Nuclear Power – Deterring the Myths: Disinformation, Deregulation, and Data Centers

- **Moderated by: Linda Pentz Gunter, Founder and Executive Director, Beyond Nuclear**
- **Hosted by the Independent Council for Safe Energy Fund**

Independent Council for Safe Energy Fund

In memoriam of
Dr. Joseph Romm

June 27, 1960 – September 14, 2026

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Joe will be dearly missed. Our sincere condolences to his daughter Antonia, his family, and friends.

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Georgia WAND (Women's Action for New Directions) Education Fund Inc.

KIM SCOTT, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Burke County, Georgia

Waynesboro, GA in Burke County (*formerly known as Shell Bluff)* is surrounded by nuclear and waste production, industrial development, air and water pollution.

Plant Vogtle with 4 nuclear reactors is the largest nuclear plant in the U.S. & is the first new build in over 30 years

“Let them eat cake”

GEORGIA WAND
women.power.peace.

15 Years

36 Billion Dollars

Georgia Power built the most expensive power plant on Earth!

$36 billion for 2.2 GWs

What could it have built instead?

Texas built 36 GWs of solar and battery storage in just four years for $36 billion, the same cost as Vogtle - *Utility Dive '26*

WAGA
Morning Edition

NEXT UP: 8:51 AM

Local News

Plant Vogtle may be the most expensive energy plant in the world—and Georgians are paying for it

WLOGA | By Alexia Ridley
Published June 6, 2024 at 10:10 AM EDT

LISTEN — 6:38

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Nuclear cost overrun could mean billions in extra Georgia Power profit

BUSINESS

By Matt Kempner, The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

July 9, 2021

The more utility spends, the more it can earn; consumers pay price

The Augusta Chronicle

NEWS

Plant Vogtle nuclear projects hits another delay with 'construction quality' issues

Dave Williams Capitol Beat News Service

Published 5:30 a.m. ET Dec. 3, 2021

$20+ Billion Over Budget

At $36 billion, Plant Vogtle's units 3 & 4 were **more than $20 billion** over budget (original estimate of $14 billion)

7 Years of Delay

Lengthy construction delays (both reactors were promised to be online by 2017, but became **operational 7 years late,** in 2024) demonstrating that new nuclear cannot come online fast enough to meet urgent climate needs

More Coal and Gas

During the construction delay and after Vogtle 3 & 4 came online, the **gap was filled with gas and coal,** impacting already overburdened communities, along with excessive water use and loss.

GEORGIA WAND women.power.peace.

New Nuclear's Devastating Impact on Georgians

25% rate increase to residential ratepayers (*so far*) from Plant Vogtle reactors 3 + 4

<u>275,000 residential disconnections in 2025</u>

1 out of 9 households disconnected

13x the National average

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

News

Georgia News | Legislature | National & World News | Business | AJC Peachtree Road Race | 2024 Election | Trump

BUSINESS

Black Georgians face disproportionate energy burden, study says

Georgia Tech study finds race a determining factor in struggles to pay utility bills

Credit: Meris Lutz

Willie Pierce, 73, stands in front of his home in the Kirkwood neighborhood of Atlanta. He has lived there for more than 40 years without air conditioning, but in the summer of 2022 received an air conditioning system installed by a local nonprofit.

By Drew Kann and Meris Lutz

March 14, 2024

Colleen

Virginia-Highland • 8 Jul •

Outrageous Georgia power bill! This month my electric bill was $605.27, I've been in my house for 11 years & I'm used to paying $300 in the summer but when looking at the cost per kilowatt hour I'm paying triple what it was in 2022. It was 0.11/kwhr & now it's up to 0.32/kwhr. What can be done about this? My estimate for this month is in the $700s!

344

See 92 previous comments

Victoria • Pine Hills • 10w

Same here. This month's bill was 3x normal. Done everything known to address this to no avail

Your State Wants To Be Next - Why?

