

Testimony Before the Pennsylvania House of Representatives Republican Policy Committee
September 14, 2026
Affordability and Energy

Members of the Policy Committee, I want to thank you for the opportunity to appear today to discuss coal, energy, and the affordability issues facing Pennsylvanians.

My name is Matt Mackowiak, Director of Government Affairs at Core Natural Resources, a Canonsburg-based coal mining company formed in January 2025 as the result of a merger between CONSOL Energy and Arch Resources.

Core operates 8 longwalls across 11 mines, with 5 of the 8 longwalls and three of the 11 mines located in Pennsylvania. Our Pennsylvania operations support about 2,000 direct jobs and we are the largest private sector employer in Greene County.

Reliable energy is arguably the most important factor determining the health of an economy. Without reliable baseload energy, the economy suffers, and lives are put at risk.

In 2024, 27% of Pennsylvanians reported cutting back on food or medicine to pay their electric bill, and 21% of Pennsylvania households could not pay an electric bill at least once throughout the year¹.

Pennsylvania is the second-largest producer of natural gas and the third-largest producer of coal in the country, producing about 47 million tons of coal last year².

Coal is a unique fuel, as it is a baseload source of power that is often stored on-site at a power plant with the ability for generation to scale up or down in a moment's notice during times of peak energy demand independent of weather conditions. Coal also proves to be a difference maker when it comes to affordable retail power. According to the National Coal Council, every state where coal-fueled generation comprises more than 25% of that state's total generation saw average retail power rates below the national average in 2025 (17.47 cents per kilowatt-hour in 2025). Conversely, every state where retail power rates are more than 25% above the national average (apart from Alaska), has closed all its coal plants³.

In 2025, the residential power rates in the 12 states without coal generation were 86% higher than the 12 states with the highest percentage of coal-fueled generation (at least 30%)⁴.

Now, let's consider our own state. Pennsylvania sees average retail electricity prices above the national average. How is this possible for a state so well-endowed with energy resources? Part of the answer lies in the fact that many of the coal plants that once provided reliable power here have been decommissioned and demolished. A decrease in the share of coal-fired generation in Pennsylvania has led to an increase in power prices over the national average.

¹ U.S. Census Bureau Household Pulse Survey, Phase 4.2, Cycle 09. Household Energy Use and Spending in the last 12 Months, by Select Characteristics (Aug 20-Sept 16, 2024).

² Pennsylvania Coal Alliance, *Pennsylvania's Bituminous Coal Industry*, 2026.

³ National Coal Council, *Maximizing the Value of the US Coal Fleet*, pg. 21, July 2026.

⁴ Ibid, pg. 22

Pennsylvania also exports about 30% of our power to other states in the PJM Interconnection which have closed a majority, if not all, of their coal-fired plants, thereby eliminating reliable baseload power from the grid and causing the Commonwealth to become a supplier of power for other states. Coupled with federal regulations and policies from previous administrations and congressional bodies, these states have put a variety of policies in place over the last few decades that have caused the premature closure of coal-fired power plants without allowing for reliable replacement power sources to fill the void left behind. Lack of investment over several decades has also forced the premature closure of many coal-fired plants.

The AI data center revolution, the drive for increased electrification, and overall increased energy use are factors driving electricity demand higher than it has ever been. From 2005 to 2020, U.S. electricity demand remained largely unchanged. But since 2020, that demand has increased approximately 1.7% year-over-year⁵, an unsustainable growth rate if we continue to remove baseload sources of energy like coal from the grid.

We've already seen the imbalance between supply and demand play out in the clearing cost of power in PJM's most recent power auctions. In PJM's Base Residual Auction for delivery year 2025/2026, the clearing cost of power rose to \$270 per megawatt-day, an 830% increase over the price from two years prior. The auction for delivery year 2026/2027 saw similar large increases, and the 2027/2028 auction prices rose to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission-mandated ceiling of \$333.44 per megawatt-day⁶. During this same period, retail power customers in Pennsylvania saw their electric bills increase by about 20%⁷. This is aside from the extreme demand spikes associated with winter storms in each of the last four years, in which coal was in some cases the sole source of power that kept vast areas of the grid from experiencing blackouts.

In summary, higher energy demand and low supply means increases in power prices. For Pennsylvanians, dramatic increases in power bills means not being able to put gas in the car. It means less money for groceries. It means the choice between heating your home or going without basic medical care.

To provide energy security and improve affordability for Pennsylvanians, baseload power must be protected and increased where possible. Pennsylvania's withdrawal from the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative in 2025 was an excellent start, but coal plant closures and potential future hostile regulation loom on the horizon, threatening to force even more reliable generation off the grid. For this reason, this committee should consider ways to ensure that should any reliable, baseload power generator leave the grid, there must be a replacement guaranteed to maintain or increase grid reliability. We can't afford to continue losing reliable energy to intermittent sources that can't rapidly meet demand at a moment's notice, and Pennsylvanians can't afford higher electricity prices as a result.

Thank you again for the opportunity to appear before you today and I welcome any questions you may have for me.

⁵ US Energy Information Administration, *Today in Energy*, May 13, 2025, <https://www.eia.gov/todayinenergy/detail.php?id=65264>.

⁶ PJM Interconnection, *2026/2027 Base Residual Auction Report*, July 22, 2025.

⁷ Independent Fiscal Office, *Pennsylvania Electricity Update*, July 2026.