

Governor Cox and Alpen Associates Discuss 'Operation Gigawatt' Strategy to Secure Utah's Energy Superabundance

By Scott Cuthbertson

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File Photo: Governor Spencer J. Cox

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

From Scarcity to Superabundance: Governor Cox has rejected calls to scale back energy production, focusing instead on building a surplus of affordable power to support Utah's growth and emerging technologies like artificial intelligence. Through **Operation Gigawatt**, Utah is accelerating a strategic mix of next-generation nuclear, geothermal, and natural gas to ensure clean, reliable baseload power.

"Utah refused to accept false choices. The nation will look to Utah as the model for building a complete, domestic energy ecosystem that actually works."

— Governor Spencer J. Cox

INTRODUCTION

Scott Cuthbertson: Governor, it's a pleasure to discuss Utah's energy future with you. In our work at Alpen Associates, we help leaders making complex capital investments, and right now, energy is the number one topic on everyone's mind. It's the literal "fuel" for our industrial growth. You've been a vocal advocate for moving beyond just "getting by" to a future of energy superabundance through your "Operation Gigawatt" vision.

THE VISION

1. When did you first recognize the need for Operation Gigawatt, and what factors convinced you that Utah was ready for such an ambitious statewide energy initiative?

Governor Cox: The need for more energy became clear when we looked honestly at where the world is headed. Utah is growing, the economy is evolving, and energy demand is accelerating, especially with technologies like artificial intelligence and the electrification of transport. Too often, the response has been to ask people to scale back. I reject that approach. Utah was ready because we have the resources, the talent, and the will to build.

2. Where do you believe Utah now holds the strongest competitive advantage in energy, and what additional opportunities do you see for the state to lead nationally in energy innovation?

Gov. Cox: Utah has a diverse energy portfolio, a regulatory environment that values speed, and a culture of responsibility. We are exploring the addition of more geothermal, next-generation nuclear, natural gas, and battery storage. The Utah San Rafael Energy Lab is a unique asset that allows us to align research with state priorities. Putting electrons on the grid here will lower costs for Americans; energy is the fuel innovation and manufacturing run on.

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TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION

3. Under your administration, Utah has emerged as a credible leader in nuclear energy. How do you see advanced nuclear technologies shaping Utah's long-term energy mix?

Gov. Cox: Advanced nuclear provides the dependable, clean baseload power a growing economy requires. By building a full nuclear ecosystem, we're creating high-paying jobs and positioning Utah as a long-term energy exporter.

4. How do you see rural Utah contributing to and benefiting from this transition?

Gov. Cox: Rural Utah powered the past, and it will power our future. From geothermal innovation in Milford to repurposing existing energy sites, rural areas are central to this goal. We want stable tax bases and the ability for families to succeed where they live.

5. What do you think Utah's 'new social contract' around energy should look like?

Gov. Cox: The foundation hasn't changed: reliable, affordable energy that keeps communities healthy. What *is* changing is the technology. Utah balances growth and stewardship; new technologies will enhance our ability to generate more power with less drain on natural resources.

SECURITY & LEGACY

6. As global competition for energy and minerals intensifies, what role do you see Utah playing in the national energy-security landscape?

Gov. Cox: Through Operation Gigawatt, we're building the capacity needed to power the next generation of American industry right here at home. That reduces dependence on unstable supply chains and strengthens the entire country.

7. What will be Utah's energy identity 20 years from now?

Gov. Cox: They'll say Utah refused to accept false choices. The nation will look to Utah as the model for building a complete, domestic energy ecosystem that actually works.

Scott Cuthbertson: Governor, thank you for your time and for outlining a vision that moves us into a mindset of building.

About Alpen Associates: Alpen Associates is a Utah-based boutique management consultancy advising leaders on complex capital investment projects and economic development programs.

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