

Saskatchewan looking into whether Ottawa's emissions policy can be blocked, Moe says

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REGINA — Saskatchewan Premier Scott Moe says the province may not go along with an incoming federal emission policy that he believes would make it difficult to keep the lights on.

Moe did not provide details Tuesday on what he might do to potentially block Ottawa's clean electricity standards, but said more information is to be shared in the coming weeks.

"We're going to continue to chart Saskatchewan's path," he told reporters after speaking at the Williston Basin Petroleum Conference in Regina. "It may not necessarily be Canada's path, and we'll have more details on that in the coming weeks."

Moe said Saskatchewan can't meet potential requirements that may be set out through the federal government's clean electricity standards.

The standards say emissions from electrical generation should be net-zero by 2035 and that conventional coal be phased out by 2030.

The premier said he's concerned these changes could result in Saskatchewan being forced to close natural gas electrical plants in the province by 2035, leaving many ratepayers in the dark and causing utility bills to spike.

He's also worried the province's only coal plant that captures carbon would have to close.

"If you think about where the city of Saskatoon receives their power, Jan. 1, 2035, is a very cold morning in Saskatoon because the lights won't come on and the furnace fans won't work," Moe said.

Saskatchewan relies heavily on natural gas and coal for its electrical grid, and the province has spent hundreds of millions of dollars in building new natural gas plants.

Moe said SaskPower, the Crown utility responsible for electricity in the province, is prepared to meet net-zero emissions by 2050.

He said Saskatchewan can use nuclear, natural gas, solar and wind energy in the future to lower the province's overall emissions and meet targets.

"It's about what's affordable and about what's possible versus some ideological policy that may come from another level of government," he said. "We're going to (green our power grid) in a way that ensures that we have sustainable supply and in a way that continues our plan to net zero by 2050."

The federal government was not immediately available for comment.

The clean electricity standards are currently under development as Ottawa looks to reduce Canada's emissions to fight climate change and create jobs through the green-energy sector.

A discussion paper on the standards states natural gas plants could be considered low-emitters if they capture carbon. Non-emitters include renewables such as solar, wind and nuclear.

The federal government has said it has been



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consulting with provinces about potential changes.

NDP energy critic Aleana Young agreed the federal government is moving too fast with the clean electrical standards, saying 2035 isn't realistic.

However, she said Moe's rhetoric over power plants being forced to close is "unhelpful."

"I don't quite know what to make of it other than fear mongering," she said. "If the plan was to turn off all natural gas plants in seven years, I would have serious questions for this government about why they just invested three quarters of \$1 billion in more natural gas plants."

Moe said plans to potentially not go along with the clean electricity standards aren't meant to be a fight.

He argued Ottawa is making the same decisions that were made in Europe, which is now struggling for reliable and stable sources of power since Russia invaded Ukraine.

"(That's) not going to happen in Saskatchewan. We're going to be using every tool that we have as a province to ensure that yes, we're reducing emissions, but we're also making sure that we have a sustainable power supply," he said.

Young said the province has been slow to act on adding more renewables to the grid and has been relying on more electrical imports.

She said there's "huge untapped opportunities" for homeowners, farms, businesses and communities to create power-generation co-ops.

"That would reduce the demand for electricity, empower people and also ensure that, come what may with federal standards, we're able to meet the challenge in the best position that we can," she said.

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