

The San Diego  
**Union-Tribune.**

**ENERGY AGENCIES DEFEND POLICIES**

**TAKE ISSUE WITH EDITORIAL**

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A recent U-T editorial (“State goes green, but neglects the basics,” March 3) wrongly implied renewable goals are trumping grid reliability, saying blackouts could result. This is false and alarmist – and misleads readers. We are working diligently to ensure California’s power grid is both reliable and flexible, which is critical to achieving climate goals and keeping the lights on.

If we hope to combat devastating consequences of climate change, maintaining the status quo is not an option. We need a modernized grid powered by diverse and flexible resources. Climate change is happening and it is hurting Californians. There are health issues as well as environmental and economic impacts at stake. Switching to clean energy has a huge impact because traditional power generation is one of the largest contributors to greenhouse gases. In 2011 alone, we reduced GHG emissions from our power sector by 22 percent from the prior year.

No one said greening and modernizing the grid powering the ninth largest economy in the world would be easy. It’s an enormous engineering feat and we are proud other states and countries are following our lead, creating cleaner air, energy security and new jobs. The U-T should be reporting on the good news. San Diego County itself – now dubbed the “Silicon Valley of green tech” – is transforming into a hotbed of renewable development. To advance this exciting shift, the California Public Utilities Commission and the California Energy Commission are coming together with industry stakeholders like never before.

Grid physics dictate electricity supply and demand must be balanced minute-by-minute in real time and that’s why planning ahead is important. The California ISO, which manages reliability, did engineering analysis that shows fast start/stop plants are key to integrating wind and solar power as well as supporting the growth of electric vehicles and rooftop solar systems. This “fill-in” or “flexible” resource comes mainly from highly efficient gas-fired plants. Combining intermittent and dispatchable resources plays to the strengths of each, optimizing the power mix in a way that lowers costs and enhances reliability.

Breakthroughs often trigger difficult transitions. That doesn’t mean they aren’t worthwhile. Only a few short years ago, skeptics said pushing investor-owned utilities to line up 20 percent

of their power mix from renewables would be hard. After hitting the 20 percent milestone last year, detractors then said a 33 percent green mix was a crazy idea. Seven years ahead of the goal, we are fine tuning infrastructure requirements that will ensure success.

Contrary to the misguided assertions made by The Wall Street Journal and repeated by the U-T, policy makers are committed to working with the power industry to carefully plan ahead to ensure we have the resources necessary to keep the lights on while advancing environmental goals.

If you want a crisis, consider extreme weather and other catastrophes from climate disruptions. Fighting climate change is a moral responsibility. Now is not the time to alter the path. Our best weapon is perseverance.

Michael Peevey, Public Utilities Commission president

Steve Berberich, Independent System Operator CEO

Bob Weisenmiller, California Energy Commission chair