



**Department of Energy**  
Washington, DC 20585

**Order No. 202-26-21**

Pursuant to the authority vested in the Secretary of Energy by section 202(c) of the Federal Power Act (FPA),<sup>1</sup> and section 301(b) of the Department of Energy Organization Act,<sup>2</sup> and for the reasons set forth below, I hereby determine that an emergency exists within the Western Electricity Coordinating Council (WECC) Rocky Mountain<sup>3</sup> assessment area due to a shortage of electric energy, a shortage of facilities for the generation of electricity, and other causes. Issuance of this Order will meet the emergency and serve the public interest.

BACKGROUND

Craig Station (Craig) is an electric generating facility in Craig, Colorado. Craig is operated by the Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association (Tri-State). Craig consists of three coal-fired generation units, Unit 1 (446.4 MW), Unit 2 (446.4 MW), and Unit 3 (534.8 MW), with a combined name plate capacity of 1427.6 MW.<sup>4</sup> Unit 1 and Unit 2 are co-owned by Tri-State, Platte River Power Authority, Salt River Project, PacifiCorp, and Public Service Company of Colorado (a subsidiary of Xcel Energy), hereinafter collectively referred to as the “co-owners”.<sup>5</sup> Unit 3 is wholly owned by Tri-State. Unit 1 and Unit 2 began operations in 1980 and 1979 respectively. Unit 3 began operations in 1984. Unit 1 was slated to cease operations in December 2025. Unit 2 and Unit 3 are slated to retire in 2028.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 16 U.S.C. § 824a(c).

<sup>2</sup> 42 U.S.C. § 7151(b).

<sup>3</sup> The 2024 Long-Term Reliability Assessment (LTRA) from the North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC) included Colorado in the WECC Northwest assessment area. The 2025 LTRA provides new assessment area boundaries for WECC to provide more geographic detail of reliability risk information and to, “reflect a more accurate alignment with operational and planning realities, as well as the footprints of various entities.” In the 2025 LTRA, Colorado is included in the WECC Rocky Mountain assessment region.

<sup>4</sup> U.S. Energy Information Administration, *Form EIA-860, Schedule 3: Generator Data* (2024), <https://www.eia.gov/electricity/data/eia860/>.

<sup>5</sup> Platte River Power Authority, Craig Units 1 & 2 (Yampa Project), <https://prpa.org/generation/yampa-project/>.

<sup>6</sup> As a coal-fired facility, it would be difficult for the Craig Unit 1 to resume operations once it has been retired. Specifically, any stop and start of operation creates heating and cooling cycles that could cause an immediate failure that could take 30–60 days to repair if a unit comes offline. In addition, other practical issues, such as

Order No. 202-25-14, issued pursuant to FPA section 202(c) on December 30, 2025, required that Tri-State and the co-owners take all measures necessary to ensure that Craig Unit 1 continues to be available to operate for 90 days, until March 30, 2026. This order was based on my determination that emergency conditions existed within the WECC Northwest assessment area.

Specifically, I determined that the WECC Northwest assessment area faced significant amount of retiring baseload generation resources and concerns meeting demand during shoulder periods.<sup>7</sup> I determined that the continued availability of Craig Unit 1 would provide additional generation capacity, which would help prevent the loss of power to homes and businesses that would otherwise pose a risk to public health and safety.<sup>8</sup> I determined that the continued availability of Craig Unit 1 was necessary to alleviate immediate and anticipated threats to reliability.<sup>9</sup> My determination was based on several facts.

