

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4804

April 25, 2018

COMMITTEES

APPROPRIATIONS

ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

INTELLIGENCE

VETERANS' AFFAIRS

The Honorable Rick Perry
Secretary
U.S. Department of Energy
1000 Independence Ave, S.W.
Washington, DC 20585

The Honorable James Mattis
Secretary
U.S. Department of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301

Dear Secretary Perry and Secretary Mattis,

As you may know, on April 18th, I wrote to the President encouraging him to consider using his authority as embodied in the Defense Production Act of 1950¹ to secure our nation's electric grid by preventing the loss of additional coal-fired and nuclear electric generation units.

As recent extreme weather events show, the ongoing loss of additional coal-fired and nuclear power poses a significant risk to the electric grid because these units provide essential reliability services and resilience attributes that are indispensable to the delivery of electricity in our country. In other words, coal-fired and nuclear power plants continue to do a lot of the heavy lifting when the bulk power system is put to the test. In the case of coal specifically, the National Energy Technology Lab stated that, during the 2018 Bomb Cyclone at the height of peak demand on January 5, 2018, "had coal been removed, a 9-18 GW shortfall would have developed."² 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."³

The security of our homeland is inextricably tied to the security of our energy supply. Therefore, the ability to produce reliable electricity and to recover from disruptions to our grid are critical to ensuring our nation's security against the various threats facing our nation today – whether those threats be extreme weather events or adversarial foreign actors.

As I noted in my letter to the President, "the Defense Production Act of 1950 grants the President the authority to ensure that the nation's domestic industrial base is capable of providing the essential materials and resources needed to defend our nation and protect our sovereignty. It recognizes energy production and critical infrastructure as strategic and crucial to that goal."

¹ P.L. 81-774, 50 U.S.C. §4501 et seq.

² 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.

³ *Id.*

I encourage you and your agencies to examine the Defense Production Act as a possible means of securing at-risk baseload power plants in an effort to enhance the security of our energy delivery systems and, therefore, our nation.

I stand ready to help you in this effort and am happy to make myself available to discuss these matters further.

Sincerely,



Joe Manchin III
United States Senator

Cc: