

The Perils of “Electrify Everything”

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In Mid-February, an arctic blast swept across Kansas and the nation and gave America a preview of what an “existential threat” looks like. Not the kind of fear-mongering “12-years to the end of the earth” threat by the likes of U.S. Representative Alexandra Ocasio-Cortez and fed to Americans by President Biden as he issues job-killing executive orders.

The threat we saw in February took away people’s power, heat, and clean water. The blame lies with those who irresponsibly push not-ready-for-primetime renewable energy, like wind and solar power, to make up a greater share of our energy grids.

There is a lot of conflicting information about electricity blackouts across the nation. The root cause of the blackouts in Kansas and across the nation is national and state policy that has prioritized the adoption of unreliable wind/solar energy over reliable energy.

For the last decade-plus energy policy in Kansas and the U.S. has been focused on mandating or subsidizing as much wind and solar as possible.

The focus on wind has come above all at the expense of coal, natural gas, and nuclear which has the resiliency advantage of being able to store large quantities of fuel onsite.

Because intermittent wind and solar can always go near zero, as we saw in mid-February, they don’t replace the cost of reliable power plants, they add to the cost of reliable power plants. This is why the more wind and solar grids are used, the higher their electricity prices.

To lessen the price increases from unreliable wind/solar energy, governments try to get away with as few reliable power plants online as they can. The expense and distraction of accommodating unreliable wind/solar energy takes away money and focus from resiliency.

While we don’t know yet what exactly caused certain natural gas and coal plants to go down, we know with 100% certainty that natural gas and coal plants can easily run in far more adverse conditions than what was experienced in mid-February. And we know with 100% certainty that even if no wind turbines had frozen they would have been nearly useless during large portions of the weather in mid-February.

To expose the foolishness of the idea that fossil fuels could not handle the cold temperatures in Texas, it helps to look at facts. In Texas, a spike in demand during cold temperatures led to devastating blackouts. In Alberta, Canada, a spike in demand during far colder temperatures led to very little disruption. Why? Alberta has a reliable grid with 43% coal and 49% natural gas.

If you are looking at the facts, the obvious lesson here is: stop subsidizing and mandating unreliable wind/solar energy, which are often useless when you need them most--and do a better job at managing reliable energy sources like coal, natural gas, and nuclear.



Instead of acknowledging the reality that unreliable wind/solar energy can't keep us warm or powered in the winter and that the "100% renewable" direction is disastrous, advocates of unreliable wind/solar energy are instead implying that no source of electricity can be relied upon, so no need to single out wind.

This is, of course, not correct. We know how to produce enough low-cost, reliable electricity for every situation. You build reliable power plants, including those with on-site fuel storage--such as coal and nuclear. You place a premium on reliability and resilience. That's it.

Several areas across the country, including Kansas, had an electricity crisis during bad winter weather because they did not focus enough on building reliable power plants and infrastructure. They were obsessed with getting as much unreliable wind/solar electricity as possible. Let's all learn from this mistake.

Plans to subsidize wind/solar energy should change. Biden's energy plan calls for nearly 100% solar and wind electricity by 2035! Everyone should be asking how the Biden plan would have fared in mid-February.

Kansas and America need to totally change direction in energy policy toward one of energy freedom.