

Dear Representative/Senator _____:

My name is _____, and I live in _____ County, Ohio. **My family and our local businesses expect our lights to stay on at a price we can afford. Our national energy policies must embrace this fundamental promise.** As electric cooperatives (including my own, Midwest Electric) work to meet the changing demands of our communities and consumer-members, prioritizing affordability and reliability is paramount. **I am writing you to ask for your help.**

On Christmas Eve, 2022, as families gathered in their homes for holiday celebrations, rolling blackouts hit nine states as demand for electricity exceeded the available supply. We managed to avert such measures, but we came frighteningly close to seeing the lights go out here, too.

As a nation, we're trending toward a future that depends on electricity to power more of the economy — and our lives — than ever before. Recent modeling by the Electric Power Research Institute concluded that achieving net-zero economywide emissions by 2050 would require 5 times more generation capacity than what is in place today. This increased demand must be accounted for as we plan to meet tomorrow's energy needs.

However, we seem to be moving in the opposite direction. According to the North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC), a not-for-profit entity with regulatory authority over reliability and security of the grid, the "disorderly" retirement of existing generating assets is reducing reliability. Many generation assets taken offline in recent years have been replaced with sources providing less capacity, no capacity, or capacity that's intermittent and not always available. **In 2009, 21 coal-fired generation plants in Ohio added their power to the grid. By the end of this summer, we will be down to four. That is a real, direct threat to reliability.**

At the same time, the current permitting process required to build, site, and maintain electric generation and transmission infrastructure is outdated and is a significant impediment to meeting tomorrow's energy needs. Electrifying other sectors of the economy could require a three-fold expansion of the transmission grid by 2050, according to the National Academy of Sciences. Just one new transmission project can take up to 10 years to complete due to regulatory hurdles.

Finally, supply chain delays are contributing to an unprecedented shortage of the basic machinery and grid components essential to ensuring continued reliability of the electric system. Prior to 2021, for example, it took an average of 70 days after placing an order for an electric cooperative to receive a distribution transformer, a basic system component that plays a key role in keeping the lights on. The same order today takes nearly five times longer to fulfill — an average of 340 days.

The fact is that we face an elevated risk of insufficient operating reserves when this summer's anticipated heat waves arrive. **The threats to the grid should serve as a dire warning that America's ability to keep the lights on is in jeopardy.** I am asking you to support reasonable federal energy policy that promotes grid reliability and assurance of baseload power generation that will allow our wholesale power supplier, Buckeye Power, to continue providing affordable and reliable power to its member-owners.

Respectfully,
