

Federal and State Electric Energy Policy Gets More Unplugged From Reality By the Week...

How so?

1. Last month the Federal Government signed a UN pact committing to rapidly close ALL fossil fuel plants- gas as well as coal.¹ The Michigan Public Service Commission is already applying pressure on some gas plants to close,² along with coal. We are moving away from coal and gas at the very time it is most obvious we need the combination for our electric energy security.³
2. Federal and State are promoting rapid construction of energy intense data centers. These data centers use as much electric as whole cities and are rapidly going up.⁴ Just recently we learned Microsoft bought hundreds of acres in Kent County to be used for a massive data center.⁵
3. Yet Consumers Energy is full steam ahead with demolishing Ottawa County's Campbell in 2025. Never mind that it provides electric to 1 million residents. Never mind that our grid operator MISO says such plant closures need to be delayed to avert supply shortfalls.⁶ Never mind that such shortfalls result in blackouts which can disable virtually every system we have.
4. Federal and State push us to build more solar and wind and use them as our baseload electric even though our grid operator MISO says they are not reliable enough for that at this time,⁷ and they overturn local zoning to do it.⁸
5. Federal and State pour money and work into rapid 2025 restart of the shutdown Palisades nuclear plant even though every week we learn of another major problem, and this will be the first restart of a shut down reactor in US history.⁹ Never mind that Palisades owner Holtec has no experience in such build, and has a history of legal violations.¹⁰
6. The Michigan Public Service Commission is considering replacing the Campbell with a nuclear reactor on the site even though the latest nuclear reactor built in the USA cost \$35 billion given cost overruns and took 15 years to build;¹¹ and no small modular reactor has yet proved practically viable.¹²

As a first step towards plugging us back into reality, the town and county boards need to request a delay in Campbell closure and Palisades re-start, but letting them know if this request is not heeded legal tools will be used to address current unrealistic energy plans.¹³ We have solid legal ground for such delay because the law says even coal plants should not be closed if such closures endanger the grid.¹⁴ Long term our goal should be to get local control of electric service like Zeeland, Grand Haven, and Holland already have. This local control would not preclude sub-contracting electric to Consumers Energy or other bidding parties, adding more private competition than currently exists.

Joseph Parnell McCarter, Georgetown Township, Volunteer leader of the SaveTheCampbell.com effort

¹ <https://www.carbonbrief.org/ga-why-defining-the-phaseout-of-unabated-fossil-fuels-is-so-important-at-cop28/>

² <https://grist.org/energy/michigan-clean-energy-laws-upper-peninsula-natural-gas-plants/>

³ <https://savethecampbell.com/ottawa-county-needs-both-coal-and-gas-electric-generating-capacity-for-energy-security-and-has-the-legal-tools-to-keep-them/>

⁴ <https://planetdetroit.org/2024/05/michigan-data-centers-would-destroy-states-nation-leading-climate-plans-opponents-charge/>

⁵ https://www.craigslist.com/news/real-estate/microsoft-buys-316-acres-from-steelcase-for-potential-data-center-in-kent-county/?utm_medium=Social&utm_source=Facebook#Echobox=1729286023

⁶ <https://www.misoenergy.org/meet-miso/media-center/2024/oms-miso-survey-results-indicate-tight-resource-capacity-in-the-upcoming-planning-year/>

⁷ <https://www.misoenergy.org/meet-miso/media-center/2024/oms-miso-survey-results-indicate-tight-resource-capacity-in-the-upcoming-planning-year/>

⁸ <https://files.constantcontact.com/4348cca2101/4b29d705-6294-4eb2-b3cd-0de199f2e6bf.pdf?rdr=true>

⁹ <https://www.reuters.com/business/energy/us-regulator-says-michigan-nuclear-plant-needs-work-before-restart-2024-09-18/>

¹⁰ <https://savethecampbell.com/here-is-the-record-of-the-company-holtec-being-entrusted-to-re-commission-the-old-palisades-plant-in-what-would-be-a-first-in-us-history/>

¹¹ <https://www.wwno.org/2024-10-17/nuclear-power-could-solve-us-electricity-needs-but-at-what-cost>

¹² <https://www.eenews.net/articles/is-advanced-nuclear-in-trouble-whats-next-after-nuscale-cancellation/>

¹³ <https://savethecampbell.com/request-to-delay-the-closure-of-the-campbell-plant/>

¹⁴ <https://planetdetroit.org/2024/05/michigan-data-centers-would-destroy-states-nation-leading-climate-plans-opponents-charge/>