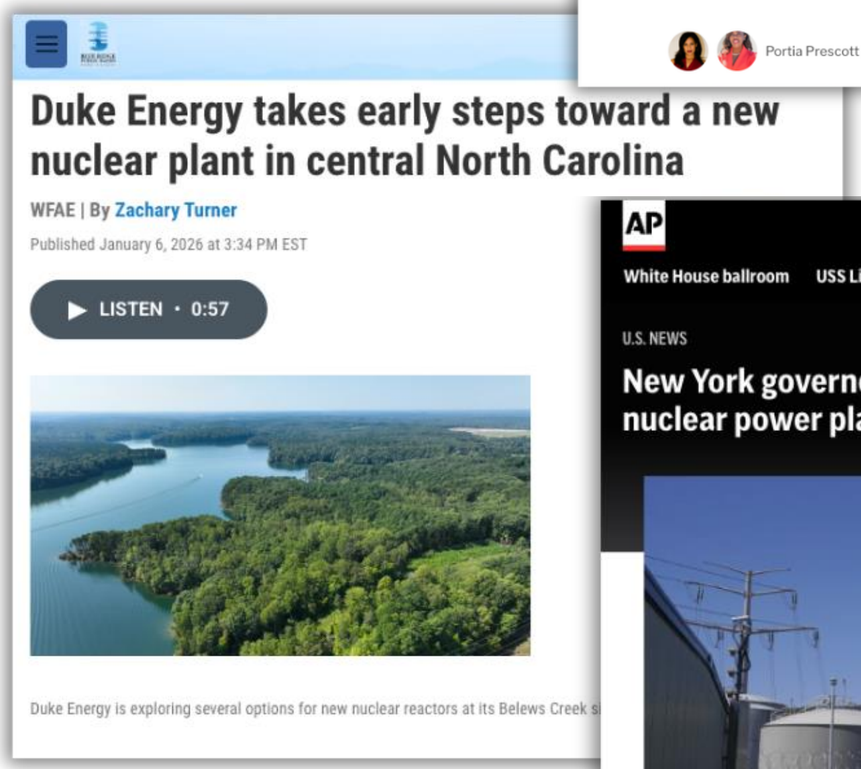
- New York Gov. Hochul wants to build 5GW worth of new nuclear
- Illinois Gov. Pritzker wants 2GW of new nuclear
- Michigan Gov. Whitmer wants new reactors on Lake Michigan

OPINION: OPINION COLUMNS

Opinion: Even as Colorado legislators and governor move ahead, bringing nuclear power back to the state is wrong

The Georgia plant confirms nuclear energy is not worth the time and investment when we have proven power sources beyond coal

Portia Prescott and Kim Scott 1:30 AM MDT on May 29, 2025 Share


Duke Energy takes early steps toward a new nuclear plant in central North Carolina

WFAE | By Zachary Turner

Published January 6, 2026 at 3:34 PM EST

LISTEN • 0:57

Duke Energy is exploring several options for new nuclear reactors at its Belews Creek s

AP Sign in DONATE

White House ballroom USS Lincoln Navy catapult system Luigi Mangione Jessica Bang dies

U.S. NEWS

New York governor seeks to build the state's first new nuclear power plant in decades

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Finally, Some Accountability

2 out of 5 members **Replaced** on the Georgia Public Service Commission.

1 recently resigned.

Local News

Georgia Public Service Commissioner Tricia Pridemore not seeking reelection in 2026

By Dan Raby

February 18, 2026 / 11:37 AM EST / CBS Atlanta

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Two democrats unseat incumbent republicans in Georgia's Public Service Commission race by large margins

POLITICS

Alabama moves to end Public Service Commission elections after Democrats win in Georgia

Updated: Feb. 10, 2026, 9:00 p.m. | Published: Feb. 10, 2026, 6:21 a.m.

Georgia WAND Education Fund 501(c)(3)

Georgia Women's Action for New Directions 501(c)(4)

info@georgiawand.org

KIM SCOTT, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The nuclear power distraction

Environmental Grantmakers Association Fall Retreat panel
"Nuclear Power—Deterring the Myths: Disinformation, Deregulation, and Data Centers," Virginia Beach, Virginia, 28 September 2026