First, in its 2024 Long-Term Reliability Assessment (LTRA), the North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC) notes that in the WECC Northwest assessment area, which included Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming, “[e]nergy variability is greater in the Northwest than other WECC regions due to the large share of wind and hydro in the portfolio.” The 2024 LTRA notes that:

[f]ive [gigawatts] of baseload resource retirements are anticipated between 2024 and 2028. The energy needs are to be replaced by solar, wind, and [battery energy storage systems], further increasing variability in the portfolio. Given the retiring of baseload resources, supply chain issues preventing the construction of [battery energy storage systems] resources are a concern as they assist in meeting demand during shoulder periods where solar availability is dropping but loads remain high.<sup>10</sup>

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employment, contracts, and permits may greatly increase the timeline for resumption of operations. Further, if Tri-State and co-owners were to begin disassembling the plant or other related facilities, the associated challenges would be greatly exacerbated. Thus, continuous operation is required in such cases so long as the Secretary determines a shortage exists and is likely to persist.

<sup>7</sup> See, e.g., *Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association (Tri-State), Platte River Power Authority, Salt River Project, PacifiCorp, and Xcel Energy*, Order No. 202-25-14, at 1–2 (Dec. 30, 2025).

<sup>8</sup> See, e.g., *id.* at 1–3.

<sup>9</sup> See, e.g., *id.* at 3.

<sup>10</sup> NERC, *2024 Long-Term Reliability Assessment* (Dec. 2024, corrected Jul. 11, 2025), at 130 (Dec. 2024, corrected Jul. 11, 2025), [https://www.nerc.com/globalassets/ourwork/assessments/2024-ltra\\_corrected\\_july\\_2025.pdf](https://www.nerc.com/globalassets/ourwork/assessments/2024-ltra_corrected_july_2025.pdf).

Second, the 2024 WECC Western Assessment of Resource Adequacy notes that peak demand in WECC’s Northwest-Central subregion, which included Colorado at the time, is “forecast to grow by 8.5% over the next decade, from 33 GW in 2025 to 36 GW in 2034.”<sup>11</sup> Meanwhile, WECC notes that most planned retirements are “baseload generation, such as coal, natural gas, and nuclear.”<sup>12</sup>

### CONTINUING EMERGENCY CONDITIONS

The emergency conditions that necessitated the issuance of Order No. 202-25-14 continue, both in the near and long term.<sup>13</sup> The availability of electricity from Craig Unit 1 will continue to be critical to maintain reliability in the WECC Rocky Mountain assessment area.

In January 2026, NERC released its 2025 Long-Term Reliability Assessment.<sup>14</sup> While NERC assessed that the WECC Rocky Mountain region, which includes Colorado, is at normal risk of energy shortfalls over the next five years,<sup>15</sup> the area has an “[anticipated reserve margin] that falls below the [Reference Margin Level] in Summer 2034 and 2035, and Winter 2034–35.”<sup>16</sup> The LTRA also notes that the WECC-Rocky Mountain assessment area faces challenges from an aging thermal resource fleet, which can lead to unplanned outages, exacerbated by supply chain issues, and vendor availability.<sup>17</sup> Additionally, both solar and wind variability are year-round concerns, and while the region is pursuing advancement into Regional Transmission Organizations (RTOs) to leverage a wider footprint, smaller entities currently have limited geographic diversity to counteract these generation constraints.<sup>18</sup>

The 2025 WECC Western Assessment of Resource Adequacy notes that “the West’s planned resource buildout will not keep up with anticipated load growth over the next decade, particularly in the Basin and Northwest subregions. The West could see

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<sup>11</sup> WECC, *Western Assessment of Resource Adequacy 2024: Peak Demand by Subregion*, at 2, <https://www.wecc.org/sites/default/files/documents/products/2024/WARA%202024%20Peak%20Demand%20by%20Subregion.pdf>.

<sup>12</sup> WECC, *Western Assessment of Resource Adequacy*, <https://feature.wecc.org/wara/>.

<sup>13</sup> Further, as noted in Order No. 202-25-14, as a coal-fired facility, it would be difficult for Craig Unit 1 to resume operations once it has been retired. *See* Order No. 202-25-14 at 1.

<sup>14</sup> NERC, *2025 Long-Term Reliability Assessment* (Jan. 2026), [https://www.nerc.com/globalassets/our-work/assessments/nerc\\_ltra\\_2025.pdf](https://www.nerc.com/globalassets/our-work/assessments/nerc_ltra_2025.pdf).

