



Breakout Session

10:45 - 11:45 AM

Africa 80

Panel

Moderated by Denise Bode

Featuring John Bode, Rob Gramlich, and Todd Stuart

Rising Grid Instability: A Key Driver of Escalating Food Industry Costs and Consumer Prices

Ensuring grid reliability is essential for maintaining the stability of American manufacturing and controlling consumer costs. As extreme weather events intensify and transition risks grow, proactive steps are necessary to address these evolving challenges and safeguard grid resilience. This is particularly critical for U.S. food producers and processors, who face increasing pressure from foreign competition. In 2023, the United States became a net food importer for the first time in history, a trend the USDA projects will continue. This shift has already led to the closure of numerous American food processing facilities, underscoring the urgent need for reliable infrastructure.

Bios:

John Bode

John is a member of the Agricultural Policy Advisory Committee, providing trade policy advice to the Administration. John has been involved in every significant federal food law change since 1981. In private practice, he counseled leading food and agriculture trade associations and companies regarding legislative and regulatory policy, compliance and congressional investigations. He served as lead counsel for several of the nation's largest food recalls and general counsel for leading food trade associations. John served in three Presidential appointments at the U.S. Department of Agriculture, on the staff of the U.S. Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry, and with Oklahoma Governor David Boren. Born in Oklahoma City, John attended the United States Naval Academy and the University of Oklahoma, receiving his B.A. in 1977 and his J.D. from George Mason University School of Law in 1983.



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Bios:

Rob Gramlich

Rob Gramlich is President of Grid Strategies LLC, a Washington DC-based consultancy focused on transmission and power markets for a reliable, affordable, and sustainable power system. He co-founded Americans for a Clean Energy Grid, Working for Advanced Transmission Technologies (WATT Coalition), Advancing Modern Powerlines, the Macro Grid Initiative, and the Future Power Markets Forum. Rob has been invited to testify by both parties before Congress, FERC, and state agencies. Rob previously oversaw transmission and power market policy for the American Wind Energy Association as SVP and Interim CEO, served as Economic Advisor to FERC Chairman Pat Wood III, and was Senior Economist at PJM Interconnection. Rob has a Master of Public Policy (MPP) degree from UC Berkeley and a BA with Honors in Economics from Colby College.

Todd Stuart

Todd Stuart is the Executive Director of the Wisconsin Industrial Energy Group, Inc. (WIEG), a non-profit organization advocating for large energy consumers in Wisconsin. WIEG represents 25 businesses that are vital to the state's economy, working to ensure affordable and reliable energy. WIEG testifies before the Wisconsin State Legislature, the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin (PSCW), and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources on behalf of large ratepayers. WIEG's efforts on behalf of large energy users has led to significant results. In the last thirteen years, investor-owned utility rate hike requests have been reduced by 40% and roughly \$1.4 billion. He holds a B.S. and M.B.A. from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and has been appointed to several state task forces on energy policy.