## **1AC – Climate**

### **Contention One is Climate**

#### **Climate change is existential – Every degree matters: warming is anthropogenic, fast, underestimated, and carbon alone triggers self-perpetuation AND acidification – its existential to humanity**

**Taylor et al. 24**, \*PhD, Coordinator of BEST Futures, a Research Group on Climate Science, also an Adjunct Research Fellow at the Environmental Futures Lab at Griffith University. \*\*PhD, Professor of Open Physics at the University of Cambridge, Head of the Polar Ocean Physics Group in the Department of Applied Mathematics and Theoretical Physics at the University of Cambridge. \*\*\*PhD, Assistant Professor of Agriculture and Life Sciences at Cornell University. †PhD, President of the Global Coral Reef Alliance and former Senior Scientific Affairs Officer at the United Nations Center for Science and Technology for Development. †\*PhD, Consulting Professor of Electrical Engineering at Stanford University. †\*\*PhD, Associate Professor in the Department of Statistics at the Sepuluh Institute of Technology (\*Graeme Taylor, \*\*Peter Wadhams, \*\*\*Daniele Visioni, †Tom Goreau, †\*Leslie Field, †\*\*Heri Kuswanto, 2024, “Bad Science and Good Intentions Prevent Effective Climate Action,” Earth ArXIV, https://eartharxiv.org/repository/object/6730/download/12962/)

**Every degree** of warming up to 2°C will **add** at least 1.3 meters to sea levels from accelerated ice flow into the ocean and melting from the Antarctic Ice Sheet, while **warming** between 2°C and 6°C is predicted to add 2.4 meters per degree (Garbe, Albrecht, Levermann, Donges and Winkelmann, 2020).

While the IPCC Working Group III reports frequently refer to 'cost-effectiveness', the cost against which the effectiveness is being assessed never includes the cost that would arise from exceeding a climate tipping point.

It should also be noted that there are no credible technological solutions for many climate change impacts: for example, the Arctic and boreal permafrost contain 1460 to 1600 Gt of organic carbon, almost twice the carbon in the atmosphere (WMO, 2020), and if gigatonnes of methane are released from melting permafrost and warming oceans, the process cannot be reversed.

Fact 3.2: The deadly impacts and costs of increasingly acidifying oceans are also greatly underestimated.

When carbon dioxide combines with seawater it forms carbonic acid, which makes the **ocean** more **acidic**. Since around 1850, the oceans have absorbed between a third and a half of the CO2 emitted to the atmosphere. As a result, the average pH of ocean surface waters has fallen from 8.2 to 8.1 units. This corresponds to a 30% increase in ocean acidity, a rate of change roughly 10 times faster than any time in the last 55 million years (CoastAdapt, 2017; Jiang et al., 2023).

If GHG emissions continue at the current rate (the RCP8.5 trajectory), by the end of the century average pH is projected to decrease by 0.3–0.4 units (∼100%–150% increase in acidity) (Kwiatkowski et al., 2020). Increasing acidity will make it difficult for marine organisms such as corals, clams, mussels, crabs, and some plankton, to form calcium carbonate, the material used to build shells and skeletal material. The **survival** of many microscopic **marine species** will also be **threatened** (Bird, 2023). In addition, ocean acidification will disrupt pelagic **food webs** via the proliferation of toxic algal blooms (Doney et al., 2020). The increasing degradation of marine food chains will seriously damage fishing industries and tourism.

**Ocean** system**s** are **not** able to **adapt** to these **rapid** changes in **acidity**—a process that **naturally** occurs over **millennia**. Declining ocean pH levels will persist as long as concentrations of atmospheric CO2 continue to rise. The stress on marine organisms will be exacerbated by rising temperatures and exposure to multiple biogeochemical changes. To avoid significant harm to critical marine ecosystems and the food security of **billions** of people, atmospheric concentrations of atmospheric **CO2** must be rapidly **reduced** to at least 320-350 ppm or less (IUCN, 2017).

Fact 3.3: Virtually irreversible tipping points are already being passed. Acceleration of the rate of **climate** change is a real and **existential** risk.

