

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4804  
April 6, 2018

COMMITTEES  
APPROPRIATIONS  
ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES  
INTELLIGENCE  
VETERANS' AFFAIRS

President Donald J. Trump  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave, Northwest  
Washington, DC 200600

Dear President Trump,

On March 29, 2018, Secretary Perry and the Department of Energy received a request for an emergency order pursuant to his authority under Section 202(c) of the Federal Power Act. It is my understanding that this request by FirstEnergy Solutions is now under consideration. I greatly appreciate Secretary Perry's efforts to secure and strengthen our electric grid and, in particular, his consideration of this request.

As I have discussed with you and Secretary Perry on numerous occasions, many baseload units in the PJM Interconnection (PJM) footprint continue to suffer from the cumulative effect of an onslaught of overregulation, market rules that disadvantage baseload power, and subsidies and mandates that have encouraged negative bidding into competitive markets. In combination with the naturally occurring dynamics of our energy markets, essential baseload units that provide resilience and reliability attributes to our grid are struggling to stay operational. Many of these plants are located in the Ohio Valley region, including the Pleasants Power Station in Willow Island, West Virginia.

As it has time and again, coal-fired power generation performed well during the Polar Vortex in 2014 and more recently during this year's Bomb Cyclone. These extreme weather events tested our electric grid in an unprecedented manner and coal delivered. In fact, the Department of Energy's own National Energy Technology Lab (NETL) found that, at the height of peak demand on January 5, 2018, "had coal been removed, a 9-18 GW shortfall would have developed."<sup>1</sup> NETL went on to conclude that, "In the case of PJM, it can also be shown that the demand could not have been met without coal."<sup>2</sup>

The impending deactivation of numerous coal and nuclear power plants is of great concern for our grid, for our communities, and for our nation. In addition to the loss of jobs and threats to the economic livelihood of the communities in which these plants sit, our region and our nation's electric grid will become less resilient if no action is taken now to keep these plants operational.

Therefore, I urge your Administration and the Department of Energy to use its statutory authority to preserve these critical units. I thank you for your consideration and am happy to make myself available to you at any time to discuss these matters.

Sincerely,



Joe Manchin III  
United States Senator

Cc: The Honorable Rick Perry

<sup>1</sup> National Energy Technology Lab. Department of Energy. "Reliability, Resilience, and the Oncoming Wave of Retiring Baseload Units, Volume I: The Critical Role of Thermal Units during Extreme Weather Events." Mar 13, 2018. Available at <https://www.netl.doe.gov/research/energy-analysis>. Last accessed April 6, 2018.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.*