

2026 POLICY GUIDES

Energy Priorities

Issue

The demand for energy is growing exponentially due to the information technology (IT) age. At the same time, the demand for energy continues to grow both for agriculture and the rest of the state and nation's economy. Working to ensure we have the capacity to meet future energy needs while at the same time balancing the many challenges that go along with that must continue to be examined.

Background

Food security is a matter of human health and national security. Agriculture is Nebraska's No. 1 industry. Energy needs for our agricultural sector have historically been met, though competing demands for electricity have grown over the years and will continue to grow tremendously.

Few areas are changing as rapidly as our energy supplies and related demand. Energy production continues to shift as businesses, such as tech companies and other large energy users, commit to using 100% renewable energy.

Meeting future energy demands may be more challenging. As we rely on the internet to process, use and store more data, the power it uses is increasing. Some experts estimate that the IT industry is already using more than 20% of all electricity produced in the world.

Nebraska law, which operates through consumer-owned public power entities, prioritizes residential customers for electricity, especially during shortages. Under executive orders during emergencies, power providers are authorized to take actions to protect the grid and ensure continued service to critical infrastructure, with residential needs taking high priority.

While residential users have priority, new laws (LB 1261 enacted in 2026) promote large industrial customers having localized private generation to reduce strain on the main grid, which can reduce the need for widespread cuts.

Farm Bureau Policy

ALTERNATIVE ENERGY (2026). We support net billing using avoided costs to pay for electric generation. We believe the use of alternative energies should fit within a comprehensive framework tied to goals and objectives developed by the State of Nebraska. Alternative energy usage must also fit within the state's public power structure. We support increasing the threshold for net metering on privately owned renewable energy projects from 25KW to at least 100KW.

We support non-grant programs that promote before-the-meter power generation and storage.

ELECTRIC INFRASTRUCTURE (2026). We support continued development of modular nuclear reactors located at the site of major electrical consumers or close to major transmission lines to provide flexibility and redundancy to our current electric infrastructure.

We support public power electric generation prioritizing Nebraska households, agriculture, and businesses in that order before entering the Southwest Power Pool.

Questions

- With changes like LB 1261, do Nebraska's laws adequately ensure that food production is properly prioritized?
- Should there be different priorities for the use of public and privately generated electricity when the demand is too great to be met?
- Does Nebraska Farm Bureau need policy that ensures that production agriculture can meet the state's food needs in emergencies?