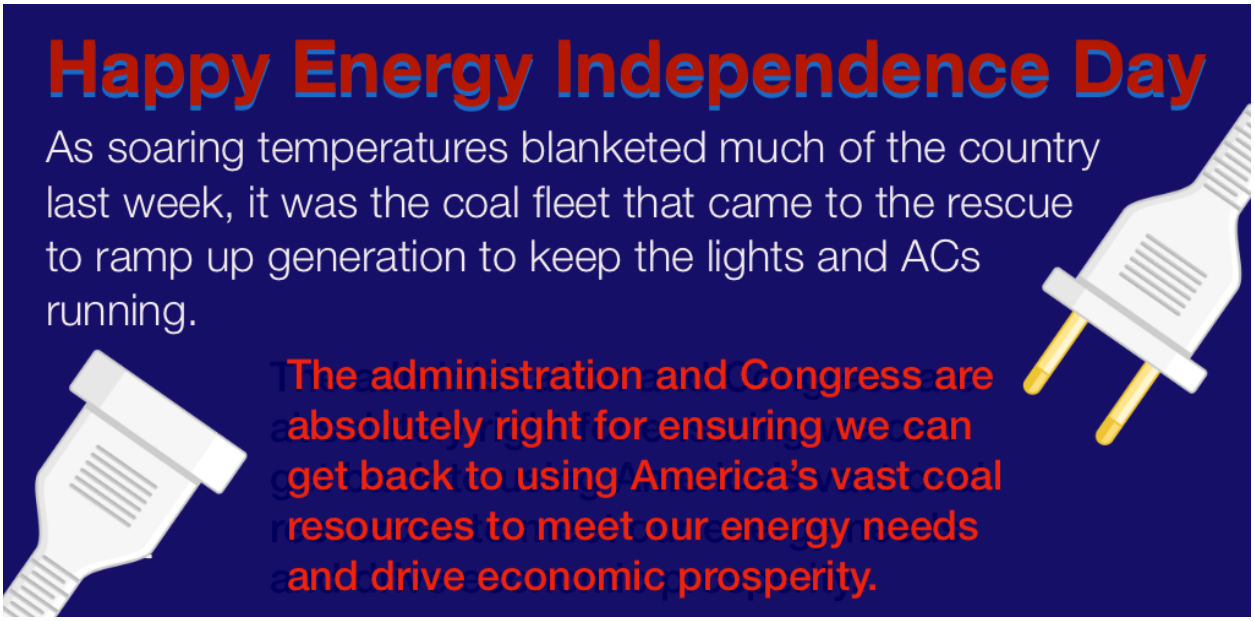
Wyoming was particularly hard hit by the Biden administration's punitive policies, losing vital leasing revenues that are a significant source of funding for public education. The Wyoming Energy Authority played a key role in educating Congress and the Congressional Budget Office about the significant economic benefits and revenues that could be gained from renewed coal leasing in the region through the provisions in the One Big Beautiful Bill.

Senate Republicans believe the bill will generate billions in new federal revenue through expanded oil, gas and coal leasing. Senator John Barrasso of Wyoming said, “America is an energy superpower, and once again, we are going to act like it.”

Wyoming, home to the Powder River Basin, is case in point to the importance of the federal coal leasing program. A tremendous success story, the program has delivered affordable, reliable fuel to the nation’s coal fleet—fuel we’re going to need as we tackle the twin challenges of eroding grid reliability and surging power demand. U.S. electricity generation from coal power plants is in fact up 23% year-over-year through April according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration.

Just last week, as soaring temperatures blanketed much of the country, it was the coal and natural gas fleets coming to the rescue to ramp up generation to keep the lights and ACs running. As Mark Christie, Chairman of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, said in reviewing the data from the heatwave, “You’ve got to have dispatchable resources. There’s no way around that.”

He’s absolutely right. And the administration and Congress are absolutely right for ensuring we can get back to using America’s vast coal resources to meet our energy needs and drive economic prosperity.



COUNTONCOAL

Will the Power Keep Flowing?

June 25, 2025

What a week for congressional attention on grid reliability.

A brutal heatwave is pushing the supply of power to its very limit in grids stretching across much of the country. Outages have already hit parts of New York City, while the PJM Interconnection and Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO) grids have both issued "maximum generation alerts" calling on every available power plant to meet peak demand. The Department of Energy also issued an emergency waiver to allow generators in the Southeast to operate at their maximum capacity to preserve reliability. Keeping the lights on and ACs running is taking a tremendous amount of skill and equal amount of luck.