Amory B. Lovins

盧安武 博士　एमोरी लविन्स　エイモリー B. ロビンス　Ловинс Эймори Блох

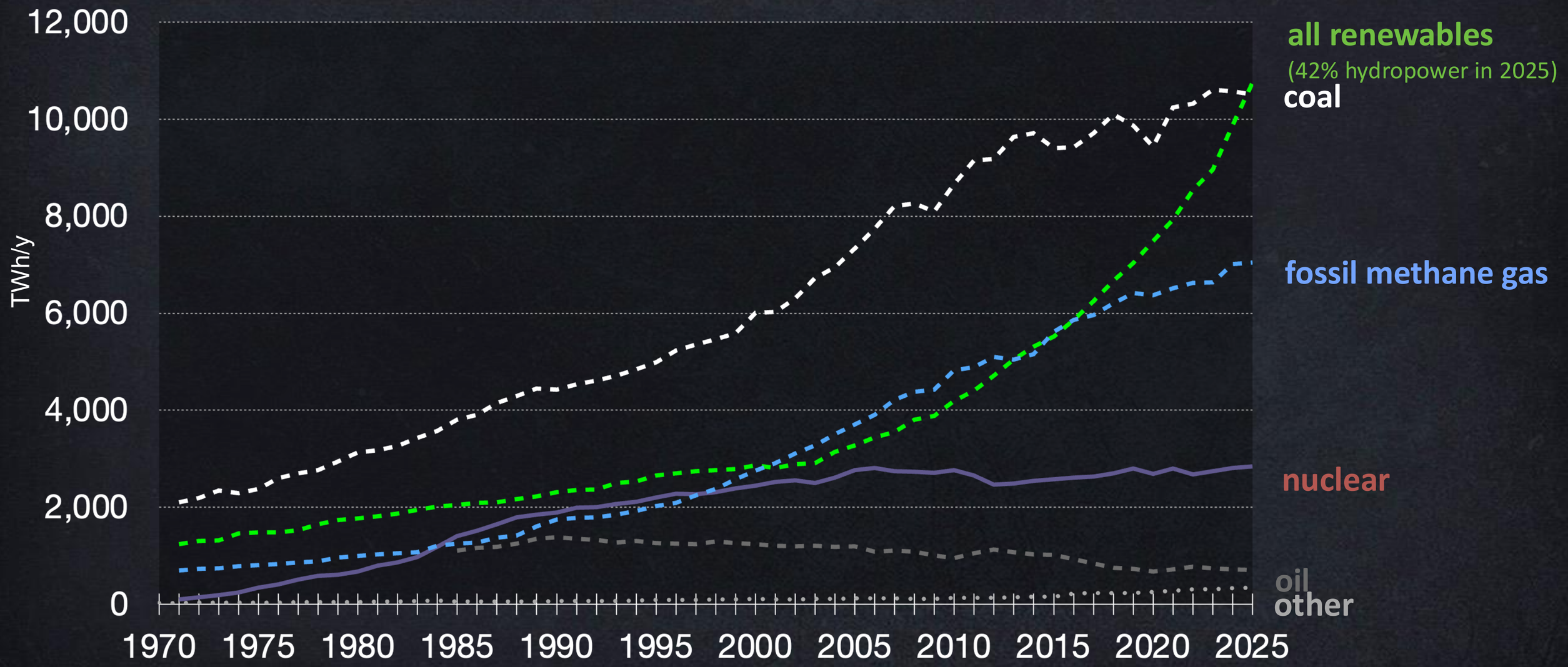
Adjunct Professor 2020–24, Lecturer 2025– in teaching terms, currently Adjunct Lecturer, Department of Civil & Environmental Engineering, and Senior Precourt Scholar of Integrative Design and Energy Efficiency, Precourt Institute for Energy, Stanford University; Cofounder (1982) and Chairman Emeritus, RMI

ablovins@stanford.edu, efficiencyhub.stanford.edu

Nuclear power's five big problems *besides* uninsurable public risks like safety & waste

1. It has no business case, so it's shunned by private capital markets.

Worldwide electricity generation by source, 1971–2025



Curves are separate, not stacked. Updated 30 June 2026 from A B Lovins *et al.*, *El. Res. & Soc. Sci.* **38**:188–192 (2018), doi:10.1016/j.erss.2018.01.05. 1971–2022 data reconciled from BP/EI *Statistical Review of Energy* (2023 edition), All 2024–25 data from succcessor, Energy Institute, *Statistical Review of World Energy 2026*, 30 June 2026, https://www.energyinst.org/statistical-review. Distributed solar may be understated. IEA forecasts from *Annual Energy Outlook*, Dec 2025, Stated Policies and Net Zero Emissions, show 34% renewable. IEA in 2026 forecasted 2030 renewables at ~41% share; 2035, 50–76%; 2050, 69–89%.Global 2025 generation totaled ~32 PWh or 32,000 TWh.

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2. It has no operational need, but crowds out better and cheaper technologies.