<sup>15</sup> *Id.* at 7.

<sup>16</sup> *Id.* at 160.

<sup>17</sup> *Id.* at 161.

<sup>18</sup> *Id.*

energy shortfalls as early as 2028.”<sup>19</sup> The assessment goes on to say that “[i]f resources are added as planned, loss of load may be limited to the Basin and Northwest subregions. However, if planned resource additions are delayed or cancelled, other subregions could also be at risk.”<sup>20</sup> Further, the assessment highlights that 90% of planned resources over the next decade are inverter-based resources, which “continue the rapid evolution of the resource mix away from traditional dispatchable resources to more weather-dependent resources.”<sup>21</sup>

Since 2019, the retirement of coal-fired generating capacity in Colorado has led to a decline in the share of coal-generated electricity from 45% to 25%.<sup>22</sup> Looking forward, by 2029, about 3,700 megawatts (MW) of coal-fired generating capacity in Colorado is scheduled to retire according to the Energy Information Administration (EIA),<sup>23</sup> accounting for all but one coal-fired power plant in Colorado. In that same time frame, 620 MW of natural gas-fired generating capacity in Colorado will retire as well.<sup>24</sup> In 2025, intermittent wind accounted for over 5,300 MW of Colorado’s electricity generating capacity.<sup>25</sup> Additionally, Colorado Public Utilities Commissioners

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<sup>19</sup> WECC, *Western Assessment of Resource Adequacy*, <https://feature.wecc.org/2025wara/index.html>.

<sup>20</sup> *Id.*

<sup>21</sup> *Id.*

<sup>22</sup> U.S. Energy Information Administration, *Electricity Data Browser, Net Generation for All Sectors Annually from 2019-2025, State: Colorado*, (last accessed Mar. 18, 2026), <https://www.eia.gov/electricity/data/browser/#/topic/0?agg=2,0,1&fuel=vtvp&geo=0000000000g&sec=g&freq=A&start=2019&end=2024&ctype=linechart&ltype=pin&rtype=s&pin=&rse=0&motype=0>.

<sup>23</sup> U.S. Energy Information Administration, *Preliminary Monthly Electric Generator Inventory (based on Form EIA-860M as a supplement to Form EIA-860), Inventory of Operating Generator as of January 2026, Plant State: Colorado, Technology: Conventional Steam Coal* (Jan. 2026), <https://www.eia.gov/electricity/data/eia860m/>.

<sup>24</sup> U.S. Energy Information Administration, *Preliminary Monthly Electric Generator Inventory (based on Form EIA-860M as a supplement to Form EIA-860), Inventory of Operating Generator as of January 2026, Plant State: Colorado, Technology: Natural Gas Fired Combustion Turbine and Natural Gas Stream Turbine* (Jan. 2026), <https://www.eia.gov/electricity/data/eia860m/>.

<sup>25</sup> U.S. Energy Information Administration, *Preliminary Monthly Electric Generator Inventory (based on Form EIA-860M as a supplement to Form EIA-860), Inventory of Operating Generator as of January 2026, Plant State: Colorado, Technology: Onshore Wind Turbine* (Jan. 2026), <https://www.eia.gov/electricity/data/eia860m/>.

have expressed concerns about the ability of certain utilities to meet projected summer 2026 loads.<sup>26</sup>

Order No. 202-25-14 was preceded by executive orders on January 20, 2025, and April 8, 2025, in which President Donald J. Trump underscored the dire energy challenges facing the Nation due to growing resource adequacy concerns. President Trump declared a national energy emergency in Executive Order 14156, *Declaring a National Energy Emergency*, in which he determined that the “United States’ insufficient energy production, transportation, refining, and generation constitutes an unusual and extraordinary threat to our Nation’s economy, national security, and foreign policy.”<sup>27</sup> The Executive Order adds, “hostile state and non-state foreign actors have targeted our domestic energy infrastructure, weaponized our reliance on foreign energy, and abused their ability to cause dramatic swings within international commodity markets.”<sup>28</sup> In a subsequent Executive Order 14262, *Strengthening the Reliability and Security of the United States Electric Grid*, President Trump emphasized that “the United States is experiencing an unprecedented surge in electricity demand driven by rapid technological advancements, including the expansion of artificial intelligence data centers and increase in domestic manufacturing.”<sup>29</sup>

