

**To:** Jackson, Ryan[jackson.ryan@epa.gov]  
**From:** POLITICO Pro Energy Whiteboard  
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**Subject:** NERC chief: A grid run mostly on renewables is 'technically feasible'

By Darius Dixon

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The technology already exists to run the electric grid largely on renewable energy, though implementing it wouldn't be easy, Gerry Cauley, the CEO of the North American Electric Reliability Corp., told lawmakers this morning.

Cauley was being probed by Texas Rep. [Joe Barton](#), who asked whether it was "possible to meet the same reliability standards if you go to a generation system that is predominantly renewables."

"From what we're seeing, it's technically feasible. There are a lot of new challenges," the NERC chief told a House Energy and Commerce subcommittee.

"Wind and solar do not inherently come with the controls to provide frequency response, voltage response," he said, while noting a logistical problem when California wildfire last year triggered 1,200 megawatts of solar capacity to disconnect from the grid.

"We've been working with the vendors to show them some of those weaknesses," Cauley said. "I think the technology is there today. It just requires a lot of coordination."

FERC Chairman Neil Chatterjee later told reporters that he believed there was some "disagreement" between Cauley and Barton about the reliability impacts of high renewable penetration on the grid. "I'd want more details on that before I speculate," he said.

In a separate line of questioning about global warming impacts on the grid, Cauley said that climate change was outside NERC's expertise but that in his eight years as its CEO he had seen "an increase in the magnitude and severity of events — flooding and so on."

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