

THE U.S. SENATE COMMITTEE ON
ENERGY AND
NATURAL RESOURCES
RANKING MEMBER SENATOR MARTIN HEINRICH

SOLAR ENERGY AND STORAGE REDUCES RISK OF OUTAGES

GRID RELIABILITY RISKS ARE REDUCED IN SUMMER 2026 DUE TO SUBSTANTIAL ADDITIONS OF SOLAR PV AND BATTERIES

NERC, the North American Electric Reliability Corporation, reduced the risk from Elevated Risk in the Summer of 2025 to Normal Risk in the Summer of 2026 across three assessment areas in the center of the country: MISO, SPP and ERCOT (Figure 1).¹ The improvement in reliability in these regions means that power outages—that can be costly to households²—are less likely to occur during summer seasons.

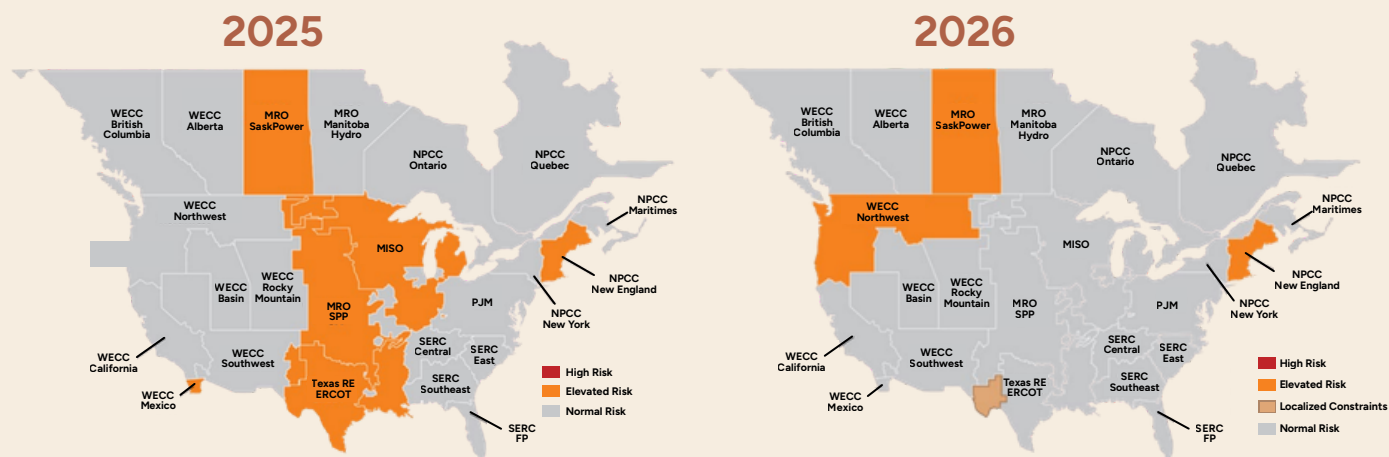


Figure 1. NERC Risk Assessment Categories for Summer 2025 and Summer 2026.^{3,4,5}

In those regions, new renewable energy and energy storage resources increase the available capacity and led to better power resource adequacy in the Summer. From June 2025 to May 2026, most nameplate capacity additions in ERCOT, MISO, and SPP were renewable sources (Figure 2). Renewable resources continue to be the fastest and cheapest resources to build and start operations.

The Trump administration’s war on renewables puts at risk these increases in the reliability of the electric grid and increases the likelihood of costly power outages.