Further, the Department detailed the myriad challenges affecting the Nation’s energy systems in its July 2025 “Resource Adequacy Report: Evaluating the Reliability and Security of the United States Electric Grid,” issued pursuant to the President’s directive in Executive Order 14262. The Department concluded that “[a]bsent decisive intervention, the Nation’s power grid will be unable to meet projected demand for manufacturing, re-industrialization, and data centers driving artificial intelligence (AI) innovation.”<sup>30</sup> The prolific growth of data centers for the development of AI, as well as their immense energy needs, presents a new and unexpected source of load growth.

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<sup>26</sup> RTO Insider, *Comanche 3 Repair Delay Raises RA Concerns in Colorado*, (March 26, 2026), <https://www.rtoinsider.com/129021-comanche-3-repair-delay-raises-ra-concerns-in-colorado/>.

<sup>27</sup> Exec. Order No. 14156, 90 Fed. Reg. 8433 (Jan. 20, 2025) (*Declaring a National Energy Emergency*), <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/01/declaring-a-national-energy-emergency/>.

<sup>28</sup> *Id.*

<sup>29</sup> Exec. Order No. 14262, 90 Fed. Reg. 15521 (Apr. 8, 2025) (*Strengthening the Reliability and Security of the United States Electric Grid*), <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/04/strengthening-the-reliability-and-security-of-the-united-states-electric-grid/>.

<sup>30</sup> U.S. Dep’t of Energy, *Resource Adequacy Report: Evaluating the Reliability and Security of the United States Electric Grid*, at 1 (July 2025), <https://www.energy.gov/sites/default/files/2025-07/DOE%20Final%20EO%20Report%20%28FINAL%20JULY%207%29.pdf>.

## ORDER

FPA section 202(c)(1) provides that whenever the Secretary of Energy determines “that an emergency exists by reason of a sudden increase in the demand for electric energy, or a shortage of electric energy or of facilities for the generation or transmission of electric energy,” then the Secretary has the authority “to require by order . . . such generation, delivery, interchange, or transmission of electric energy as in [his] judgment will best meet the emergency and serve the public interest.”<sup>31</sup> This statutory language constitutes a specific grant of authority to the Secretary to require the availability and operation of Craig Unit 1 when the Secretary has determined that such availability and operation will best meet an emergency caused by a sudden increase in the demand for electric energy or a shortage of generation capacity.

Such is the case here. As described above, the emergency conditions resulting from increasing demand and shortage from accelerated retirement of generation facilities will continue in the near term and are also likely to continue in subsequent years. This could lead to the loss of power to homes and businesses in the areas that may be affected by curtailments or power outages, presenting a risk to public health and safety.

I have also made the determination that, to best meet the emergency arising from increased demand, determined shortage, and other causes, and serve the public interest under FPA section 202(c), Craig Unit 1 shall be made available for operation through June 28, 2026.

Based on my determination of an emergency set forth above, I hereby order:

- A. For March 31, 2026, Tri-State and the co-owners, shall take all measures necessary to ensure that Craig Unit 1 is available to operate at the direction of either Western Area Power Administration (WAPA)—Rocky Mountain Region, Western Area Colorado Missouri (WACM), in its role as Balancing Authority,<sup>32</sup> or the Southwest Power Pool (SPP) West in its role as the Reliability Coordinator,<sup>33</sup> as applicable.
- B. From April 1, 2026, SPP, Tri-State and the co-owners shall take all measures

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<sup>31</sup> Although the text of FPA section 202(c) grants this authority to “the Commission,” section 301(b) of the Department of Energy Organization Act transferred this authority to the Secretary of the Department of Energy. *See* 42 U.S.C. § 7151(b).

