Trump's Path to Energy Dominance: Powering AI Without Burdening Americans

FRANK LASEE | 5:37 PM ON FEBRUARY 21, 2026

AP Photo/Evan Vucci

President Trump's vision of American energy dominance is rapidly taking shape, promising a future of abundant, affordable power that fuels innovation while shielding everyday consumers from skyrocketing bills. By unleashing domestic production in oil, natural gas, and nuclear, Trump is reversing the Biden-era policies that stifled supply and drove up costs. This shift couldn't come at a better time, as the explosive growth of AI data centers demands massive amounts of electricity.

A prime example is Meta's recent nuclear power agreements, announced in January 2026, with Constellation Energy, Vistra, Oklo, and TerraPower. These deals secure gigawatts of reliable, baseload power for Meta's AI operations, including restarts of existing reactors and deployments of small modular reactors (SMRs) by the early 2030s. Unlike intermittent wind and solar, nuclear provides the necessary 24/7 energy, aligning well with Trump's strategy.

In the last two years alone, data center giants like Microsoft, Amazon, and Google have inked at least seven similar nuclear pacts, such as Microsoft's revival of Three Mile Island. These initiatives bolster U.S. technological dominance and demonstrate how private investment can expand capacity without taxpayer subsidies.

Yet the renewable energy lobby is quick to scapegoat AI data centers for rising rates, deflecting from the real culprit: overreliance on part-time wind and solar, and closing dispatchable capacity with regulations leaving us

short of electricity. Wherever wind and solar have scaled massively, California, Germany, and the United Kingdom electricity prices have doubled or tripled compared to regions that have not.

Biden's premature closures of coal plants, often before their useful life ended, forced utilities to replace full-time power with unreliable and heavily subsidized alternatives, leading to grid instability and higher costs.

Data centers do contribute to surging demand and are projected to consume 6-12% of U.S. electricity by 2030, up from 2% in 2020 and 4% in 2025. The blame for this lies in policies that failed to build enough baseload ahead of time and closed reliable dispatchable coal at a fast pace.

On the other hand, both China and India get most of their electricity from coal, and will for decades. This is because they are building hundreds of coal plants, each of which is slated to last at least 50 years — and they are only ramping up their production of these plants.

AI and cloud storage are vital to America's future, essential to our national security and economic edge, and we cannot cede this ground to China, which has brazenly stolen U.S. intellectual property, has an aggressive anti-US global strategy, and is threatening Taiwan with force.

Beijing's massive military buildup, including advanced drones, underscores the stakes: losing AI leadership will jeopardize our national defense and innovation. Trump rightly prioritizes domestic AI growth, while also insisting data centers "pay their own way."

In a January 2026 Truth Social post, he declared that big tech must fully cover their power needs, preventing ordinary Americans from footing the bill for grid upgrades or new plants.

This Trump directive is part of energy dominance. By making hyperscalers like Meta fund infrastructure through special tariffs, upfront payments, or dedicated generation, ensures costs aren't socialized from the wallets of regular people.

States are already acting. Virginia's new GS-5 rate class (effective 2027) requires large users to pay 85% of distribution costs (it should be 100%); Ohio mandates minimum demand charges; and North Carolina's Ratepayer Protection Act bars utilities from shifting data center expenses to retail customers. These measures address how data center demand drives up Regional Transmission Organization (RTO) prices, like PJM's 833% capacity auction spike in 2025-2026, which added billions in costs passed to households.

To meet timelines for technological dominance and to add 10-50 GW in the U.S. by 2030, data centers need accelerated permitting reforms, as outlined in Trump's executive orders. Streamlining approvals for nuclear restarts, gas plants, and transmission lines for reliable power is needed.

Public-private partnerships, like Meta's nuclear bundle, must expand, with tech firms building or leasing dedicated generation to avoid RTO bottlenecks. They can rely on the grid for redundancy and back up, and in turn can sell excess electricity back to the grid when needed. Federal incentives for SMRs and high-voltage lines on public lands will further this, and we need to ensure energy abundance lowers overall prices.

Ultimately, this approach not only benefits everyone but also bolsters our national security. Data centers become good neighbors by boosting local taxes and jobs without hiking rates. Communities will welcome them, knowing their bills won't climb due to unchecked demand, while receiving an additional supply of electricity from these nearby data centers.

Trump's fusion of energy and tech policies design a course for dominance: powering AI innovation while keeping power affordable for all Americans.

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