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Commissioner Oden Says Don't Abandon Reliable Energy

California's extreme rush to transition to renewable energy is creating havoc in that state and continues to drive up energy costs for consumers and businesses.

The State of California's power grid is once again being pushed to the limit as it pursues its rapid transition away from reliable fossil fuels (natural gas, oil and coal). That state continues a push toward less reliable renewable energy sources such as solar and wind power.

On Friday, September 9, 2022, the California Independent System Operator extended the statewide Flex Alert for a 10th straight day. Under a Flex Alert, consumers are "voluntarily" asked to reduce electricity consumption during peak hours, typically 4:00 until 9:00 p.m. This is obviously a huge inconvenience for all Californians, but especially for families and those working 8-5 jobs.

Last week, we also saw Pacific Gas & Electric, which provides natural gas and electricity to 16 million Californians, issue a staunch warning to 525,000 customers to prepare for "potential rotating outages." Is this what a renewable and carbon-free world looks like, where "Flex Alerts" and harsh warnings from utility companies are issued to avoid overloading the grid and having blackouts?

So, how did California get in the position it is now?

There are several factors, but one of the most significant would be a mandate the California Legislature passed in 2018. Senate Bill 100 mandated 30% of the state's retail electricity be generated from renewable and carbon-free sources by 2020; 60% by 2030; and 100% by 2045. California easily hit the 30% mark in 2020 and is on pace to reach 60% in 2030, but at what cost?

California's energy policies mimic those of the Biden administration, including halting drilling and fracking and refusing to expand gas pipelines. A hasty transition to renewable energy continues to drive up costs for consumers and businesses alike.

It is a fact renewable energy sources are a part of our future. However, we must be smart and continue to use, and not abandon, our proven and reliable energy sources such as coal, nuclear power and natural gas.

We should take a more realistic and methodical approach to the current and future mix of energy sources we rely upon, instead of one driven by liberal, corporate America. By doing so, we can avoid the drastic measures California is currently taking just to keep the lights on.

The opinions and thoughts in this release are those of Commissioner Jeremy H. Oden and do not reflect the official position of the Alabama Public Service Commission or its other Commissioners.