Climate tipping points (CTPs) are irrevocable changes in the climate, such as the melting of ice sheets, or the dieback of rainforests. These are points of **no return**: once glaciers and ecosystems like coral reefs have disappeared, they cannot be restored. For example, warming oceans make the collapse of the West Antarctic Ice Sheet unavoidable (Naughten, Holland and De Rydt, 2023). Evidence is all around us that we are nearing or have already crossed CTPs associated with critical parts of the Earth system—we see catastrophic fires in rainforests, spreading deserts, degrading ecosystems, and shrinking sea ice (e.g., Walsh, 2016; Bochow and Boers, 2023; Kim et al., 2023).

Another example is rainfall in Greenland, which has increased by 33% since 1991, with flooding rain darkening and melting the ice sheet and baring rocks (Box et al., 2023). However, the accelerating rate of melt and the positive feedbacks of increasing rainfall and reducing albedo are not represented in IPCC models.

Armstrong McKay and colleagues (2022) identify six **tipping points** that are **likely** to be crossed within the Paris Agreement targets of 1.5°C - 2°C of warming. **These are:**

Greenland Ice Sheet collapse

West Antarctic Ice Sheet collapse

**Coral** reef die off at low latitudes

Sudden **thawing** of permafrost in northern regions

Abrupt sea **ice loss** in the Barents Sea

Collapse of ocean **circulation** in the high-latitude North **Atlantic**

They point out that crossing these climate tipping points can generate positive feedbacks that will increase the likelihood of crossing other CTPs. For example, Arctic permafrost may permanently thaw even if warming stays between 1.1 °C and 1.5°C. Above 1.5°C of warming, losing the permafrost becomes “likely,” and we are currently on track for 2.7°C of warming in this century. If all the permafrost thawed, emissions would be equivalent to **51 times** all GHG **emissions** in 2019.

Alarmingly, the ESCIMO climate model indicates that a self-sustaining process of permafrost thaw has already begun, which suggests that the world is already past a point-of-no-return for global warming. This cycle consists of decreasing surface albedo, increasing water vapour feedback and increasing thawing of the permafrost, which releases both methane and carbon dioxide, resulting in even further temperature rises, and so on. Even after no more man-made GHG are emitted, this cycle will continue on its own until all carbon is released from permafrost and all ice is melted (Randers and Goluke, 2020).

The likelihood of passing additional CTPs becomes non-negligible at ~2°C and increases greatly at ~3°C. Above 2°C the Arctic would very likely become summer ice-free, and land carbon sink-tosource transitions would become widespread.

Scientists are detecting warning signs for many CTPs. For example, researchers have found an almost complete loss of stability of the Atlantic meridional overturning circulation (AMOC). These currents are already at their slowest point in at least 1,600 years, and new analysis indicates that the AMOC could collapse between 2025 and 2095, with a central estimate of 2050, if global carbon emissions are not reduced (Ditlevsen and Ditlevsen, 2023). This would have catastrophic consequences, severely disrupting the rains that billions of people depend on for food in India, South America and West Africa; increasing storms and lowering temperatures in Europe; and raising sea levels in the eastern North America (Boers, 2021)

The IPCC’s highest-end GHG concentration pathway, RCP 8.5, remains close to observations in many regions and may eventuate if negative feedback loops are activated, such as emissions from melting permafrost and forest die-backs (Schwalm, Glendon and Duffy, 2020). Both of the high-emission pathways considered in the IPCC’s most recent Working Group I report contain 4°C increases in the “very likely” range for 2081 through 2100, temperatures that many scientists believe would pose a significant threat to civilization (Steel, DesRoches, Mintz-Woo, 2022).

Tipping elements have been identified in all earth systems including cryosphere, ocean circulation systems and the biosphere, and a growing risk is that even if the Paris Agreement targets are met, a **cascade** of positive feedbacks could **push** the Earth System irreversibly onto a “**Hothouse Earth**” pathway (Steffen et al. 2018; Klose, Karle, Winkelmann and Donges, 2020). During the last glacial period abrupt climate changes sometimes occurred within decades, with temperatures over the Greenland ice-sheet warming by 8°C to 16°C at each event (Corrick et al., 2020).

The IPCC has been cautious in its evaluation of climate tipping points. For example, its latest report stated that there was a chance of a tipping point in the Amazon by the year 2100. However, while most studies only focus on one driver of destruction, such as climate change or deforestation, in reality ecosystems are simultaneously impacted by multiple interacting threats, e.g., water stress, degradation and pollution. Because tipping points can amplify and **accelerate** one **another**, more than a fifth of ecosystems worldwide, including the Amazon rainforest, are at **risk** of a catastrophic **breakdown** within a single **human life**time (Willcock et al., 2023). Record drought in Amazonia in 2023 suggests we are **much closer** to these thresholds than models **predict**.

#### **Thankfully, Small Modular Reactors massively reduce emissions, alleviate construction burdens, and meet energy goals**

University of Michigan News citing Max **Vanatta**, 11-4-20**24**, [Vanatta is a doctoral student in U-M’s School for Environment and Sustainability and in the Department of Industrial and Operations Engineering] "Small modular nuclear reactors can help meet US energy and emission goals—if we let them," https://news.umich.edu/small-modular-nuclear-reactors-can-help-meet-us-energy-and-emission-goalsif-we-let-them/, accessed 3-22-2025 //cy

Interest in small modular nuclear reactors, or SMRs, is skyrocketing with tech companies including Google, Amazon and Microsoft investing in the emerging low-carbon energy technology.¶ It has the potential to help these companies and the country meet their emissions goals while satisfying growing energy demands. But the United States has yet to power up its first SMR and the technology faces substantial deployment challenges with its cost and complexity.¶ Still, new research from the University of Michigan shows that SMRs are economically viable and poised to start living up to their potential by 2050.¶ “While expensive and challenging, SMRs do have the potential to be deployed,” said Max Vanatta, lead author of the new study in the journal Nature Energy. Vanatta is a doctoral student in U-M’s School for Environment and Sustainability and in the Department of Industrial and Operations Engineering.¶ “Even though they’re expensive, they can still be **the lowest cost option**,” Vanatta said.¶ The study predicts that enough SMRs could be deployed by then to reduce the country’s annual carbon dioxide emissions by up to **59 million metric tons**. To get there, though, they’ll need some help from **the government** and the industries building and implementing the technology.¶ Projects not products¶ One of the advantages of nuclear power is that how we end up using it is very similar to how we use energy from fossil fuels. Because of that, it integrates fairly seamlessly with the existing grid.¶ But nuclear energy also has unique considerations—so unique that no two nuclear power plants are completely identical, the researchers said.¶ “Nuclear reactors aren’t products like we think about other technologies,” said co-author Robb Stewart, chief technology officer of Alva Energy. “They’re more like construction projects.”¶ For conventional nuclear power plants, those projects involve several specialized buildings and elements, including their famous cooling towers. The net result in the U.S. is, on average, a plant that produces about 1 gigawatt of electric power, according to the U.S. Department of Energy.¶ SMRs are still projects, Stewart said, but smaller ones. They shrink down the reactor to fit into a more modular design, which comes at a cost to the maximum power capacity. The largest SMRs produce about 30% the power of an average conventional plant, but they can be housed in a single building on the site where the power will be used.¶ In the new study, Vanatta, Stewart and Michael Craig, a U-M assistant professor in energy systems, considered the deployment of SMRs in more than 900 facilities using natural gas to meet their industrial heating needs. The facilities represented 14 heat-intensive industries, including paper mills, petroleum refineries and chemical manufacturers.¶ “Providing cheap enough heat through **low-carbon means** is really hard,” Vanatta said. “That’s where **SMRs have a really good opportunity**.”¶ For its analysis, the team developed a model to project the degree and impact of SMR deployment in these settings in the context of three variables.¶ How to make SMRs competitive¶ One variable was the cost of natural gas. The team found that SMRs could compete when natural gas was priced at $6 or more per metric million British thermal units, or MMBtu, a standard unit of measurement for heat content. Although that’s not the lowest number you’ll see for the cost of natural gas, it is a realistic industrial price, Vanatta said.¶ Another variable was how the government incentivized SMR development through policy. Here, the researchers found incentives like tax credits and carbon taxes made a huge difference, while direct subsidies did not.¶ “If you were to just subsidize SMR development with a $10 billion pool, build as many modules as you can for that amount at the cheapest facilities, it still doesn’t take off,” Vanatta said. “Other policies had a very valuable impact. They go a long way.”¶ The final variable was how much the experience of building and installing an SMR would drive down the cost of future SMR projects. The team referred to this as learning, and it’s a component of the project that stood out most to Stewart.¶ “That capability of the model makes it a first of its kind,” Stewart said. The model could thus help bring a new dimension to similar studies of other technologies, especially in the low-carbon energy field, he added.¶ “There’s a lot of technology that’s just coming out of the lab,” Stewart said. “Whether that’s nuclear or battery storage or geothermal technology, we’re going to want to capture how the costs evolve from building the first system to the 100th.”¶ Historically, there hasn’t been much cost-reducing learning when it comes to conventional nuclear power plants. That’s another consequence of how unique each nuclear project is, Vanatta said.¶ But he’s optimistic the smaller, modular designs of SMRs could help buck that trend. Even in the worst-case scenario, though, where SMRs experience negative learning and the cost goes up between projects, the team still saw potential for deployment.¶ Still, the researchers stressed how much easier the path becomes with positive learning.¶ “We need to make sure that we’re **capturing that learning and scaling it**,” Stewart said. “We need to make sure it doesn’t get stuck inside a certain business or utility.”¶ Per the U.S. Energy Information Administration, conventional nuclear plants currently provide the country with about 100 gigawatts of power capacity. The facilities analyzed by the team could deploy more than an additional 20 gigawatts in the best-case scenario for SMRs.¶ “It’s going to take everything, but it’s all **in the service of reliable, low-carbon energy,” Vanatta said.**

#### **SMRs solve traditional concerns – costs, scalability, safety**

Brandon **Rakszawski**, 11-6-20**24**, [Director of Product Management at VenEck, a global investment management firm"Investment Opportunities in SMRs: The Future of Nuclear Power," Investment Opportunities in SMRs: The Future of Nuclear Power, VanEck, https://www.vaneck.com/us/en/blogs/natural-resources/smr-investing/, accessed 3-22-2025 //cy

Nuclear is a major component of the energy mix needed to satisfy growing electricity demand while the world transitions to cleaner energy sources. To see this trend play out in real time, look no further than the various announcements in recent months by tech companies to secure nuclear power sources. Nuclear offers **a long list of beneficial characteristics**: its emissions levels are some of the **lowest among energy sources**, it is very efficient and can produce **consistent power throughout the day**, and its land-use footprint is small compared to other energy sources.

Historically, one hurdle for broader nuclear power adoption has been the slow development pace. The infrastructure required to build a large-scale nuclear reactor can be significant, and the regulatory approval process can often move at a snail’s pace. For this reason, industry, customers, and public officials have turned their attention to small modular reactors (SMRs). SMRs are expected to allow for more scalable and flexible installation of nuclear power that, once further developed, **may reduce the time to market significantly, with many other potential benefits.**

What Are Small Modular Reactors?

As their name implies, SMRs are small and modular. They are much smaller than large-scale traditional nuclear reactor facilities, in some cases as small as 1/10th the size of traditional nuclear reactors. Being modular allows them to be manufactured offsite and assembled on-site.

These features are important for several reasons. Their small scale may allow SMRs to be used in locations that could not otherwise support a large reactor. Also, SMRs can add additional capacity at existing nuclear power sites. The modular design allows reactors to be manufactured at scale and assembled on-site. This **can significantly reduce** the up-front capital costs associated with large reactor sites and significantly reduce construction times.

Safety is another attractive feature of SMR innovation. Traditional nuclear reactors rely on physical barriers between the radioactive reactor core and the environment, along with extensive protocols to monitor the reactor’s safety and serve as backup to address human and computer errors. Many SMRs are designed with passive, self-cooling features that **don’t rely on operator intervention or computer action.**

The elephant in the room when discussing SMRs is that they have long been in the design and innovation phase but have yet to be deployed in a meaningful way. The primary hurdle has been the cost associated with being first. Many plans have been canceled or reassessed as inflation and rising interest rates drove financing costs higher over the last several years. However, that is expected to change in short order as nuclear has been more widely recognized as an important “green” or “sustainable” power source, **and significant amounts of financing** have been made available to this space in recent years. Several projects are targeting completion by 2029, but the early 2030s may be a more reasonable timeline.

