

North Dakota Industrial Commission



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Industrial Commission announces results of electric grid impact study, results indicate Environmental Protection Agency rules will cause blackouts for millions of Americans

The North Dakota Industrial Commission, acting in its capacity as the North Dakota Transmission Authority (NDTA), commissioned a study on the impact of the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Final Greenhouse Gas Standards with ALWAYSON Energy Research in April. Claire Vigesaa, Executive Director of the NDTA presented highlights of the study to the Commission at their May 28th, 2024 meeting. The study modeled the impact of the EPA standards on the two Regional Transmission Organizations (RTOs) serving North Dakota, the Mid-Continent Independent System Operator (MISO) and the Southwest Power Pool (SPP). The impact analysis demonstrated that the EPA's proposed rules would result in the retirement of baseload power generation plants across the region. Baseload power is generated from a source which can be dispatched on-demand, in contrast to intermittent sources like renewable power which relies on favorable weather conditions to generate power.

The study built upon grid reliability data and forecasts from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) and the North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC). The results show that MISO and SPP will become dependent upon the weather to meet projected peak electricity demand as soon as 2028, and beyond 2030 will not have enough generation to meet demand. The study concluded that transmission system blackouts and capacity shortfalls will become more common as the grid increases its dependence on intermittent sources, in some cases even experiencing more hours with blackouts than without. In SPP alone, this would leave over five million Americans without power.

"The results of the study demonstrate a serious reality, that the consequences of this federal administration's actions will have lasting impacts on every American," said the Commission, which consists of Governor Doug Burgum, Attorney General Drew Wrigley, and Agriculture Commissioner Doug Goehring. "EPA has been playing political games with our livelihoods for too long, even in this case artificially lowering their projected power demands so the impact of their rules would fit their narrative. At the same time, they are pushing for the electrification of our transmission fleet, which, combined with increased demand for data services like artificial intelligence, will actually have the opposite effect and will significantly increase the strain on our grid. All this at a time when they are shutting down our power sources. In the end, physics will

beat politics, and we stand ready to fight for the American people.”

Vigesaa noted that electrical consumer demand is growing at a rate of 3-5% annually due to the electrification movement, data center growth to support artificial intelligence and bringing manufacturing home to the USA. He highlighted the need for an all-of-the-above energy policy to ensure that the existing baseload generation fleet can continue to operate, while also highlighting the need for new baseload facilities.

The full study is available on the North Dakota Industrial Commission’s website:

<https://www.ndic.nd.gov/sites/www/files/documents/Transmission-Authority/Publications/AlwaysOnEnergyResearchGreenhouseGasReport5172024.pdf>