While our supply of power is pushed to its very limit, the House Energy and Commerce committee held a markup on legislation designed to help the electric grid meet soaring power demand. While today's challenges are daunting, looming on the horizon is extraordinary demand growth. Balancing supply and demand will only get harder from here on out.

The committee marked up 13 bills, which do everything from easing permitting for energy infrastructure to giving federal reliability regulators the authority to intervene if proposed early plant retirements threaten the grid. This package of bills is an important step towards providing the tools needed to better shore up our supply of power and handle the extraordinary demand coming from electrification and the AI data center boom.

The data center industry has made it abundantly clear: its growth is dependent on the availability of reliable, affordable power. And in the AI energy race, the U.S. risks falling far behind China.

As Rich Nolan, the National Mining Association's president and CEO, wrote to the committee on the markup, "these legislative proposals offer urgently needed solutions to the worsening reliability crisis facing our bulk power

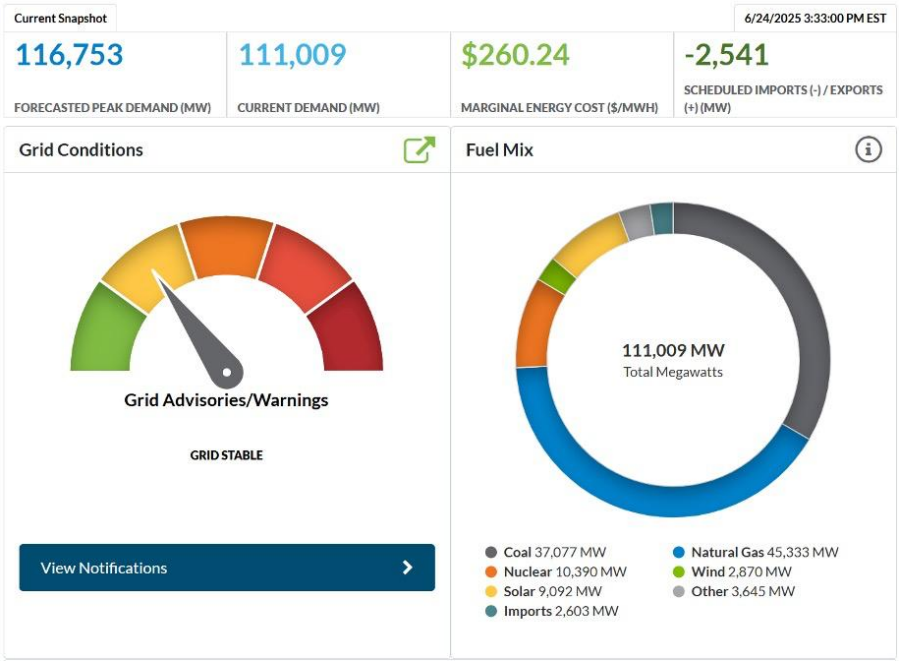
system.” He added, pointing to projections of demand overwhelming available supply, “the nation cannot afford to lose more dependable, dispatchable generation.”

Illustrating the Point

On both the PJM and MISO grids, the power sources doing the lion’s share of the work this week tell an important story about the irreplaceable role of dispatchable power in periods of peak demand.

Coal, natural gas and nuclear power have stepped up, shouldering the burden of near-record demand while wind power has struggled. And solar power, while helpful at midday, has been of little assistance in the evening as the sun has set and temperatures remain near triple digits.

Wind power’s struggles on the MISO grid during peak demand on June 24th were alarming. MISO covers parts of 15 states stretching up and down the Midwest, including much of the nation’s prime wind real estate. At 3:30 pm (see the screenshot of the MISO dashboard) of MISO’s 30 gigawatts (GW) of nameplate wind capacity – the amount of power wind generation could provide during ideal conditions – wind provided just 2.8 GW of generation. It was all but a no-show. Of the 111 GW of demand on the MISO grid, wind power met just 2.5% of it.



The Germans have coined the word, “Dunkelflaute”, or dark doldrums, to describe these moments when renewable generation all but disappears from the grid. This disappearing act isn’t a bug of renewable integration, it’s a feature and a reality the Trump administration is actively confronting in its return to pragmatic, reliability-first energy policy.

Without MISO’s coal generation, the Midwest would have been sweltering in the dark. President Trump’s clear-eyed decision to address the grid reliability crisis, urgently refocus U.S. energy policy on dispatchable generation and keep the U.S. coal fleet running might very well have saved lives this summer. It almost certainly will in the years ahead.