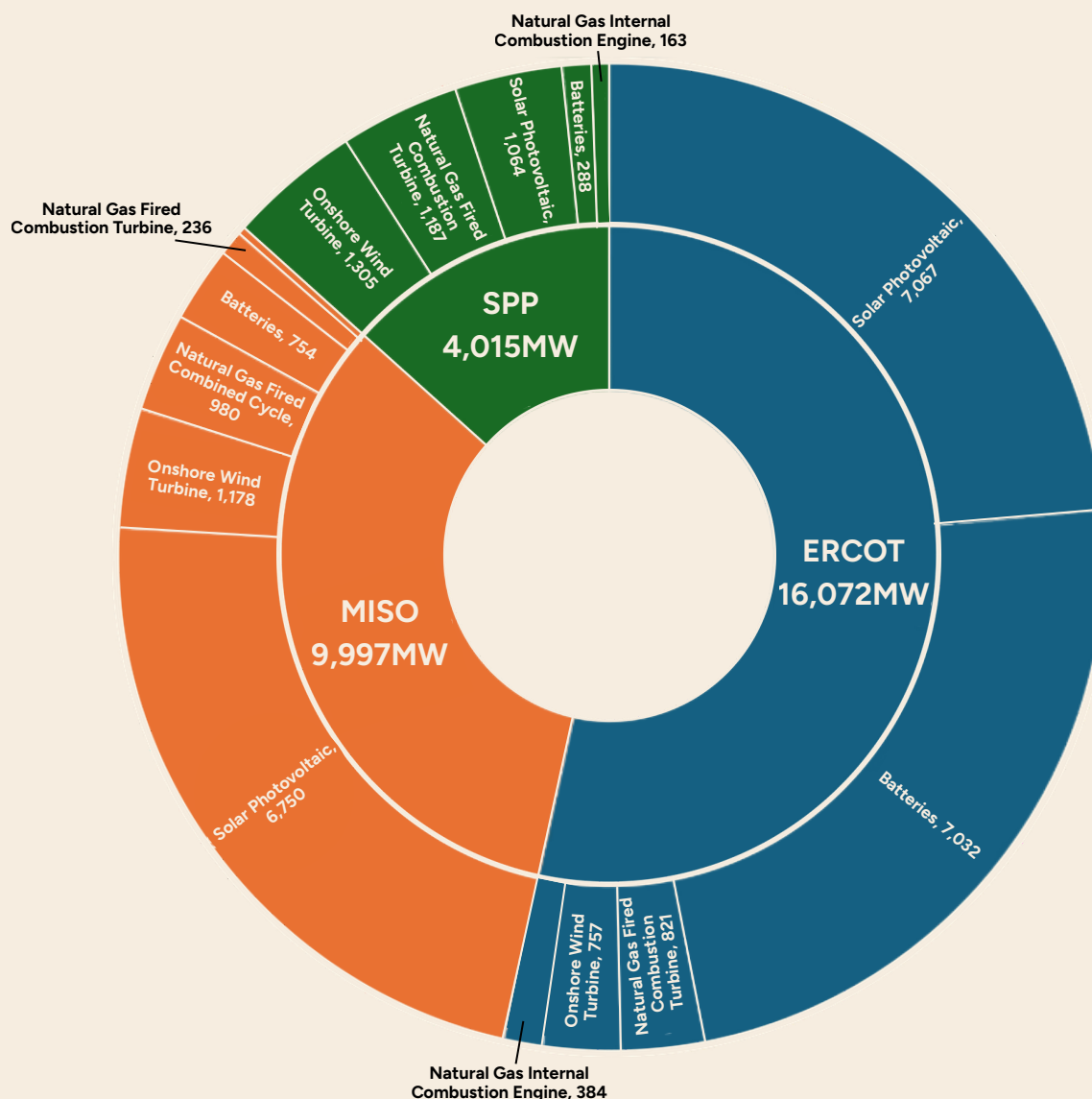


Figure 2. Nameplate Capacity of Power Plants in the ERCOT, MISO, and SPP Areas Becoming Operational Between June 2025 and May 2026 (All Numbers in Megawatts, MW).⁶

The addition of substantial amounts of solar energy and energy storage resources has outpaced other generation sources and is helping to meet increasing demand. New generation becoming operational between September 2025 and May 2026 was comprised mainly of solar projects, representing 45% of all generation added in that period across the United States, reducing the reliability risk during the Summer.

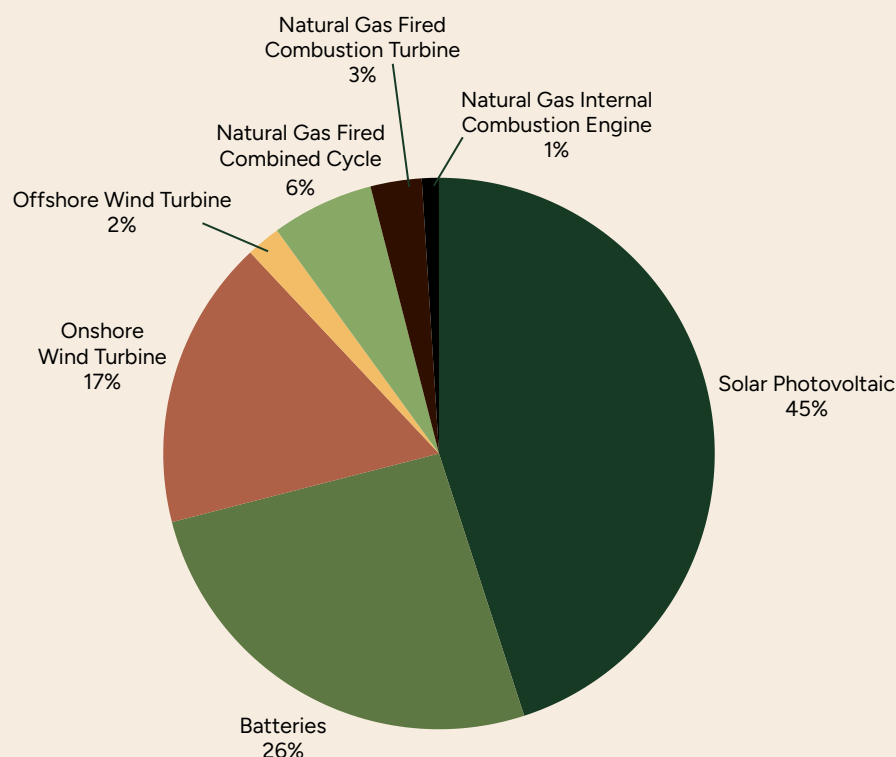


Figure 3. Generation additions from September 2025 to May 2026.⁷

¹ MISO – Midcontinent Independent System Operator, SPP – Southwest Power Pool, ERCOT – Electric Reliability Council of Texas

² US Census Bureau – [How Do Power Outages Affect Households?](#)

³ NERC, [2025 Summer Reliability Assessment](#)

⁴ NERC, [2026 Summer Reliability Assessment](#) – “All areas assessed as having adequate anticipated resources for normal summer peak load conditions. However, the ... areas [in orange] face elevated risks of electricity supply shortfalls during periods of more extreme summer conditions or are subject to localized constraints that raise the risk levels of certain small areas within the broader system. This determination of elevated risk is based on analysis of plausible scenarios, including 90/10 demand forecasts and historical high outage rates as well as low wind or solar photovoltaic (PV) energy conditions”.

⁵ The assessment of Elevated Risk in the WECC-Northwest is due in part due to the reliance of that region on hydropower in the current conditions of drought and a lower-than-average snowpack this Spring.

⁶ EIA – [Preliminary Monthly Electric Generator Inventory](#) (based on Form EIA-860M as a supplement to Form EIA-860)

⁷ EIA – [Preliminary Monthly Electric Generator Inventory](#) (based on Form EIA-860M as a supplement to Form EIA-860)