This 100%-solar microgrid near Reno, Nevada, powers data centers more cheaply and reliably than grid power could

Courtesy of redwoodenergy.com (Sparks, Nevada)

“Renewable baseload” can power the toughest, heaviest industries

Hornsdale Power Reserve image, www.carnegie.com.au

100 MW wind/batteries for BHP copper mines

Boyne aluminum smelter, 8 TWh/y, https://discoveryalert.com.au/australias-industrial-energy-evolution-2026/

2.8 GW solar/wind/batteries for Rio Tinto aluminum smelter

300 MW for >90%-solar Pueblo, CO steel mill

Turner River solar farm, https://www.fortescue.com/en/articles/fortescue-accelerates-real-zero-with-construction

690 MW solar + 650 MWh batteries for Fortescue iron mining;
1.4 GW of Pilbara renewables by 2028

https://bigpivots.com/no-4-a-solar-powered-steel-mill/

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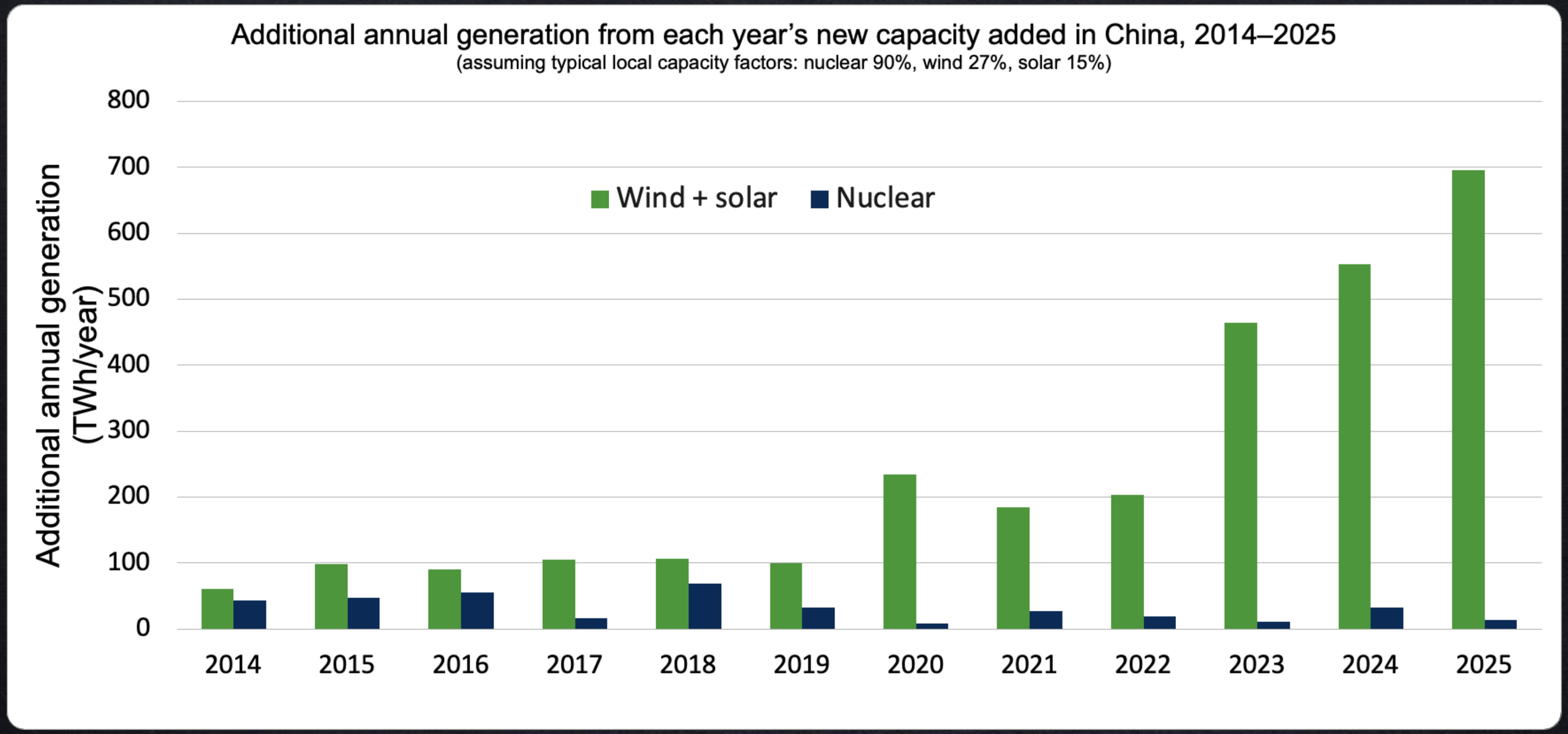
2. It has no operational need, but crowds out better and cheaper technologies.

3. It worsens climate change.

China: natural experiment in nuclear *vs*. renewable deployment



Analysis by Michael Barnard, briefing.tfie.io, 26 July 2026

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5. New reactor types can worsen some and solve none of those fatal flaws.

