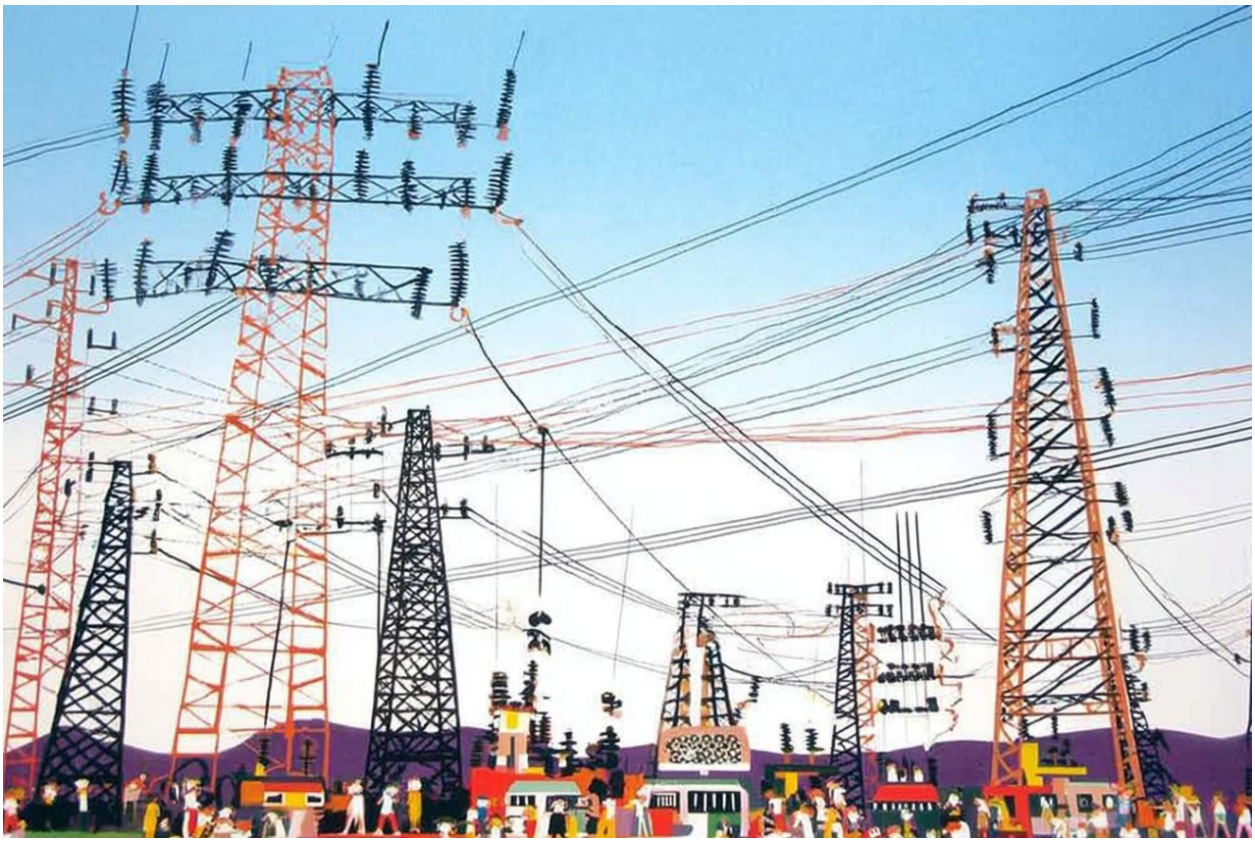
# Five Tests for New England’s Energy Future

— Fred V. Carstensen, 11.12.2026



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The Connecticut Center for Economic Analysis at UConn’s new study, coming out next week, with support from the Connecticut League of Conservation Voters, starts with an open question. How should New England meet rising electricity demand and who will benefit? Because even while Connecticut dramatically expanded natural gas capacity, we still pay among the nation’s highest electricity rates and have seen little measurable job growth or economic buildout.

We reviewed the data to evaluate upcoming policy and investment decisions that should guide our energy future.

Reliability came first. Any combination of resources must be able to keep the lights on through summer peaks, winter cold snaps and stretches with little

wind or sun. Once that is met, we applied the following tests over three time periods – focused solely on financial and economic performance.

1. **All-in cost**. This includes generation, fuel and any pipelines, transmission or storage requirements?
2. **Scale.** Can we add capacity incrementally as demand grows?
3. **Speed**. How sooncan we serve customers?
4. **Risk.** Who bears it if fuel prices spike or a project is needed less than expected?
5. **Connecticut Value.** How much of the investment, spending and employment stays here?

**Through 2030, speed matters.** Beyond existing projects, solar and batteries have the clearest path to being added at scale. Grid connections can delay both. A major gas expansion also faces long waits for turbines and would need firm fuel supplies.

**From 2031 through 2040, technological improvements matter more.** Solar module prices have fallen about 20 percent with each doubling of global deployment, and utility battery costs have fallen about 90 percent since 2010. Those trends give us a strong basis for expecting further gains. Building in stages lets us use the best technologies as new equipment becomes available. Any natural gas expansion locks in legacy technology, exposes ratepayers to near term price risks and stranded costs in the future.

**From 2041 through 2050, the risk of a long-term commitment matters more.** A gas plant or pipeline financed today will still be on customers' bills as Connecticut faces its statutory requirement for zero-carbon electricity by 2040. If the region uses that infrastructure less than projected, who pays the balance? Wind and solar have costs of their own, but sunlight and wind carry no fuel bill. Emerging technologies should give us more choices by then.

Across the three periods, evidence is clear: investing in clean energy resources, deployed in stages as demand grows, is the more affordable and sustainable path forward for New England. Our paper shows that a commitment to green technologies generates significant economic growth and creates jobs. While existing natural gas *will* play a role in reliability as we transition to a renewable grid, **maintaining existing generation is fundamentally different from asking ratepayers to finance an expensive**

**new gas buildout.** This strategic expansion of zero-carbon generation, supported by energy storage, transmission improvements, and programs that reduce peak demand is what the analysis clearly establishes as the best path forward for the ratepayer, the worker, and state finances.

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