



Written by [Luis Miguel](#) on October 27, 2023

Whitmer & Democrats Make Push to Create Green New Deal for Michigan

Michigan Democrats aren't content to wait around for Washington to bring the Green New Deal to fruition. They're taking matters into their own hands.

Democratic Governor Gretchen Whitmer and lawmakers of her party are making a strong push to make Michigan a green-energy state with a proposal that has many similarities to the Green New Deal legislation championed by progressives at the federal level.

Democrats have held both the House and Senate in Michigan since the 1980s, making their efforts that much easier. Already they have enacted some of their green agenda, and they are working to get even more of it passed in order to create a system of top-down control over energy production in the state.



AP Images
Gretchen Whitmer

“These bills will balance reliability and affordability and help us protect our air and our water and improve public health,” said Whitmer in defense of her agenda on Thursday night, per [Fox News](#). “They will help us bring home more cutting-edge manufacturing investments so we can make solar panels, wind turbines, and more right here in Michigan, supporting good-paying jobs, high-skill jobs that are a ticket to the middle class.”

The governor added, “And they will make Michigan a national leader in clean energy, shoring up our position as the best place to start your family, your career, or your business.”

Whitmer made her remarks following the state Senate's passing of a far-reaching energy package dubbed the Clean Energy Future plan, which Democrats assert is crucial to stopping climate change. Senator Sean McCann, a Democrat, touted the collection of bills as the key to a “greener and more environmentally conscious Michigan.”

One of the bills in the package, [Senate Bill 271](#), creates a renewable-energy standard of 50 percent by 2030 and 60 percent by 2035, meaning electric utilities will be compelled to reach that share of their generation capacity by means of renewable methods or with renewable energy credits. This would go beyond current law, which requires a 15-percent renewable energy standard through the year 2029.

Fox News further reports:

In addition, under the bill, utility providers must meet an 80% clean energy standard by 2035 and 100% clean energy standard set to be achieved by 2040. The clean energy standard would include natural gas-fired generation with 90% carbon capture, a nascent and expensive technology that hasn't been deployed at any power plant nationwide.



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Back in August, Whitmer said of her vision, “Let’s enact a 100% clean energy standard for Michigan. This means all the energy we produce will be from wind, solar, or other commonsense sources. It means clean air for our kids to breathe and safe water for them to drink. And it means protecting our lakes for generations to come. We can achieve 100% clean energy while balancing reliability and affordability.”

Detractors of Whitmer and her proposal say the changes would be radical and abrupt, as Michigan currently relies heavily on “non-renewable” energy sources.

For example, Energy Information Administration data obtained by Fox News reveals that Michigan is among the top five states in the country when it comes to residential natural-gas usage, and in the top 10 for total consumption of natural gas. In fact, for more than 75 percent of Michigan residents, natural gas is the primary source of home heating.

Furthermore, natural-gas power plants account for the biggest share of Michigan’s electricity production, followed by nuclear and coal. Meanwhile, solar and wind power produce only 8.1 percent of the state’s electricity.

The Mackinac Center for Public Policy, a free-market think tank that analyzes energy bills, is working on a report asserting that the Democrats’ Clean Energy Future plan would nearly double the average monthly electric bill in the coming decades. In addition, the Mackinac Center says, the package would drastically reduce overall grid reliability.

“The biggest thing is prices are going to go up, reliability is going to go way down and people are going to be left sitting in the cold in Michigan in January, like our modeling shows, for as much as 61 hours without electric service because of these plans,” claims Jason Hayes, the Mackinac Center’s director of energy and environmental policy.

Hayes maintained that the instability would be partly due to the fact that solar and wind produce less power relative to their total capacity. He said proponents of green energy often misleadingly focus on the total capacity of renewable energy products but ignore the reality that the actual power produced is significantly less than their capacity.

For instance, solar panels only generate 25 percent of their listed capacity; wind turbines produce 34 percent of theirs. Meanwhile, coal, natural gas, and nuclear power plants generate 49, 54, and 93 percent of their respective capacities.

A final concern is that Whitmer’s program would take permitting authority for green energy projects away from local bodies and hand it instead to the Michigan Public Service Commission, thus consolidating power in the hands of the state government and eroding local decision-making.



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