A. "Small Modular Reactors" are not a commercial product anywhere
B. Safety often uncertain, wastes and proliferation generally worse
C. Must become ~12 to 24× cheaper to beat renewables—no way
D. Far too late: very few SMRs are buildable before US grid is decarbonized
E. Small Modular *Renewables* are already hundreds of times faster
F. "Small Modular Reactors" can't compete even if the nuclear part is *free*
G. Using energy 5× more efficiently is even cheaper

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Why pay—let alone extra—for a risky non-solution?

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Costly, Slow, & Unscalable: New reactors worsen affordability but can't address AI data center surge

Joe Romm
Penn Center for Science, Sustainability, and the Media
rommj@sas.upenn.edu

"I have learned a lot of what I know about energy economics from Joe Romm."

— Paul Krugman, *NY Times*, 2016

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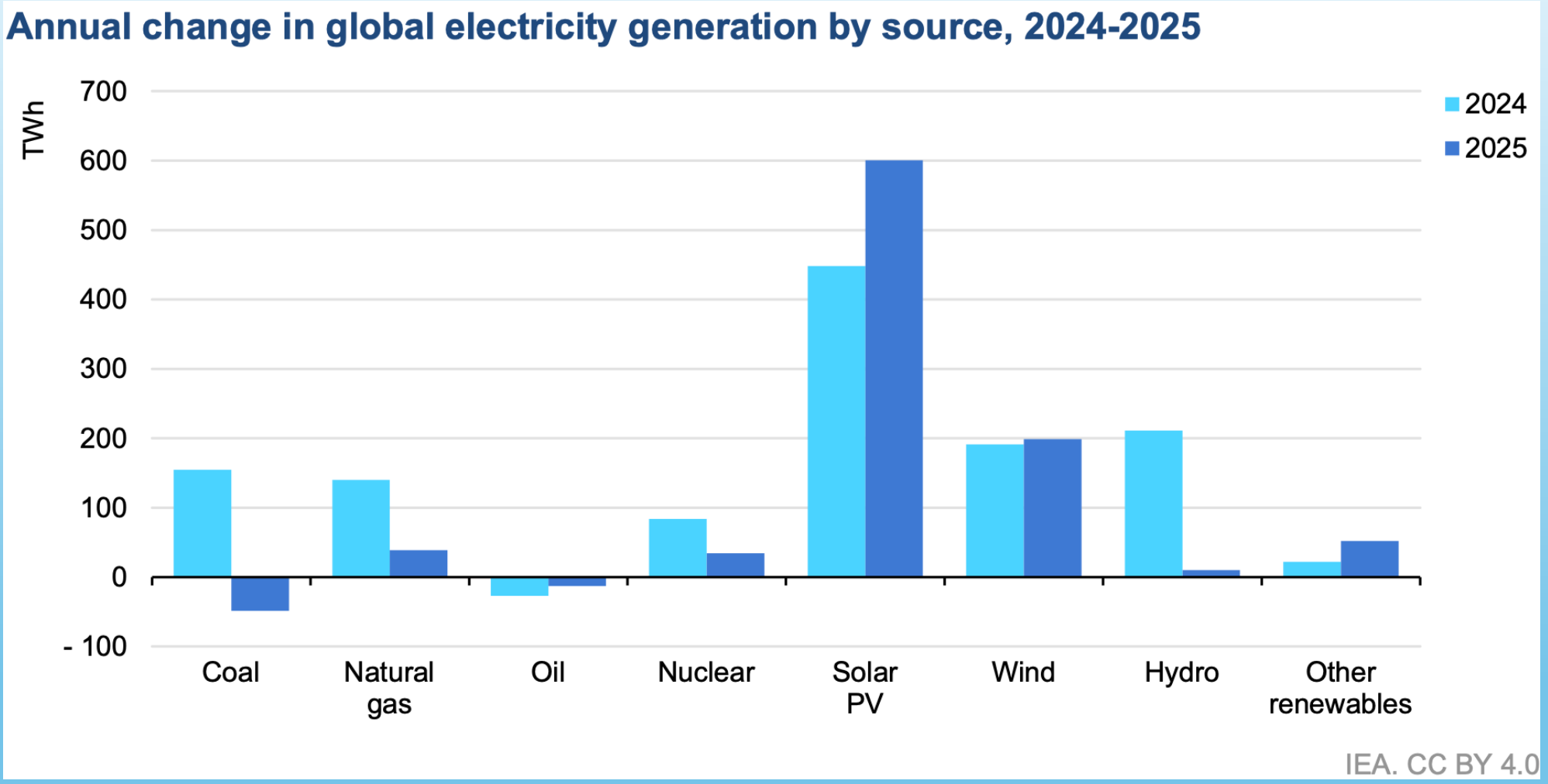
Bill Gates at the Helm

Big Tech campaign to fast track nuke energy

Taken together, Breakthrough entities and the Gates Foundation have given more than $60 million to the key pro-nuclear groups that reshaped policy, the majority since 2022.