<sup>32</sup> *See* EIA-930A 2024 Data, <https://www.eia.gov/electricity/gridmonitor/about>. On EIA-930A 2024 SCH 2, the balancing authority (BA) Code for Craig is WACM. *See* EIA-930 data reference tables, <https://www.eia.gov/electricity/gridmonitor/about>. On EIA-930 data reference tables BA Code WACM is associated with Western Area Power Administration—Rocky Mountain Region.

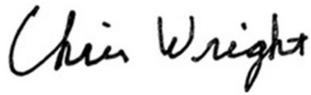
<sup>33</sup> SPP, *Western RC Services*, [https://www.spp.org/western-services/western-rc-services/#:~:text=SPP%20is%20a%20certified%20Reliability%20Coordinator%20\(RC\),Interchange%20Tool%20\\*%20Western%20Interconnection%20Synchrophasor%20Project](https://www.spp.org/western-services/western-rc-services/#:~:text=SPP%20is%20a%20certified%20Reliability%20Coordinator%20(RC),Interchange%20Tool%20*%20Western%20Interconnection%20Synchrophasor%20Project).

- necessary to ensure that Craig Unit 1 is available to operate.<sup>34</sup> For the duration of this Order, SPP is directed to take every step to employ economic dispatch of Craig Unit 1 to minimize costs to ratepayers. Following the conclusion of this Order, sufficient time for orderly ramp down is permitted, consistent with industry practices. Tri-State and the co-owners are directed to comply with all orders from SPP related to the availability and dispatch of Craig Unit 1.
- C. To minimize adverse environmental impacts, this Order limits operation of Craig Unit 1 to the times and within the parameters established in paragraph A and paragraph B. SPP and Tri-State shall provide a daily notification to the Department (via AskCR@hq.doe.gov) reporting whether Craig Unit 1 has operated in compliance with this Order.
  - D. All operations of Craig Unit 1 must comply with applicable environmental requirements, including but not limited to monitoring, reporting, and recordkeeping requirements, to the maximum extent feasible while operating consistent with the emergency conditions.
  - E. By April 14, 2026, SPP and Tri-State, in coordination with the co-owners, are directed to provide the Department of Energy (via AskCR@hq.doe.gov) with information concerning the measures each has taken and is planning to take to ensure the operational availability of Craig Unit 1 consistent with this Order. SPP, Tri-State and the co-owners shall also provide such additional information regarding the environmental and operational impacts of this Order and its compliance with the conditions of this Order, in each case as requested by the Department of Energy from time to time.
  - F. Tri-state and the co-owners are directed to file with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission Tariff revisions or waivers to effectuate this Order, as needed. Rate recovery is available pursuant to 16 U.S.C. § 824a(c).
  - G. This Order shall not preclude the need for Craig Unit 1 to comply with applicable state, local, or Federal law or regulations following the expiration of this Order.
  - H. Because this Order is predicated on the shortage of facilities for generation of electric energy and other causes, Craig Unit 1 shall not be considered a capacity resource.
  - I. This Order shall be effective from March 31, 2026 through June 28, 2026, with the exception of applicable compliance obligations in paragraph E.

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<sup>34</sup> WAPA, *Southwest Power Pool RTO Membership Initiative*, <https://www.wapa.gov/about-wapa/the-source/key-topics/southwest-power-pool-membership/#:~:text=Since%202020%2C%20WAPA's%20Colorado%20River,FERC%20website%20under%20Docket%20No.>

Issued in Washington, D.C. on this 30th day of March 2026.



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Chris Wright  
Secretary of Energy

cc: **FERC Commissioners**  
Chairman Laura V. Swett  
Commissioner David Rosner  
Commissioner Lindsay S. See  
Commissioner Judy W. Chang  
Commissioner David A. LaCerte

**Colorado Public Utilities Commission**  
Chairman Eric Blank  
Commissioner Megan Gilman  
Commissioner Tom Plant