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Unlock the Grid launches to help states meet electricity demand as prices are set to rise 16% amid federal policies that slow clean energy deployment

The new initiative unites policy, technical, and implementation expertise to help states identify durable solutions that can lower consumer costs and prepare for future economic growth.

Washington, D.C. – November 17, 2026 – As new governors prepare to take office in 21 states by January 2027, the new *Unlock the Grid* initiative launched today to help state policymakers meet rising electricity demand quickly and affordably. The initiative launches with *A Blueprint to Deliver the Power America Needs*, a set of actionable state policy tools. The initiative will follow up with bespoke blueprints for high-opportunity states poised to enact change.

Utility rates are expected to rise 16% by 2040 across residential, commercial, and industrial customers amid reduced clean energy deployment due to federal policies, according to Energy Innovation modeling. At the same time, electricity demand could grow by more than 30% by 2030, driven by data centers, manufacturing, and electrification. Increasingly, large electricity users like data centers are investing directly in massive off-grid gas power generation.

"The rush to inefficient off-grid gas plants to meet demand is a five-alarm-fire. Instead of jacking up fuel prices and polluting neighborhoods to power new demand, we should upgrade our grid for everyone and ensure we can deploy modern technology and stay competitive," **said Unlock the Grid Director and former White House advisor Arjun Krishnaswami.** "Americans deserve durable policy solutions to meet today's demands and enable future economic growth with cheap, clean electricity. The technologies and strategies to build that future are here. All we have to do is unlock them."

Unlock the Grid unites policy, technical, and implementation expertise with the state policymaker relationships to create the conditions for clean energy to thrive as a fast and cheap option to meet demand and drive economic growth. The team from Energy Innovation, GridLab, and S2 Strategies has decades of experience working on policy across dozens of states.

The *Blueprint* tackles three core pillars of state policy action:

- ***Unlock Clean Energy at Scale*** addresses the siting, interconnection, and investment barriers that slow large wind, solar, and storage projects, which comprise 85% of the over 2,000 gigawatts waiting in the interconnection queue.

- ***Unlock Customer and Local Clean Energy*** covers smaller-scale solar, batteries, and flexible demand that can come online in months, along with the planning, compensation, and financing needed to coordinate them.

- ***Unlock the Wires*** focuses on rapidly increasing the capacity of the existing transmission system through advanced technologies, and on aligning utility incentives to deploy them.

After an election where rising energy costs was a central campaign issue across the country, newly elected state leaders need solutions to deliver on affordable and reliable power as quickly as possible. *Unlock the Grid* is available to advise on policy design, technical analysis, and policy implementation.

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ABOUT ENERGY INNOVATION

Energy Innovation is a non-partisan energy and climate policy think tank. We provide customized research and policy analysis to decision-makers to support policy design that enhances security and access to affordable energy, while reducing emissions at the speed and scale required for a safe climate future.

ABOUT GRIDLAB

GridLab is an innovative non-profit that provides technical grid expertise to enhance policy decision-making and to ensure a rapid transition to a reliable, cost effective, and low carbon future.

ABOUT S2 STRATEGIES

S2 Strategies works with governments, businesses, and non-profits to build a thriving, low-cost clean energy economy.