The Non-Existent Nuclear Renaissance



Nuclear % Share of global power

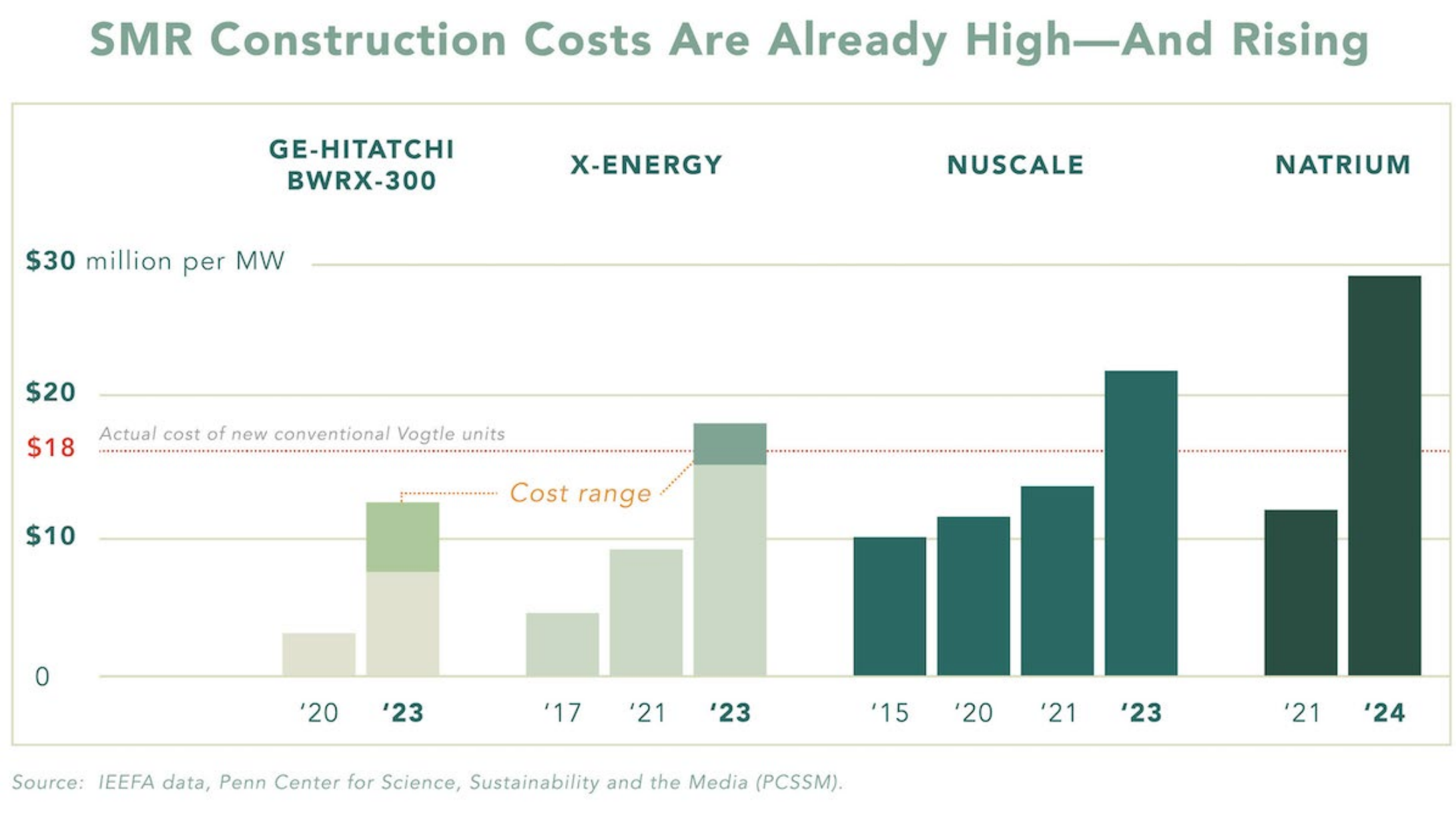
1990s: 17%
2022: 9.2%
2025: 8.9%

Joseph Romm, PCSSM

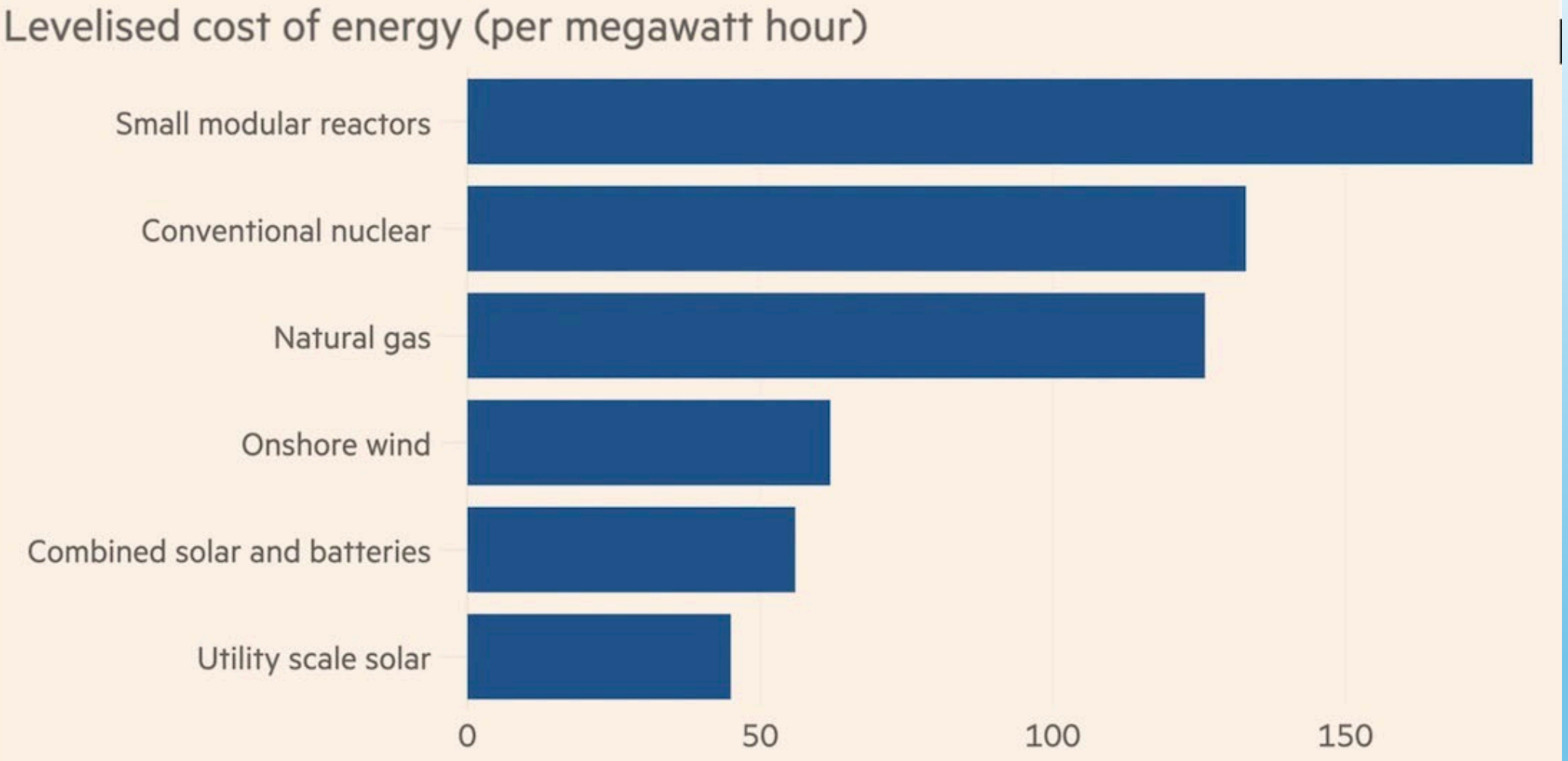
Trump's multi-trillion-dollar nuclear boondoggle

- Trump plans to build more reactors than France + China + ROW
- Electricity prices would soar more than the 25% Georgians saw, which led **to 2 huge upset elections for PSC commissioners**.
- Georgia's $38+ billion Vogtle plant is "the most expensive power plant ever built" with an **"astoundingly high" electricity cost.**
- South Carolina residents paying off $9 billion for 2 never-finished large reactors at VC Summer plant: **Westinghouse Bankruptcy**

