

CEMA Urges Conn. Governor Ned Lamont To Act Now To Prevent Possible Catastrophic Electricity Grid Failure This Winter

Connecticut's policies to promote the conversion of homes and businesses to natural gas and electric heat pumps is overloading the region's electricity grid.

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WITH COLD WEATHER ALREADY IN THE FORECAST, CEMA (Connecticut Energy Marketers Association) URGES GOVERNOR NED LAMONT TO HALT STATE ENERGY POLICIES, WHICH COULD CONTRIBUTE TO A CATASTROPHIC ELECTRICITY GRID FAILURE WITH FRIGID TEMPERATURES



"The time to act is now before it's too late," said Chris Herb, President of CEMA. "We've been sounding the alarm on this for nearly ten years. Connecticut's policies to promote the conversion of homes and businesses to natural gas and electric heat pumps have put the cart before the horse. The region's electricity grid has not been updated to keep up with all these new conversions that the state has been incentivizing. If the lights go out this winter and residents are unable to heat their homes, Connecticut's ill-advised policies, are in part, to blame."

Hartford: In a [letter delivered to Governor Ned Lamont today](#), CEMA president Chris Herb urged the Connecticut Governor to put the brakes on state energy policies that encourage residents to convert from home heating oil and propane gas to natural gas and electric heat. Herb wrote that these ill-advised policies are overburdening the power grid, which could contribute to possible catastrophic power outages during cold winter months.

This is [Herb's second such letter](#) in just fifteen months.

"I once again ask that you use your executive powers to halt all efforts to promote natural gas and electric heat pump conversions until all reliability issues have been addressed. The current electrification efforts and natural gas conversion policy endanger public welfare and can be avoided if you act now," Herb wrote in the letter.

Governor Lamont recently voiced concerns about keeping the lights on this winter at a [November 5, 2021 press conference](#).

"Severe weather could make matters worse, by driving up demand for natural gas, which in turn could compromise the reliability of the region's electricity grid," Governor Lamont said at the press conference.

Herb urged Governor Lamont to do more than just sound the alarm.

"Since you agree that inadequate natural gas supply may compromise the electric grid, now is the time to do something about it," Herb wrote. The people of Connecticut need more than the advanced notice you provided them about potentially losing power and heat; they need action!"

That action, Herb said, is for Governor Lamont to issue an executive order placing a moratorium on natural gas and electric heat pump conversions in an effort to save the grid from crashing and burning.

"Incentivizing conversions to natural gas and electric heat pumps when we do not know if there is enough electricity to satisfy demand is dangerous. We should not allow an electrify-everything-political-agenda to jeopardize our state's energy security when there are clean environmentally friendly alternatives like Bioheat," Herb said. (See Bioheat description below)

During the last decade, Connecticut's Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) and the Public Utility Regulatory Authority (PURA) have pursued a number of state backed initiatives aimed at encouraging homes and businesses to convert from home heating oil/Bioheat fuel and propane gas to natural gas and electric heat pumps. The agencies have also promoted plans to encouraged motorists to drive electric vehicles. (EV's).

"The state is encouraging people to switch to natural gas or electric heat pumps, and buy EV's, which is overloading the region's outdated electricity grid. If the lights go out this winter and people are unable to heat their homes, it's in part a homemade problem brought to you by the State of Connecticut," Herb said.

With more people using electricity and natural gas to power their homes and cars, the power

grid could get maxed out. To make matters worse, natural gas is the primary fuel used by power plants to make electricity. So, the state's energy policy is creating a bottleneck of customers that could overload the grid for everyone. According to regional grid operator ISO-NE, the use of natural gas for electric generation has increased from about 15% in 2000 to over 50% today in New England, with projections of more than 60% by 2025. The ill-advised policy of "putting all one's energy eggs into one basket" makes utilities particularly vulnerable to gas supply-reliability, and pricing.

Herb also sent a letter to former Governor Dan Malloy in January of 2014, sounding the same alarm when Connecticut was promoting a natural gas expansion plan called the Comprehensive Energy Strategy (CES) which called for converting nearly 300,000 homes in Connecticut from heating oil to natural gas by 2020.

Chris Herb to Governor Malloy
January 27, 2014 [Letter]
Paragraph 5

The inability for natural gas supply to keep up with the current demand by power plants is a clear warning sign that should be headed before a crisis occurs. The state natural gas policy needs to be suspended before the electric generation issues that we are currently experiencing, end up affecting firm customers.

Home heating oil/Bioheat fuel and propane are delivered by 600 locally owned and family-run businesses in Connecticut. CEMA is a trade organization, which represents those family-run businesses that have been delivering fuel reliably to every community in the state for more than a century. The deliverable fuel industry provides relief to the grid by avoiding the need for additional electricity that heat pumps require. Having to rely on power lines as the sole source of delivery for electricity, heating oil/Bioheat fuel is delivered over the road, by rail, barge, and pipeline, making it the most reliable energy source. With a new law that requires the use of biodiesel, nearly half the home in Connecticut will receive a renewable environmentally friendly fuel.

Bioheat® home heating fuel is a blend of clean renewable biodiesel and ultra-low sulfur heating oil. Biodiesel is derived from used cooking oil and plant oil like soy, canola and others.

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