

NEWS



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For Immediate Release:

New EPA Rules Threaten Reliability and Affordability of Electricity for Ohio and Puts Our Nation's Electric System in Jeopardy

NEW LONDON, April 30, 2024 at 8:30AM — On April 25, the EPA released its long-anticipated final rule targeting all coal power plants and new natural gas plants in the United States, which will impact everyone located in the Buckeye State.

According to the [U.S. Energy Information Administration](#), Ohio is among the nation's top 10 electricity producers and one of the top 5 electricity consumers. Natural gas provides the largest share of baseload electricity generation by capacity in Ohio, supplying more than 51% of the state's power.

Baseload power plants (such as gas, coal, and nuclear) deliver constant power output and are not affected by weather conditions, whereas new capacity centered around renewables will result in intermittent and unreliable generation.

For decades, coal was Ohio's primary fuel for electricity generation. Increased federal regulation over the past 15 years has decreased coal's 82% share of Ohio's electricity generation. Since 2010, 16 coal-fired power plants have been closed across the Buckeye State, resulting in over 50% of coal-fired baseload power generation being taken offline, and a portion of that has not been replaced.



Increased natural gas-fired generation has offset much of the power decrease caused by coal-fired power plant retirements. Today, only 4 coal-fired power plants remain in Ohio, which still provide roughly 32% of the state's baseload generation.

Ohio's two nuclear power plants, located near Toledo and Cleveland, supply about 12% of the state's net generation. Renewable energy resources supply about 4% of Ohio's total in-state electricity generation, with wind and solar accounting for the most.

The new EPA rule demands that existing coal-fired plants be 90% carbon emission free by 2032 and points to carbon capture technology as a means to achieve this. Generating facilities unable to meet the demands would be forced to close. Presently, carbon capture technology and infrastructure for large-scale coal-fired power plants does not exist.

The EPA's final rule targeting all coal plants and new natural gas plants will affect Ohio's coal-fired Cardinal Plant in Brilliant, Ohio, which is owned by [Ohio's Electric Cooperatives](#). Cardinal has three coal-fired generating units with a total capacity up to 1,800 MW and is the backbone of reliable and affordable electricity generation for over a million member-consumers receiving their power from an electric cooperative here in the Buckeye State.

Ohio's Electric Cooperatives have invested \$1.2 billion at Cardinal Plant since 2012 to reduce emissions at the member-owned plant and has been recognized as one of the cleanest power plants of its kind in the world.

"EPA has again proposed an unrealistic and unachievable set of regulations on the production of electricity. EPA mandates the use of unproven technologies and sets unrealistic compliance limits on power plants. They have ignored warnings that these rules will increase cost and threaten the reliability of our national electric system at a time when we are experiencing growing demand and already increasing costs," said Ohio's Electric Cooperatives President and CEO, Pat O'Loughlin. "Unfortunately, EPA rules will harm electricity consumers and our economy while promising dubious environmental benefit."

O'Loughlin, along with other leaders of power generation plants across the country, have testified on Capitol Hill to the public health-safety risks and negative economic impacts this EPA rule would impose on electric cooperatives members — and all electricity consumers.

Not only does the new rule put reliable, affordable power, and the integrity of the electric grid at risk, it all but ensures rolling blackouts will occur during cold winters, when electricity demand for heat to stay warm exceeds available supply.

Firelands Electric Cooperative's member-owned generation and transmission cooperative, Buckeye Power, supplies power to 25 electric distribution cooperatives that serve nearly 40% of the land area in the state and 77 of Ohio's 88 counties, plus parts of Indiana and Michigan.

The Cardinal plant supplies more than 70% of Ohio co-ops' baseload electricity generation, which over a million people rely on every day to power nearly 400,000 homes and businesses across Ohio. Cardinal Plant employs over 300 people here in the state.

Buckeye Power owns and operates a diverse set of power generation resources. In addition to coal and natural gas power plants, it utilizes renewable energy projects, including agricultural bio-digesters, landfill gas plants, 24 solar PV sites, and New York Power Authority (NYPA) hydropower. Buckeye has developed and operates an extensive demand-side management program.

Firelands Electric Cooperative, a Touchstone Energy Cooperative, is a member-owned, not-for-profit electric utility serving more than 9,200 homes and businesses in rural areas of Ashland, Huron, Lorain, and Richland counties and ranks among the highest energy utilities in the country for customer satisfaction. Visit the cooperative's website at www.firelandsec.com, [Facebook page](#), or [Twitter feed](#) to learn more about reliable and affordable power.

PHOTO CAPTION:

Patrick O'Loughlin, president and CEO of Buckeye Power and Ohio Rural Electric Cooperatives, told the House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Environment, Manufacturing, and Critical Materials on June 6, 2023 that EPA's proposed greenhouse gas rule for power plants threatens reliability. (Photo By: Denny Gainer/NRECA)