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Letter: Buffalo should embrace SolarCity, Tesla merger

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Western New York, like most of the country, is experiencing one of the hottest summers on record. As much as we like to enjoy our outdoor activities, the extreme temperatures drive many to the comforts of our climate-controlled housing. Air conditioning, our relief from the heat, puts a strain on our electricity system with effects that are under-reported in the news media. SolarCity and its new owners will be part of the solution to rising energy consumption and distribution issues.

The Northeast Blackout of 2003 left 55 million people without power due to simple human error. What if the next widespread power outage is not caused by an uncorrected circuit error but by demand from users exceeding the peak capacity of the system? Power supply in Texas, spiked by 100-plus-degree temperatures, set four peak load records and came close to exceeding the peak demand that the system is rated for by the utility. What happens when more power is consumed than power generation facilities can produce?

The merger between SolarCity and Tesla is bringing together two technologies that will both solve the peak power issues of the utility and reduce the costs to the consumer. SolarCity brings the benefit of an energy production system that is most efficient at the same time that power consumption is at its highest. Tesla provides an energy storage system that can save energy produced at off-peak hours and release it when is needed.

The vision of Tesla CEO Elon Musk is far beyond the marketing of high performance electric automobiles. Buffalo should embrace the news of the SolarCity-Tesla merger as the city and region stand to be in the forefront of a key industry of the near future.

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