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California Energy Leaders Report Progress on Grid Reliability Ahead of Summer 2026

Newsroom



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WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW:

California's electric grid is stronger and more resilient than in past years; energy leaders report improvements but also remain prepared for challenges heading into the summer.

SACRAMENTO — California energy leaders today reported a generally positive outlook for summer 2026 grid reliability, citing major gains in battery storage, clean energy deployment, forecasting, and emergency preparedness following years of investment and planning.

The outlook was presented during the annual Summer Energy Reliability Workshop, where officials from the [California Energy Commission](#) (CEC), [California Public Utilities Commission](#) (CPUC), [California Independent System Operator](#) (California ISO), other state agencies and partners in the energy and utilities industry convened to assess readiness for the summer and strategies to manage extreme weather and potential grid challenges.

Thanks to rapid clean energy deployment, expansion of battery storage, and strategic efforts to build up emergency reserves, the state’s electric grid is better prepared to handle extreme weather and wildfires. Since grid strain and emergencies in summers 2020-2022, California has not called a Flex Alert for the past three summers (2023, 2024 and 2025) despite periods of extreme heat and record-setting temperatures.

Despite the positive outlook, officials cautioned that overlapping extreme events — such as prolonged heat waves combined with wildfire-related transmission disruptions — could still create tight grid conditions. In those instances, the state has up to 4,000 megawatts (MW) of contingency resources to draw on through its Strategic Reliability Reserve and other programs, depending on availability and other system conditions.

“Years of investment and planning are paying off as we head into another summer with stronger tools and better preparedness,” said CEC Vice Chair Siva Gunda. “Just a few years ago, extreme heat pushed the grid to its limits. Today, cleaner energy, battery storage, and better planning are helping California maintain reliable power during increasingly severe climate events. This progress reflects close collaboration among the CEC, CPUC, California ISO, and many other partners, and I also want to recognize the staff across agencies whose hard work continues to strengthen grid reliability for Californians.”

The state has taken aggressive action over the past six years to confront grid reliability challenges exposed by climate change.

Today, California is better prepared:

- For each of the past two years, California brought online over 6,000 megawatts of new nameplate capacity to serve load. State policies have driven unprecedented and record-breaking levels of investments that have yielded more than 31,000 MW of efficient, new power plants since 2020.
- The new resource capacity additions in 2025 helped California reach a milestone achievement of installing a cumulative total of [over 17,000 megawatts of battery storage capacity](#) to serve the grid. Batteries help the grid optimize the use of abundant solar resources by storing energy for use in non-daylight hours. By doing so, these grid storage resources are reducing the usage of fossil fuels throughout the year.
- Up to 4,500 MW of contingency resources are available for summer 2026 in case of extreme events that strain the grid. A majority of these resources are provided through the [Strategic Reliability Reserve](#), established by legislation after grid challenges in 2020 and 2021, including demand response and virtual power plant programs.

- The extension of operations at the Diablo Canyon Power Plant provides additional capacity during the clean energy transition, providing stability while new renewable resources and storage continue to come online.
- State energy agencies have improved forecasting, coordination, and operational strategies to better manage complex situations.
- Coordination with regional partners across the West, including the Western Energy Imbalance Market, continue to enhance grid reliability.
- On May 1, California ISO launched the Extended Day-Ahead Market with its first participant, PacifiCorp. The new market provides earlier insight into supply, demand, congestion and transmission availability across a wide area footprint allowing for better coordination, economic dispatch and reliability planning during extreme weather and other stressed system conditions.

“California’s investments in cost-effective, clean energy supply have strengthened reliability and made the grid better prepared to serve all customers, even as climate-driven events continue to challenge the electric system,” said CPUC President John Reynolds. “These resources, coupled with the pipeline of generation, storage, and transmission assets under development, will be critical to maintaining reliable service for homes and businesses and keeping the system resilient in the face of changing conditions.”

“With continued procurement and onboarding of significant new resources, the ISO-managed electric grid is well positioned to meet expected demand this summer,” said CAISO President and CEO Elliot Mainzer. “However, extreme heat, unpredictable weather-driven challenges and increased demand mean we must manage our resources carefully to ensure reliable power across the entire system.”

Officials also highlighted how consumer engagement is a key factor in grid stability. Programs like Power Saver Rewards and public awareness of peak demand hours have helped reduce strain on the system, reducing the need for Flex Alerts in recent years.

State energy agencies emphasized that reliability planning is an ongoing effort as California prepares for increasing electrification, changing weather patterns, and continued economic growth.

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About the California Energy Commission

The California Energy Commission is leading the state to a 100 percent clean energy future for all. It has seven core responsibilities: developing renewable energy, transforming

transportation, increasing energy efficiency, investing in energy innovation, advancing state energy policy, certifying power plants and preparing for energy emergencies.

About the California Public Utilities Commission

The CPUC regulates services and utilities, protects consumers, safeguards the environment, and assures Californians access to safe and reliable utility infrastructure and services.

Visit www.cpuc.ca.gov for more information.

About the California Independent System Operator

The California Independent System Operator (ISO) is a nonprofit public-benefit corporation dedicated with its partners to continuous improvement and secure operation of a reliable grid operated for the benefit of electricity consumers.

The ISO provides comprehensive grid planning, open and nondiscriminatory access to one of the largest networks of high-voltage transmission power lines in the world and operates a competitive electricity market that in 2024 included \$16.1 billion in transactions. In helping to carry out California's energy policy objectives, the ISO is at the forefront of integrating renewable power and advanced technologies that will help provide a reliable and sustainable energy future efficiently and cleanly.

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