

LETTERS

Albany Is Pursuing Rational Energy Policies

Reliability problems come from the faulty distribution of power, not its source, whether that be coal, oil, gas or solar.



New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo during a news conference in New York on May 10. PHOTO: FRANK FRANKLIN II/ASSOCIATED PRESS

May 21, 2018 1:14 p.m. ET

Holman Jenkins's "New York's Green Energy Roulette" (Business World, May 16) rehashes old, 20th-century claims about high renewable-energy costs and unreliability. Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo pushed for change in energy policy out of his direct experience with New Yorkers who had lost power after superstorm Sandy and other increasingly frequent extreme-weather events. The current electric grid is very reliable, until it is not, and then it's very unreliable. That's why so many non-city dwellers, those who can afford it, have bought their own generators. Reliability problems come from the faulty distribution of power, not its source, whether that be coal, oil, gas or solar.

The current electric grid is increasingly expensive. It's built and regulated to ensure it works on the hottest days of the year, while customers pay for this service all year long. While low natural-gas prices have reduced energy costs at its source, transmission and distribution costs to inefficiently get power to customers keep rising. And so do everyone's bills. At the same time, solar, fuel cells, combined heat and power continue to decline in cost. Gov. Cuomo did what we want our politicians to do—responsibly look ahead to adopt policies that address all of these issues affordably, benefiting consumers, businesses, innovators and even utilities.

Mr. Jenkins's central argument about relying on wind and solar when there's no wind or no sun ignores the ability for storage and for flexibility in demand to match the intermittence of renewable energy. These solutions are cheaper than building more natural gas plants and infrastructure. In addition, New York has substantial base-load power, including a fourth of its power coming from hydro generation.

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