#### **And, decarbonization efforts are coming now, but current strategy lacks diversification – only increased investment solves**

Ejeong **Baik et al. 21**. Department of Energy Resources Engineering, Stanford University; Kiran P. Chawla, Emmett Interdisciplinary Program in Environment and Resources, Stanford University; Jesse. D Jenkins, Department of Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering and Andlinger Center for Energy and the Environment, Princeton University; Clea Kolster, Lowercarbon Capital; Neha S. Patankar, Andlinger Center for Energy and the Environment, Princeton University; Arne Olson, Energy and Environmental Economics, Inc; Sally M. Benson, Department of Energy Resources Engineering, Stanford University; Jane C.S. Long, Environmental Defense Fund. What is different about different net-zero carbon electricity systems? Energy and Climate Change, Vol. 2, December 2021, 100046. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.egycc.2021.100046. Accessed 10 August 2024

Cost-effective 100% decarbonization of the grid-and consequently the cost-effective **decarbonization** of the entire **economy**-appears to depend on the development and deployment of clean firm resources. This analysis has also demonstrated that having **multiple clean** firm **resources** provides more cost-savings than only developing a single clean firm resource. Furthermore, the analysis has shown that different clean firm resources with varying techno-economic abilities can provide similar cost savings value in decarbonizing the grid. However, the mechanism in which each resource operates to provide cost-savings varies, and each technology and its respective least-cost grid are shown to have different implications for California's system development. While not explicitly modeled, the results of the modeling imply that a system that **relies** heavily on high capacities of PV **in-state** (such as the scenario with ZCF) may encounter greater **land-use** and **siting challenges** that may potentially **limit** the **development** of PV, or may face **higher** system **costs** if expected cost declines in storage and PV do not materialize. On the other hand, CCS or nuclear generally face higher public opposition and may encounter siting challenges of their own that may slow the growth of clean firm capacity that is needed. The development of **multiple** clean firm resources thus provides a **hedge** against non-modeled **risks** associated with relying on technical and cost advances or social license for a **single** technology, especially if the risks associated with these technologies are not correlated. Furthermore, relying on multiple clean firm resources **distributes** the risk of system failure more broadly, by **mitigating** the risk of a **system failure** based on the failure of a single technology and increasing the flexibility of the system in adjusting to potential challenges.

In addition to reducing risk, utilizing multiple clean firm resources to decarbonize a grid is more cost-effective than solely relying on a single resource. While additional effort is required to develop more than one clean firm power option, the options are not limited to only the three technologies modeled in this analysis. There are also other clean firm resources that fit the identification of flexible base, intermediate, and firm cycler that can substitute for or supplement nuclear, CCS, or zero carbon fuels. Geothermal resources are also flexible base options that have high capital costs, but low variable costs when run. Allam cycle turbines are intermediate resources that are similar to natural gas with CCS. **Biomass**-fired power plants with CCS may also serve as intermediate resources. Firm cyclers can take the form of ZCF such as hydrogen with hydrogen turbines, or biogas or methanated hydrogen that run in conventional gas turbines. Running natural gas peakers that emit CO2 with the use of negative emissions technologies or offsets can also be a form of **firm cycler**.

While long duration storage was also considered in this analysis, we find that long duration storage resources at current and future projects costs cannot serve as direct substitutes for clean firm resources, and the conclusion is consistent with recent literature [39]. This is because fully displacing firm generation with long duration storage requires very low marginal utilization rates for the final increments of storage capacity deployed. For this capacity to be economically competitive, energy storage capacity costs must be extremely low (on the order of $1 per kilowatt-hour of installed energy capacity) along with sufficient power cost and efficiency performance. A more detailed discussion on the long duration storage results can be found in the SI.

