

Analysis: The Costs Ratepayers May Pay to Keep the Stanton Coal Plant Running Past Retirement

On June 4, 2026, the Trump administration [issued an illegal emergency order](#) to keep **Unit 1 at the Curtis H. Stanton Coal Plant in Orlando, Florida** open past its scheduled retirement date for 90 days. The unit was scheduled to be retired at the end of May 2026 and replaced with natural gas and solar resources.

The costs to Central Florida families and businesses

Financial reports from the owner of the Stanton Plant, the Orlando Utilities Commission (OUC), reveal that coal has been its [highest-cost fuel](#) per-megawatt-hour in recent years, costing more than natural gas and the cost of purchasing solar power. Because OUC already had a plan to replace the plant with lower-cost resources, continuing to operate Stanton adds unnecessary costs that Central Florida families and businesses may ultimately be asked to pay.



Figure 1: Photo Credit: Rusty Clark, Flickr

Based on [data](#) from the Rocky Mountain Institute, **Stanton Unit 1 is estimated to cost of \$6.2 million each month to run.** OUC's 288,492 residential and commercial [customers](#) will have to cover the full costs of continuing to operate the plant if other Florida utilities successfully argue that their customers should not have to pay for extending Stanton's operation because they do not receive power from the plant.

If OUC does pass those costs onto its customers, the increase would average \$21 per month per ratepayer. This added cost burden could arrive during the hottest months of the year, when air-conditioning use drives up electricity bills.

If the emergency order is extended—as has been done with other coal plants including the [J.H. Campbell plant](#) which has been ordered to run for over a year—Central Florida families and businesses will face these costs month after month. If Stanton Unit 1 is ordered to run for a year, **it would raise electricity bills by an average of \$257 per ratepayer.**

Florida electricity costs are already high

The Stanton extension arrives as many Floridians feel the squeeze from rising electricity costs. A majority of Florida voters said their electricity bill has caused at least some financial stress over the past year, according to a [recent poll](#). With a state average monthly residential electric bill of \$156.09,¹ Floridians have the tenth-most expensive electricity

¹ Energy Information Administration, Electric Sales, Revenue, and Average Price Summary Table T5.a: [2024 Average Monthly Bill – Residential](#)

bills in the country, according to data from the [Energy Information Administration](#). The average residential Orlando Utilities Commission (OUC) customer bill increased 22% between 2020 and 2025. These increases may be compounded for some of the nearly 2 million low-and-moderate income households in Florida are at risk for energy insecurity, according to data from a 2023 [report](#) commissioned by EDF.

Floridians' high electricity bills were already predicted to rise due to the state's overreliance on natural gas. This leaves customers extremely [vulnerable](#) to the risks of the global natural gas market, as they bear the full cost when prices jump.

The costs of other “emergency” orders

The Department of Energy order mandating the extension of Stanton follows [orders](#) that have kept aging coal plants in Michigan, Indiana, Colorado and Washington open past their scheduled retirements. DOE has repeatedly claimed the extensions are necessary to meet growing electricity demand; however, many of the extended coal plants have [ended up failing](#) or [have not generated power at all](#) during the supposed “emergency” periods.

The high costs of keeping these aging coal plants online are mounting—and are being passed on directly to already-overburdened consumers. The continued operation of the J.H. Campbell coal plant in Michigan, one of the coal plants mandated by DOE to remain online since May 2025, has already cost families and businesses over [\\$180 million dollars](#)—over \$600,000 a day—just through the end of March 2026 and these costs continue to grow every day. The owner of the Michigan plant has already filed to recover some of those costs from ratepayers across 11 states in the Midwest. An [independent analysis by Grid Strategies](#) found that, if the administration forces coal plants across the country to continue operating, it could **cost ratepayers between \$3.1 billion to \$5.9 billion per year**.

According to a recent Sierra Club [analysis](#), the forced operation of these coal plants amounts to nearly **\$1.5 million per day**.

| Coal Plant | State | Estimated net cost per day |
|-------------------------------|------------|----------------------------|
| J.H. Campbell units 1, 2, & 3 | Michigan | \$605,381 |
| Craig unit 1 | Colorado | \$218,467 |
| Centralia unit 2 | Washington | \$220,692 |
| R. M. Schahfer units 17 & 18 | Indiana | \$173,944 |
| Stanton Energy Station unit 1 | Florida | \$233,560 |
| Total | | \$1,452,044 |

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