AI expansion runs into green energy roadblock

May 30 2024, by Las Vegas Review-Journal

Credit: Pixabay/CC0 Public Domain

Even artificial intelligence doesn't have the smarts to square the left's green agenda with the energy needs of the future.

Some of today's biggest growth industries are in cutting-edge

technologies. They include AI, data centers and advanced manufacturing. As The Wall Street Journal reported recently, these industries require large amounts of electricity.

This shouldn't be a problem. The United States has produced cheap and reliable power for decades. Years and years of experience have produced technological innovations and improvements. Building reliable plants may take time, but it shouldn't be a long-term obstacle.

It is, though. Companies and utilities have the technical knowledge and ability to build more reliable power plants. But they're often running into major political hurdles.

The environmental left wants to decrease carbon emissions. Greens argue that burning fossil fuels is an "existential threat to human existence as we know it," as President Joe Biden said in 2021.

Climate alarmists seek to leverage their relentlessly dire predictions to raise money, gain political influence and overhaul the nation's economy to reflect a reliance on central planning. This approach has been successful, in part. Many states now have renewable portfolio standards that require the use of renewable energy, no matter how practical. Some go further. California and Hawaii want to reach net zero emissions in only 20 years.

A key part of reducing emissions is reducing overall power usage. That's because fossil fuel or nuclear plants are needed to provide backup for renewable sources. Nuclear power doesn't produce carbon emissions, but many environmentalists oppose it for reasons that suggest they don't believe global warming is an existential threat.

One place this dynamic is playing out is in the Southeast. Georgia Power is that state's main utility. Its projections for future demand have shot up

16-fold as more of these power-hungry companies look to move there. Providing that power offers a clear path to economic growth, but greens are up in arms over the increased carbon emissions.

There's a major opportunity here for Nevada as California further reforms its electrical grid to emphasize less-reliable energy sources. Nevada should show it's capable of providing reliable power to industries that could become integral to future growth and prosperity.

Unfortunately, voters and politicians alike have shackled Nevada with a 50 percent renewable portfolio standard by 2030. In recent years, Nevada has already faced energy shortages. The RPS will also increase energy prices.

Fossil fuel and nuclear power have generated vast wealth and remain essential to powering the economy. Unfortunately, environmentalists would prefer we move back to the Stone Age.

2024 Las Vegas Review-Journal. Distributed by Tribune Content Agency, LLC.