Regardless of the type, developing clean firm resources of any sort to scale by 2045 will likely require immediate action. Furthermore, recent policy signals have pointed to a possible goal to reach a net zero carbon grid by 2035 [40], greatly raising the urgency to take action. Planning and developing power system assets take multiple years, and the capacity installed in the next decade will likely persist through 2050. However, the development of clean firm resources explored in this analysis currently face a multitude of challenges in scaling up. Producing and distributing ZCF will likely require more affordable fuel production technologies and a wide range of fuel transport and storage infrastructure buildout. Similarly, CCS will require the development of CO2 storage site development and protocols and pipelines, and nuclear will have to face public acceptance and siting challenges. Developing any clean firm technology at scale will require significant investment and a concerted effort to reduce barriers to deployment. Furthermore, all clean firm resources will need appropriate incentives or market mechanisms in place for them to participate and be profitable in the electricity system. Pursuing a **broader range** of possible clean firm resources, in addition to renewable technologies, will help build knowledge and experience, as well as **encourage** further **investment** across the energy sector to reach a **net zero** carbon **grid** sooner.

The result that having multiple clean firm resources within a decarbonized grid is more cost-effective than decarbonized grids with single clean firm resources is consistent across the three independent capacity expansion and dispatch models. This further emphasizes the robustness of the results and that the basis of the outcome was from the techno-economic characteristics of the resources instead of any unique set up of the models themselves. While this analysis focuses on California and the WECC, the techno-economic characteristics of flexible base, intermediate, and firm cycling resources imply that the results of this analysis will likely hold in **any region** with high share of renewable resources, and especially more so for regions such as the Northeast and Southeast US where the wind and solar resources may be of lower quality. Given the importance of affordably decarbonizing the electricity sector globally, this analysis highlights the integral role that multiple clean firm resources with varying techno-economic characteristics can play in decarbonizing the grid cost-effectively. Future work can be done to understand the role, value, and operation of clean firm resources in pathways for decarbonizing at less stringent emissions goals.

## **1AC – Resiliency**

### **Contention Two is Resiliency**

#### **Brink of grid failure now – its high risk – government action is urgently needed**

Grace **Wickerson**, 4-3-20**24**, [Senior Manager @ Federation of American Scientists, focus on Climate and Environment, masters of Science from Northwestern!! btw //sugar school] "When America Goes Dark, What Comes Next?," Federation of American Scientists, https://fas.org/publication/grid-failure-extreme-heat/, accessed 3-23-2025 //cy

**Soaring** energy demands and **unprecedented** heatwaves have placed the **U.S. on the brink of a severe threat** with the potential to impact **millions of lives: widespread grid failure** across multiple states. While the North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC), tasked with overseeing grid reliability under the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), has issued warnings about the heightened risk of grid failures, the prospect of widespread summer blackouts looms large amid the nation’s unpreparedness for such scenarios.

As a proactive measure, there needs to be a mandate for the implementation of an Executive Order or an interagency Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) mandating the expansion of Public Health and Emergency Response Planning for Widespread Grid Failure Under Extreme Heat. This **urgently** needed action would help mitigate the worst impacts of future grid failures under extreme heat, safeguarding lives, the economy, and national security as the U.S. moves toward a more **sustainable, stable, and reliable electric grid system.**

When the lights go out, restoring power across America is a complex, intricate process requiring seamless collaboration among various agencies, levels of government, and power providers amid constraints extending beyond just the loss of electricity. In a blackout, access to critical services like telecommunications, transportation, and medical assistance is also compromised, which only intensifies and compounds the urgency for coordinated response efforts. To avert blackouts, operators frequently implement planned and unplanned rolling blackouts, a process for load shedding that eases strain on the grid. However, these actions may lack transparent protocols and criteria for safeguarding critical medical services. Equally crucial and missing are frameworks to prioritize regions for power restoration, ensuring equitable treatment for low-income and socially vulnerable communities affected by grid failure events.

Thus, given the gravity of these high-risk, increasingly probable scenarios facing the United States, it is imperative for the federal government to take a **leadership role** in assessing and directing planning and readiness capabilities to respond to this evolving disaster.

