

(608) 266-5490 (800) 385-3385

April 29, 2025

## **Ensuring Energy Reliability for Future Generations**

The dawn of AI is just one reason why America's energy grid is at a crossroads. A single Chat GPT query uses enough energy to power a lightbulb for 20 minutes. In addition to our increasing reliance on technology, continued U.S. population growth will ensure that our economy becomes progressively more energy intensive. Since America's energy supply infrastructure is already struggling to keep pace with these factors, our country faces a straightforward but pressing problem: how do we make sure that our power grid can continue to meet the demands of our 21<sup>st</sup> Century economy.

At this juncture, continuing to achieve electric reliability should be a priority for our energy regulators, so Midwestern families can continue to power their lives and their livelihoods without interruption. Given its ability to provide consistent baseload power, natural gas is the best fuel source to ensure that our energy demands are met. Renewables like wind and solar are an important component of an all-of-the-above energy portfolio and I support their continued expansion, but their power generation ebbs and flows depending on the time of day or weather conditions. Recently, at the Commissioner-led Reliability Technical Conference, representatives from the Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO) made clear that "weatherdependent electric generation resources do not possess the same operational characteristics as the power plants that are retiring," leading to declining "fuel assurance and dispatchability."

Or, in other words, if we want people to have confidence that the power they need will be there whenever they need it--night or day, rain or shine--we must create a grid that is founded on consistent and dependable sources of energy.

With new advances in pipeline technology, today's energy operations can run more efficiently and with lower emissions, aligning with environmental goals while meeting modern energy needs. By building energy infrastructure strategically, our country can achieve a balanced and sustainable energy grid that supports our renewable ambitions without sacrificing reliability.

The need for a more reliable grid is particularly relevant to Wisconsin, where regions are experiencing rapid energy demand growth, driven in part by the growth of AI uses and data centers. Large technology firms are investing across the Midwest due to lower land costs and access to renewable resources. Ensuring that the region's energy infrastructure can support this demand will be essential to both its economic growth and its burgeoning role as a tech and data hub.

We cannot afford to wait until our energy grid is at capacity to take action; proactively investing in our energy infrastructure today will allow us to meet future demands without worrying about our ability to keep the lights on or heat our homes. A stronger, more resilient grid will be essential to avoid blackouts, price spikes, and other disruptions that could have severe economic and social consequences.