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# Groups call on DOE to draw a roadmap for TVA to shift to renewables

*Tim Sylvia*

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TVA currently has no plan to achieve emission-free power and that is frustrating advocacy groups along with a handful of TVA member companies.

July 29, 2021

A coalition of 80 groups, representing interests that range from energy justice to racial justice, is urging the U.S. Department of Energy to release a roadmap detailing how the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) will transition to 100% renewable energy by 2030.

While President Biden has made decarbonizing the U.S. electricity sector by 2035 one of the premier goals of his administration, TVA, a federally owned electric utility corporation, currently has no plan to achieve emission-free power.

TVA has increased its contracted and installed solar capacity in the last 18 months, thanks in part to its Green Invest program and 2020 Request for Proposals for solar capacity. However, the roughly 1 GW that those initiatives have brought to the grid are less than what administration goals would require.



U.S. Secretary of Energy Jennifer M. Granholm

*Image: Department of Energy*

In their letter to Energy Secretary Jennifer Granholm, [the groups said](#) that the most current resource plan shows that TVA will still be producing more than 34 million tons of CO<sub>2</sub> annually in 2038. TVA just recently announced plans to add 1,500 MW of new gas to its resource mix.

Co-signers of the letter said they believe that TVA's energy transition should emphasize community-based and rooftop solar systems, energy efficiency, battery storage, and microgrids to enhance climate resilience. In line with other Biden administration goals, they said any roadmap should ensure union jobs and strong labor standards for workers.

## Growing frustration

The power provider's slow pace in transitioning away from fossil fuels has frustrated renewable energy advocates, as well as some TVA member power companies. A number of those companies have [asked the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission](#) for permission to leave TVA's service umbrella altogether.

Four of those companies—Athens Utilities Board, Gibson Electric

Membership Corporation, Joe Wheeler Electric Membership Corporation, and Volunteer Energy Cooperative—want to break their supply deal with TVA. They allege that the federal entity violated Section 211 A(b) of the Federal Power Act.



Legendary frontiersman Kit Carson once blazed trails throughout the West.

*Image Pinterest*

Section 211 allows any electric utility, federal power marketing agency, or any other person generating electric energy for sale for resale to apply to FERC for an order requiring a utility to provide transmission services. The section also allows FERC to redress discriminatory practices being made by transmitting utilities.

The companies alleged that their supply deal with TVA is discriminatory as long as TVA has a generation portfolio skewed toward fossil fuels and relatively lacking in renewables. They are asking to be freed from their supply deals so they can pursue electricity agreements from renewable resources.

## Precedent

TVA member companies are not alone in seeking to move away from fossil fuel-heavy generating companies. New Mexico's Kit Carson Electric Cooperative [provided an early model in 2016](#) with

its \$37-million buyout of a contract with Tri-State Generation & Transmission. In that instance, Denver-based Guzman Energy helped with the initial financing and later partnered with Kit Carson to build a solar portfolio.

The letter also was directed to Martin Keller, director of the National Renewable Energy, and asked that a transitional roadmap be developed through NREL or other authority. The letter noted NREL's recent work to [create a roadmap for Los Angeles](#) to follow to achieve 100% renewable energy by mid-century. It also pointed to the Hawaii Clean Energy Initiative which aims to advance distributed energy to transform Hawaii's energy system to 100% clean energy by 2045.

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