#### **Unprecedented surges in electricity demand aren’t met now – nuclear is key and emerging**

Will Sturgeon, 3-10-2025, [Director of Communications for the American Clean Power Association, Sustainable Development degree from Uni College Dublin], "New Report Finds Urgent Need to Expand Energy Supply to Meet Rapidly Growing Future Demand," ACP, https://cleanpower.org/news/us-national-power-demand-study/, accessed 3-14-2025 //cy

HOUSTON, March 10, 2025 – Electricity demand in the United States is projected to surge by an **unprecedented amount** over the coming decade, according to data released today by **S&P Global** Commodity Insights. This rapid growth, driven by a diverse set of factors, signals an extraordinary opportunity for the American economy and electricity sector: meeting this growing demand will require an all-of-the-above energy strategy featuring efficient, economic, reliable, and rapidly deployable energy resources.

The full US National Power Demand Study will describe **a critical gap** between the current energy supply and future needs. It predicts U.S. electricity demand will surge by 35-50% between 2024 and 2040. This is primarily due to AI data centers and new manufacturing activity in the short-term whereas electric vehicles (EV), space-heating electrification, and broad economic growth underlie the long-term dynamics. This **demand is growing faster than the supply** of new energy solutions that could power it — data centers and manufacturing facilities, for example, take about three years to build versus development and construction times of typically five or more years for new power generation to come online, creating an **urgent need** for faster **policy action** on permitting and grid interconnection and an all-of-the-above energy strategy within the sector.

Regional dynamics — such as population growth, data center development and manufacturing in Texas and zero emission vehicle mandates in Western states — will dictate how the problem is best addressed, as demand grows unevenly across regions in the near term. The data describes how demand growth will initially be concentrated in the Eastern Interconnection and Texas, while later growth will be driven by the electrification of transportation and heating in population centers nationwide.

“Today’s report demonstrates the challenge of meeting our nation’s skyrocketing demand for electric power. The strategies for near-term and sustained success are simple to describe and hard to achieve. We must support and **accelerate** all sources of shovel-ready renewable resources, energy storage, and natural gas generation while urgently building new electricity transmission and natural gas distribution infrastructure. We must bring equal urgency to accelerate the development and deployment of new nuclear generation capacity and fossil generation with carbon capture,” said Jason Grumet, CEO of the American Clean Power Association. “However, the necessity to embrace all American resources will only occur if both parties move beyond the idea that hydrocarbons and electrons have political affiliations. It is time to join together behind a true all-of-the-above energy strategy that lowers prices, creates jobs, and supports our national security.”

The data finds that an additional (net) 730-765 GW of renewables, 160-175 GW of storage, 60-100 GW of gas, and 10-25 GW of nuclear and geothermal will be needed by 2040 to maintain grid reliability, with 8% of the nation’s energy demand being met through expected energy efficiency savings over 2024 levels of savings.¶ America already possesses the technology necessary to bridge this gap between demand and supply, the report will stress. It calls on government, industry, and consumers to work together on the following actions to solve the issue and, in turn, drive economic growth and strengthen security and system reliability:¶ Accelerate permitting processes, including for power generation and transmission¶ Reform interconnection processes¶ Upgrade and expand infrastructure¶ Enhance energy efficiency and encourage demand-side management and flexibility

“This report underscores the urgency clean energy buyers face in securing reliable, low-cost, **carbon-free electricity**,” said Rich Powell, CEO of Clean Energy Buyers Association (CEBA). “At CEBA, we are collaborating with stakeholders across industries from technology to manufacturing as well as utilities and policymakers to forge partnerships and solutions that will ensure energy buyers have all of the resources that they need to power their operations and enable our nation’s economic growth and competitiveness.”

“The S&P Demand Growth Report highlights the tremendous growth in electricity demand and the critical gaps that must be filled to meet future needs. Nuclear energy is **well positioned** to meet the increasing energy demand from manufacturing, AI and data center growth. Partnerships with Amazon, Microsoft, Meta, and Google highlight a broader shift among **leading** technology companies toward investing in nuclear energy’s unique ability to provide clean, 24/7/365 power — **essential** for supporting energy-intensive data center operations. Looking ahead, the next-generation nuclear technologies that will emerge because of these investments will be **integral in reaching our clean energy goals**. We welcome these developments and the growing commitment to nuclear energy, which will play **a pivotal role in shaping the future of a reliable and clean energy** grid,” said John Kotek, Senior Vice President of Policy and Public Affairs at NEI.

