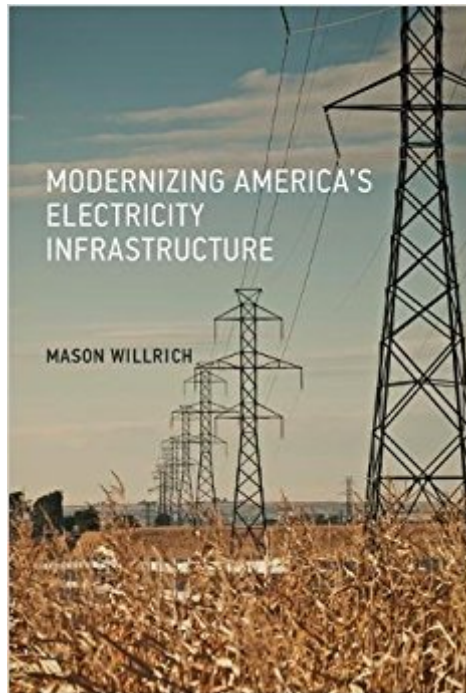




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Modernizing America's Electricity Infrastructure (MIT Press)



Synopsis

America's aging electricity infrastructure is deteriorating rapidly even as the need for highly reliable electric service -- driven by the explosion of digital technology -- continues to rise. Largely missing from national discussions, however, is a coherent, comprehensive national strategy for modernizing this critical infrastructure. Energy expert Mason Willrich presents just such a strategy in this book, connecting the dots across electric utilities, independent suppliers, government bureaucracies, political jurisdictions, and academic disciplines. He explains the need for a coherent approach, offers a framework for analyzing policy options, and proposes a step-by-step strategy for modernizing electrical infrastructure, end-to-end, in a way that ensures the delivery of affordable, reliable, secure, and environmentally sustainable electricity services. Willrich argues that an effective electrical infrastructure modernization strategy must incorporate flexibility, adaptability, and the capacity to coordinate policies at local, state, and federal levels. He reviews the history of America's electrification, from Edison's demonstration of the incandescent light bulb through the recent expansion of wind, solar, and energy efficiency as carbon-free energy resources. He describes the current ownership and operation of the electric industry and the complicated web of federal and state policies that govern it.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Mason Willrich draws on a lifetime of experience and his innate common sense to provide an

important strategy for dealing with our electricity infrastructure. Read and learn. (George P. Shultz, Thomas W. and Susan B. Ford Distinguished Fellow and Chairman, Energy Policy Task Force, Hoover Institution, Stanford University) Even experts will learn much, and nonexperts far more, from this magisterial and admirably clear overview of America's electricity system by one of its most distinguished experts. (Amory B. Lovins, Cofounder and Chief Scientist, Rocky Mountain Institute; lead author of *Small Is Profitable*, *Brittle Power*, and *Reinventing Fire*) Mason Willrich provides us with a compelling model for modernizing the U.S. electric power infrastructure to take full advantage of no- and low-carbon generation technologies. Firmly grounded in history, industry economics, and technological innovation, this is a book that everyone should read. (Paul L. Joskow, President, Alfred P. Sloan Foundation; Elizabeth and James Killian Professor of Economics, Emeritus, MIT) Mason Willrich is a leading expert on energy issues, and emphasizes the importance of the electricity sector to the country and everyone's lives. He points out that investments in energy infrastructure and modernizing the energy grid need to be a national priority in order to ensure that we retain reliable, affordable, secure, and increasingly clean energy. Although some of Mason's recommendations are controversial, and I disagree with some of them, the book is a great read. (Thomas R. Kuhn, President, Edison Electric Institute, association representing all U.S. investor-owned electric companies) The power grid is the most important physical-cyber system on the planet, and what Mason Willrich has done here is no less than to provide us a brilliant — a theoretical and practical guide to its vitally needed upgrade for the 21st century. (Daniel Kammen, Professor, University of California, Berkeley; Science Envoy, U.S. State Department)

Mason Willrich is an independent energy consultant. During a distinguished career of more than five decades, he has worked as a senior executive in the electric utility industry and the independent power industry as well as in academia and the U.S. government. His books include *Energy and World Politics* and *Non-Proliferation Treaty: Framework for Nuclear Arms Control*.

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