

Why Does Closing and Demolishing the Campbell in 2025 Not Make Economic Sense?

Solar and wind are no economic substitute.

- Our grid operator MISO says solar and wind should not be classified as reliable base load sources of electric generation. John Bear, CEO of MISO, said in 2024: “While wind and solar produce needed clean energy, they lack certain key reliability attributes that are needed to keep the grid reliable every hour of the year. Although several emerging technologies may someday change that calculus, they are not yet proven at grid scale.”¹ MISO says our grid is in trouble.
- It really does not matter how cheap wind and solar may be: they do not currently have the features we need as base load for our grid. They should **currently** be regarded as no substitute for the Campbell, at least to 2032.
- Billions of dollars of government subsidy are flowing into solar and wind, distorting the true economics. The very fact such subsidy is needed speaks volumes about the true economics. We should not count on such subsidy to continue indefinitely because the growing government debt level is simply not sustainable.
- Most analyses fail to take into account the significant costs of solar panel and turbine disposal and the fact that infrastructure is not even in place to handle such disposal safely.² It will become a huge future burden on localities.

Natural gas is no economic substitute.

- Michigan law prevents new gas plants from being manufactured without 90% carbon capture, but that level of carbon capture is cost prohibitive.³ That is why Consumers is not building one. Besides, it is more economic to add a carbon capture facility or feature alongside the existing Campbell rather than build a new gas plant with 90% carbon capture.
- Consumers purchase of the Covert plant did not help the overall grid at all, because it was already operating on the grid with another owner before the purchase. It was simply an accounting gimmick. Courts would likely require it to share its generating capacity with others like Wolverine Power, which has an on-going lawsuit with Consumers over the Campbell.
- A UN pact signed in September 2024 requires the rapid phase-out of all fossil fuel plants and not just coal ones.
- Natural gas is more expensive than coal per kilowatt hour,⁴ especially given the Campbell already is built and running.

Palisades nuclear plant is no economic substitute.

- It received another setback in recent weeks: “The U.S. nuclear power regulator said ... ‘Preliminary results identified a large number of steam generator tubes with indications that require further analysis and/or repair,’ a notice on the Nuclear Regulatory Commission’s website said... Alan Blind, engineering director at the plant from 2006 to 2013, estimated ... that repairs to the steam generators would cost over \$500 million and add two to three years to any restart. Edwin Lyman, a physicist and a nuclear safety expert at the Union of Concerned Scientists, said more needs to be known about the plant’s condition. “The public deserves the unvarnished truth ... before more taxpayer and ratepayer dollars are poured down what could be a very deep rathole”.⁵ This is on top of a significant number of previously identified problems.
- It will cost billions of dollars to re-commission, and it is very doubtful whether it even will be re-commissioned, since in US history no shuttered nuclear plant has ever been re-commissioned, and all of its identified problems.⁶

Building better transmission lines from other regions is no economic substitute.

- Building better transmission lines from other regions is a time consuming process that cannot resolve the challenges our regional grid faces in the next several years.⁷ It is also more expensive than transporting fuel to Michigan plants.

There is simply no good economic substitute for keeping the Campbell open to at least 2032.

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¹ <https://www.publicpower.org/periodical/article/miso-ceo-highlights-immediate-and-serious-challenges-reliability-regions-grid#:~:text=%E2%80%9CWhile%20wind%20and%20solar%20produce.grid%20scale%2C%E2%80%9D%20Bear%20said.>

² <https://www.empirecenter.org/publications/renewable-solar-comes-with-recurring-waste-costs/>

³ <https://www.michiganlciv.org/natural-gas-should-have-no-place-in-our-clean-energy-future/>

⁴ [https://www.statista.com/statistics/189180/natural-gas-vis-a-vis-coal-](https://www.statista.com/statistics/189180/natural-gas-vis-a-vis-coal-prices/#:~:text=Natural%20gas%20vis%20a%20vis.in%20the%20U.S.%201980%2D2023&text=United%20States'%20electricity%20producers%20paid.average%20of%202.52%20U.S.%20dollars.)

[prices/#:~:text=Natural%20gas%20vis%20a%20vis.in%20the%20U.S.%201980%2D2023&text=United%20States'%20electricity%20producers%20paid.average%20of%202.52%20U.S.%20dollars.](https://www.statista.com/statistics/189180/natural-gas-vis-a-vis-coal-prices/#:~:text=Natural%20gas%20vis%20a%20vis.in%20the%20U.S.%201980%2D2023&text=United%20States'%20electricity%20producers%20paid.average%20of%202.52%20U.S.%20dollars.)

⁵ <https://www.reuters.com/business/energy/us-regulator-says-michigan-nuclear-plant-needs-work-before-restart-2024-09-18/>

⁶ <https://savethecampbell.com/ordinarily-nuclear-power-is-reliable-but-not-with-the-palisades-plan/>

⁷ <https://missouriindependent.com/2023/12/19/building-transmission-takes-forever-the-biden-administration-is-pushing-to-change-that/>