#### **Nuclear provides stability – renewables can’t solve**

**Latief 23** [Yusuf Latief, Latief is an avid writer with extensive cross-industry technical writing experience., "Grid Reliability: Is Nuclear The Stabiliser We’Ve Been Looking For?," Smart Energy International, 11-13-2023, https://www.smart-energy.com/industry-sectors/energy-grid-management/grid-reliability-is-nuclear-the-stabiliser-weve-been-looking-for/, accessed on 1-6-2025, Bittner]

Grid stability is consistently brought up as **a key puzzle** that needs to be solved to reach our net zero targets. One often overlooked piece, states Bernard Salha, group technical director and R&D director for French energy giant EDF, might be found in **nuclear power**.

Although the volume of renewable energy sources coming online is an accolade worth touting, the **issue behind intermittency persists**.

However, an answer might just be found in the role of **nuclear** and Salha, in an Energy Transitions Podcast episode, stated his confidence in this being the case:

“Nuclear is clearly an asset to cope with the question of overall intermittency and, let me also say, the question of **global stability of the grid**.

“The big question with renewables is that you have electricity (only) when you have wind or when you have sun…”

The go-to answer for this intermittency conundrum is the use of storage systems, whether battery or long-duration, which can be co-located with renewable power plants to store energy when generated and discharge back to the grid during peak hours of demand.

However, states Salha, storage technology is **not yet** at a level where it can be fully relied on to keep our grid in check for the foreseeable future:

“…the development of storage, at least of big (enough) volumes of storage, **is not yet here**, and is probably **not** going to be here **for a very long time**.

“There are technical devices, which allow us to have stability on the grid – grid forming systems for example – but nuclear could help also in that respect by its natural inertia. And nuclear is **flexible** – that’s a key element I really want to stress; nuclear is flexible.

“On our French fleet, we have reactors, which can increase (…) or decrease power very fast; the technical spec, with grey rods to which the reactors are equipped, is of 3% full power per minute.

“Nuclear power plants can follow the load, and consequently, they can help to **bring stability on the grid**.”

According to Salha, ensuring the stability of our grid systems needs to be recognised as a **crucial** element **for** the **success of** the **energy transition** as, with increasing shares of electricity and renewable energy coming online, its functioning will need to be maintained throughout.

“As each share (of energy) is going to be larger and larger; we need a strong grid and a stable grid.

“And in that respect, a nuclear power plant with the flexibility and capacity to follow the load is clearly an asset in this global, complex landscape.”

#### **Grid failure causes extinction.**

**Rees ’18** [Martin; 2018; founder of Center for the Study of Existential Risk, MA, Trinity College, Cambridge, and fifteenth Astronomer Royal; Princeton University Press, “On the Future Prospects for Humanity,” p. 108-110 language edited] https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctvc774d5

2.5. TRULY EXISTENTIAL RISKS?

Our world increasingly depends on elaborate networks: electricity **power grids**, air traffic control, international finance, globally dispersed manufacturing, and so forth. Unless these networks are highly resilient, their benefits could be outweighed by **catastrophic** (albeit rare) **breakdowns**—real- world analogues of what happened in the 2008 global financial crisis. Cities would be ~~paralysed~~ [immobilized] without electricity—the **lights** would go out, but that would be far from the most serious consequence. Within a few **days** our cities would be **uninhabitable** and **anarchic**. Air travel can spread a **pandemic** worldwide within days, wreaking havoc on the disorganised **megacities** of the developing world. And social media can spread **panic** and rumour, and **economic contagion**, literally at the **speed of light**.

When we realise the power of biotech, robotics, cybertechnology, and AI—and, still more, their potential in the coming decades—we can’t avoid anxieties about how this empowerment could be **misused**. The historical record reveals episodes when ‘**civilizations**’ have crumbled and even been **extinguished**. Our world is so **interconnected** it’s unlikely a catastrophe could hit any region without its consequences **cascad**ing **globally**. For the first time, we need to contemplate a collapse—**societal** or **ecological**—that would be a truly **global setback** to civilization. The setback could be temporary. On the other hand, it could be so devastating (and could have entailed so much **environmental** or **genetic degradation**) that the survivors could **never regenerate** a civilization at the present level.

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