

Government-in-Action Youth Tour Contest 2023



TOPIC

In September 2022, National Rural Electric Cooperative Association CEO Jim Matheson shared the following thoughts with *RE Magazine* During the Energy Transition,” referring to federal and, in some cases, state mandates for 100% renewable energy and production of all-electric vehicles by quickly approaching dates.

After reading Matheson’s article below, research the impact 100% renewable energy and electric vehicle mandates could have on rural Americans. Then make a 5-minute video intended for your congressman, explaining:

- 1. The need for reliable, affordable electricity**
- 2. The threats presented by current federal energy legislation; and**
- 3. Ask your congressman to advocate for responsible application of technology and energy policy.**

Closing Thoughts: Keeping the Lights on During the Energy Transition

Jim Matheson, CEO NRECA (National Rural Electric Cooperative Association)

Ensuring the lights stay on across America is an important national priority and one that is taken for granted. In fact, dozens of states in the most powerful nation in the world may struggle to keep the lights on in the coming years. That’s unacceptable, and it doesn’t have to be this way.

Absent a shift in policy and coordination between federal and state governments, this is the energy reality America faces for years to come. And as the nation leans on electricity to power more of our economy, failing to live up to the fundamental premise of affordable, reliable electricity would devastate American families and businesses.

The ability to keep the lights on is a cornerstone of our economy. No one recognizes that more than America’s electric cooperatives. The co-op focus on local communities lends us clarity on these issues that few other organizations have. That’s why NRECA continues leaning into our role as truth-tellers amid the ongoing conversation about the energy transition.

Other organizations have recently sounded a similar alarm about reliable electricity in the months and years ahead. Electric co-ops have been voicing grid reliability concerns for years, while simultaneously rising to the challenge to keep affordable, reliable electricity a constant in rural America.

Some are quick to blame these reliability threats on changing or more extreme weather patterns. That’s certainly part of the story, but there’s a deeper problem that must be acknowledged. Spurred by policy and market factors, the ongoing energy transition has prioritized the disorderly and premature closure of baseload power plants without considering the collective impact on the power grid and the availability of feasible technology to fully replace them.

That’s proving to be a misstep with potentially severe consequences.

Driven by a focus on keeping the lights on, America’s electric cooperatives have demonstrated what a responsible energy transition can look like. Electric co-ops lowered their carbon emissions by 23% between

2005 and 2020. Co-ops also continue investing in energy innovation technologies to help meet tomorrow's electricity needs with speed and flexibility.

Policymakers play a critical role in our energy future. As they establish energy policies, legislators and regulators must consider threats to reliability before setting arbitrary dates and deadlines. This must include allowing adequate time, technology development and the construction of desperately needed transmission lines.

That's why NRECA and our member co-ops consistently push policymakers to recalibrate their focus on a commonsense energy transition that recognizes all of the factors above and doesn't jeopardize reliability or punish families already struggling to make ends meet.

When you find yourself in a hole, the first thing to do is stop digging. Today's energy decisions will determine whether there are sufficient resources for the lights to come on tomorrow. Failure is not an acceptable option for the consumers and communities we serve.

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Eligibility Requirements

A contestant must:

- Be a current 10th, 11th, or 12th grader at a school in Big Country EC's service area (Borden, Fisher, Garza, Haskell, Jones, Kent, Mitchell, Nolan, Scurry, Shackelford, Stonewall and Throckmorton Counties).
- Students' parents/guardians DO NOT have to be members/customers of Big Country Electric Cooperative in order to compete in and win the Youth Tour contest.
- Previous Youth Tour contest winners and immediate family of co-op directors or employees are not eligible to participate.

Application Submission

- Application form may be downloaded at bigcountry.coop, by clicking on Service Beyond Electricity → Youth Tour. Submit to Sarah McLen at smclen@bigcountry.coop. **Applications are due by 5:00 p.m. on Thursday, February 16, 2023.**
- Once your application is received, you will receive an email with instructions to post your video.
- **Videos must be uploaded by 5:00 p.m. February 16, 2023. Please include your name with the video title. Example: *Title of my Video by John Smith.***

Video Topic and Scoring

- Winners will be selected on a competitive basis, using the following scoring system:
Knowledge of Subject 50% (40 points) Presentation Quality 50% (40 points)
- Multiple applicants *CANNOT* submit the same video. The video *MUST BE YOUR OWN ORIGINAL CREATION! Be unique, be creative, be yourself and have fun!*

Finalist Selection

Five winning contestants will be chosen by an independent panel of judges, to represent BCEC on the Government-in-Action Youth Tour in Washington, D.C. in June 11-20, 2023. Each contestant will be notified of the results by email or phone.

****Big Country EC will donate \$500 to the school that has the most students submit videos! ****
