

POWER  THE FUTURE

# FROZEN BY FERN

AMERICA'S ENERGY GRID CRISIS MET ITS  
STRESS TEST, AND RENEWABLES FAILED IT

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**During the height of Winter Storm Fern, when millions of Americans needed electricity the most, roughly 80% of U.S. power came from natural gas, coal, and nuclear energy. Wind and solar contributed only a fraction, with output collapsing during the coldest, darkest hours.**

**This real-world stress test came just days after Al Gore declared at Davos that President Trump was “insane” for canceling wind projects, insisting that “renewable is taking over” and that electrification leaves “no choice.” The storm proved otherwise. When temperatures plunged and demand surged nationwide, it was reliable, dispatchable energy, not climate ideology, that kept the lights on.**

For years, Power The Future has warned that politically driven energy policies prioritizing wind and solar over reliable power would raise prices and weaken the grid. Winter Storm Fern put that warning to the test. The result was unmistakable: states that embraced the most aggressive renewable mandates entered the storm with the highest prices, the weakest reliability, and the greatest exposure to failure.

Spanning from the Southwest through the Midwest and into the Northeast, the storm brought record low temperatures, heavy snow, ice accumulation, and prolonged freezing conditions across more than 30 states. By mid-storm, grid operators reported more than 1 million customer power outages due directly to weather stress on infrastructure.

This was not an anomaly. It was the predictable outcome of a grid designed around ideology instead of physics.

## **RENEWABLES DRIVE PRICES**

In The Looming American Electricity Affordability Crisis, Power The Future analyzed more than 500,000 federal electricity records and found a consistent national pattern: as dispatchable fossil fuel generation is retired and replaced with intermittent wind and solar, electricity prices rise. This is not cyclical. It is structural.

The states that cut reliable power the fastest saw the sharpest price increases:

- California: Fossil generation down 57 million MWh per year since 2010; electricity prices up 8.3¢/kWh.
- Massachusetts: Fossil generation down 74%; prices up 6.4¢/kWh.
- New York: Closure of the Indian Point nuclear plant drove prices higher and increased dependence on imported power.
- New Jersey: The Eagle Point gas plant was mothballed despite rising demand.

These states are not outliers. They are the leading edge of a national affordability crisis driven by renewable mandates, premature plant retirements, and market rules that reward intermittency while penalizing reliability.

At the same time, the states with the least wind and solar penetration, and the most firm generation, consistently enjoy lower prices and greater resilience, particularly during peak demand events.

## **WINTER STORM FERN: WHEN THE BILLS CAME DUE**

Winter Storm Fern transformed long-term affordability warnings into an immediate reliability crisis.

As temperatures plunged across the country, electricity demand surged simultaneously in every major region. Grid operators were forced into emergency actions, wholesale power prices spiked, and the federal government intervened to keep generators online.

During the height of the storm, natural gas, coal, and nuclear provided roughly 80% of U.S. electricity, carrying the grid through overnight hours and peak cold when demand was highest. Wind contributed single-digit percentages, and solar was largely unavailable during the coldest and darkest hours.

This is the reality renewable advocates refuse to confront: intermittent energy does not show up when Americans need power the most.

States that entered the storm with the worst generation mix, high renewable dependence and diminished firm capacity, faced the greatest stress and the highest prices. The same states PTF identified in its affordability analysis reappeared as the most vulnerable during Fern.

Winter Storm Fern did not “break” the grid. It revealed it.

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**It was not wind turbines or solar panels keeping the lights on. It was the same dispatchable energy sources climate activists have spent two decades trying to eliminate.**

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## **AL GORE WAS WRONG THEN AND HE'S A WRONG NOW**

Less than a week before Winter Storm Fern, Al Gore stood in Davos and declared President Trump “insane” for canceling wind projects, insisting that “renewable is taking over” and that “we really don’t have any choice” but to electrify everything. That statement aged poorly and immediately.

As Americans shivered through Fern, it was not wind turbines or solar panels keeping the lights on. It was the same dispatchable energy sources climate activists have spent two decades trying to eliminate.

This week also marks the 20-year anniversary of *An Inconvenient Truth*. Two decades later, Gore’s core promise remains unchanged and unfulfilled. He wasn’t just wrong about the timeline. He was wrong about the system. And Winter Storm Fern proved it.



## **TRUMP IS RIGHT AND THE DATA PROVES IT**

Power The Future’s affordability research and Winter Storm Fern tell the same story:

- The states with the worst grid mix entered the storm with the highest prices and the weakest reliability.
- Wind and solar failed to perform during peak winter demand, forcing emergency reliance on fossil and nuclear power.
- Policies that prioritize renewable expansion over firm capacity increase costs and risk outages.

**President Trump is right to cancel projects that deepen this imbalance. America does not have an energy shortage. It has a reliability problem created by policy choices.**

Electricity must be affordable. It must be reliable. And before we talk about all-of-the-above, it, above all, must be there when people need it.

Winter Storm Fern made clear that energy policy rooted in reality beats climate ideology every time.