U.S. Pursuing 27+ Small Modular Reactor Designs



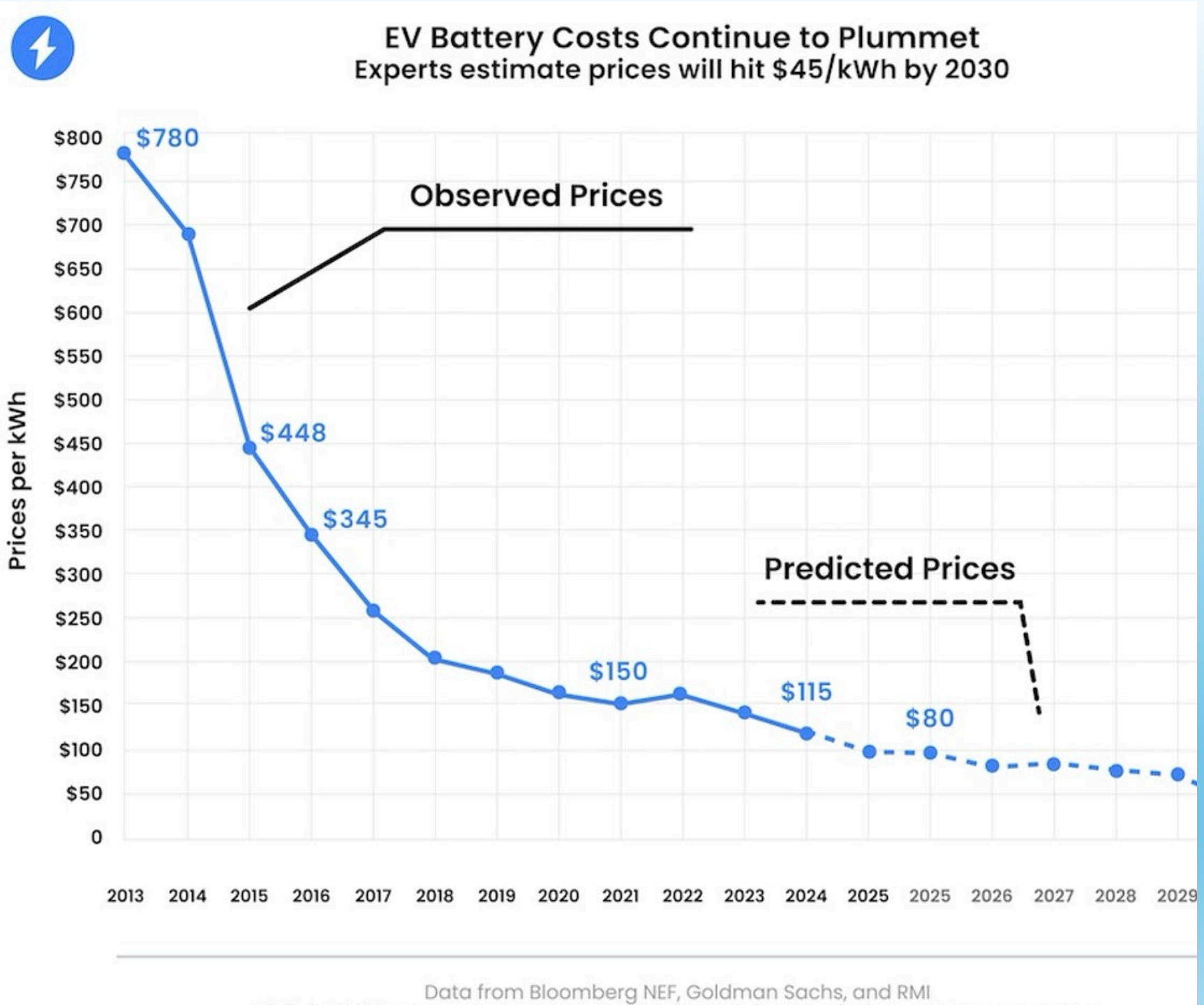
Time To Update Your Priors: Natural Gas Is Expensive *FORBES* 12-7-25



Values are projected US national averages for projects completed and delivered in 2030, based on state-by-state data.
Source: Wood Mackenzie

"US and investors gambling on unproven nuclear technology, warn experts,"
Financial Times, 10-5-25

Joseph Romm
PCSSM



"The economics for batteries are unrecognisable, and the industry is only just getting to grips with this new paradigm. **Solar is no longer just cheap daytime electricity, solar is now anytime dispatchable electricity**."
Ember 12-25

Businessweek | The Big Take

How a Nuclear-Fossil Fuel Alliance Is Winning the Fight for Energy Dominance

North Carolina bill would prop up coal until new nuclear is approved

Canary Media, June 2026

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Slides, additional resources and bios available here:

Amory Lovins

Kimberly Scott

Linda Pentz Gunter

Dr. Joe Romm - pre-recorded on 8/31/2026

Tim Judson

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Independent Council for Safe Energy Fund