



Friday 20th March, 2026

## AMERICA'S ENERGY FUTURE DEPENDS ON COAL AND THIS MOMENT PROVES WHY

For more than a century, coal has powered American progress. It has fueled our industries, strengthened our communities, and anchored our energy security through every era of growth and challenge. Today, as the nation confronts rising electricity demand, geopolitical uncertainty, and unprecedented strain on the grid, coal's importance is not fading, it is becoming clearer than it has been in decades.

Over the past year, the United States has taken meaningful steps to recognize the value of its domestic energy resources, including coal. Federal agencies, policymakers, and energy leaders have increasingly acknowledged what many in the industry have long understood: America is vulnerable when it underutilizes the assets that have sustained its strength. This shift matters. It signals an understanding that the United States cannot afford to sideline the very resources that keep the lights on during extreme weather, peak demand, and supply chain disruptions.



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**Coal's value is not simply historical, but it is practical, immediate, and measurable.** Stockpiled on site, protected from global volatility, and capable of delivering power when other sources falter, coal remains one of the most dependable tools in America's energy arsenal.

### ***A Year of Renewed Recognition***

Across the energy landscape, the past year has brought a shift in tone and urgency. As electricity demand surges, driven by data centers, manufacturing expansion, electrification, and population growth, grid operators have issued repeated warnings about reliability shortfalls. These warnings are not theoretical. They reflect real risks to American families, businesses, and national security.

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In this environment, coal has reemerged as a stabilizing force. Federal leaders have voiced support for an all-that-works energy strategy. One that recognizes the need for every reliable resource, including coal. This approach reflects a practical understanding of the challenges facing the grid and the importance of maintaining a diverse, resilient energy mix.

Coal's ability to deliver power when it is needed most has been proven time and again. During extreme cold snaps, heat waves, and regional emergencies, coal plants have stepped in to prevent blackouts and stabilize the grid. These moments underscore a simple truth: coal remains essential to American reliability.

## ***A Nation Made Vulnerable by Underutilization***

Despite these positive international developments, the United States itself remains vulnerable. Years of premature plant closures, infrastructure underinvestment, and policy uncertainty have weakened the resilience of the grid. At the same time, electricity demand is rising faster than at any point in modern history.

This combination of shrinking supply and accelerating demand has created a dangerous imbalance. Without sufficient baseload power, the grid becomes increasingly dependent on weather-dependent resources and fragile supply chains. This is not a sustainable path for a nation that relies on energy for everything from national defense to manufacturing to everyday life.

Coal provides a solution. It offers stability when other sources cannot. Because it is mined in the U.S., it provides a buffer against geopolitical shocks. It ensures that America maintains control over its own energy destiny. And it does so while employing a workforce that is among the most skilled, dedicated, and safety-focused in the world.

## ***America is Using Its Coal Assets but Not to Their Full Potential***

Contrary to common perception, the United States continues to rely heavily on coal. During periods of extreme cold or heat, coal plants routinely step in to prevent blackouts. During Winter Storm Elliott, Winter Storm Heather, and countless regional events, coal provided the margin of safety that kept millions of Americans warm and protected.

Coal also remains a cornerstone of industrial energy use. Steelmaking, cement production, and other critical sectors depend on coal and coal-derived products. These industries cannot simply switch to alternative fuels without compromising performance, cost, or reliability.

Yet even with these realities, America is not fully utilizing its coal assets. Many plants operate below capacity. Regulatory uncertainty discourages investment in modernization. And public discourse often overlooks coal's indispensable role in grid stability.

***“A balanced, realistic energy strategy must include coal, not as a relic of the past, but as a strategic asset for the future.”***

## ***A Call for Strength, Balance, and Clarity***

As the United States navigates this historic moment, the path forward must be guided by three principles:

- Strength – America must invest in the energy resources that make it strong, including coal.
- Balance – A reliable grid requires a mix of energy sources, not dependence on any single technology.
- Clarity – Policymakers and the public must understand the real risks of underutilizing coal and the real benefits of embracing it.

America has the resources, the workforce, and the expertise to lead the world in energy security. But leadership requires action. It requires recognizing the value of coal—not just in times of crisis, but every day.

**Coal built this nation. Coal protects this nation. And coal will continue to power this nation...if we choose to use the strength we already have.**

### **▶ ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Emily Arthun is current CEO of the American Coal Council; she brings over twenty years of experience across the coal and hard-rock mining sectors. Prior to her role at ACC, she worked with the Women's Mining Coalition, supporting advocacy for domestic mining. Her industry experience includes Stillwater Mining Company and Cloud Peak Energy. She serves on the Washington Coal Club and Women's Mining Coalition boards.

A native Montanan raised on a working cattle ranch, she holds a Bachelor of Science in Business Management from Montana State University and resides in Gillette, Wyoming. She testified before the U.S. House Committee on Natural Resources Subcommittee: Oversight and Investigations - in 2025 on "Unleashing a Golden Age: Examining the Use of Federal Lands to Power American Technological Innovation".