

Electric Cooperatives View on A Lower-Carbon Future

Key Facts:

- America's electric cooperatives are focused on a just and reasonable approach to climate policy and our energy supply that prioritizes the affordable, reliable, and responsible delivery of electricity to every community.
- Energy and climate policies must include realistic, reasonable, and achievable timelines. Any policy proposal must:
 - Ensure an affordable, reliable electricity supply for consumers;
 - Invest in needed infrastructure improvements, including the sustained development of energy technology;
 - Mitigate the financial impact of stranded assets; and
 - Limit the economic impact on our most vulnerable communities.
- Electric cooperatives have lowered carbon emissions by 23% between 2005 and 2020.

Electric Cooperatives are Meeting Commitments to their Members and the Environment

Electric co-ops evaluate energy and environmental policy proposals through the lens of affordability, reliability, responsibility, and flexibility. It is essential that policymakers and stakeholders pursue a balanced and thoughtful approach that is inclusive of all energy sources and the communities that rely on them.

Reliable, affordable electricity is the foundation of economic opportunity and will continue to be the most important consumer-member expectation related to energy. Diversity of electric generating sources, from traditional energy sources like natural gas and coal to renewables and nuclear energy, helps cooperatives maintain affordable rates and high reliability.

As policymakers work toward a future that depends on electricity as the primary energy source for much of the economy, electric cooperatives are taking necessary steps to prepare. In support of those plans, co-ops are driving innovation in areas such as community solar, battery storage, microgrids, and carbon capture, use and storage. A continued commitment to the development of energy technologies will be critical to meeting future electricity needs.

As the policy discussion continues about the transition to a lower-carbon economy, these conversations must consider and address key elements, including:

- A just and reasonable approach to ensure the availability of affordable, reliable electricity to every community.
- The need for such a transition to be accomplished over a reasonable and realistic period while accounting for regional differences in energy resource availability and the potential for stranded assets.

- The lack of commercially viable electric generating technologies that are affordable, always-available, and carbon-free.
- The economic impact on our most vulnerable communities, including 92% of America's persistent poverty counties served by electric cooperatives.

Electric cooperatives substantially lowered carbon emissions by 23% between 2005 and 2020, the equivalent of taking nearly 9 million cars off the road. Although cooperatives continue adding low or no-carbon generation, achieving 100% carbon-free electricity generation by 2035 is an overly ambitious goal.

The electric sector is poised to play a major role in transforming the transportation, agricultural and other sectors of the economy through increased electrification. Such a transformation will require total electricity generation to increase by up to 170% by 2050 alongside a more than a three-fold expansion of the transmission grid, according to a recent National Academies of Sciences study.

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