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THE OCTOBER 2006 ENERGY PICTURE IN NORTH CAROLINA

North Carolina electric rates are rising fast to pay rising coal, gas and uranium fuel costs. Low-cost energy efficiency and home-grown renewable energy will cost ratepayers less than building new power plants, but our electric utilities are proposing new plants without first implementing energy efficiency measures that might make the plants unnecessary.

- Using electricity **EFFICIENTLY** means getting the same result while using less electricity. Compact fluorescent light bulbs, for example, use 75% less energy while producing the same amount of light as an equivalent incandescent bulb.
- Energy **CONSERVATION** means reducing the use of energy by avoiding consumption—by turning lights off and using fewer electrical appliances, for example.
- Clean, safe **RENEWABLE ENERGY SOURCES** include wind, solar and landfill methane. Conventional sources are coal and nuclear generation.

Most of the electricity we use in our homes is generated by coal-fired power plants. We import coal from other states such as West Virginia, where mountain-top removal mining destroys the natural landscape and robs mountain people of the land and waters that have sustained their families for generations. The money North Carolina spends for coal enriches the higher-ups and stock owners of these damaging mining corporations, not the people losing their personal inheritance and the beauty of their mountains.

Consequences of coal burning to North Carolina:

1. The resulting mercury contamination makes it dangerous to eat fish caught in many North Carolina streams and lakes.
2. Particulate matter released as coal is burned contributes to high asthma rates among children and the elderly.
3. Emissions such as carbon dioxide (CO₂) contribute to global warming pollution.

Climate Connection: Interfaith Eco-Justice Network advocates energy efficiency, energy conservation, and clean, safe renewable power generation and NO NEW POWER PLANTS. Energy efficiency and the use of renewable sources saves ratepayer dollars, protects the health of people and ecosystems, and strengthens local economies.

Rather than employing efficiency and renewables, at this time Duke Energy is proposing to build one of the nation's largest coal plants at its Cliffside site in Western North Carolina. It would add two 800 megawatt units to the existing 760 MW Cliffside pulverized coal plant in Rutherford County for a total 2160 megawatt capacity. While Duke has not published projections of coal use, comparable sized plants usually burn over 5 million tons of coal a year. This facility will be a major source of global warming pollution and will emit large amounts of the toxic heavy metal mercury. The bottom line is that if this plant is built, it will ***lock North Carolina into a dirty energy future – dependent on coal from mountain top removal mining for the next fifty years.***

There is a better way. The Cliffside expansion will cost two billion dollars. It costs more than 4 cents per kilowatt-hour to create electricity in a coal or nuclear plant but only 3 cents per kWh to finance energy efficiency programs for ratepayers. Appalachian State University calculates that energy efficiency programs in North Carolina could save \$3 billion per year and support over 150,000 jobs paying an average salary of \$42,000.

Energy efficiency, energy conservation and safe, clean renewable energy generation can save us money, improve our health, create jobs, enhance national security and protect the Creation!

Let's use our POWER as citizens and consumers to demand CLEAN SAFE POWER choices! (over)

- **Counted as a nation, among the world's nations North Carolina would be the world's 34th largest emitter of greenhouse gases causing climate change.** (US Environmental Protection Agency)
- **Electric utilities and their customers produce 42% of those emissions.** (US Environmental Protection Agency)
- **North Carolina's electric utilities rank 46th in the U.S. in using low-cost energy efficiency, but our utilities are leading the nation in proposing expensive new power plants.** (American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy.)

The new units that Duke Energy is proposing to build at its Cliffside site in Western North Carolina will emit approximately these amounts of toxic substances:

- 11.7 million tons of new carbon dioxide (the leading global warming pollutant)
- 13,766 tons of sulfur dioxide (causes regional haze and particulate matter)
- 1,741 tons of PM10 (causes heart and lung damage)
- 5,531 tons of nitrogen oxide (causes ozone smog)
- 10,327 tons of carbon monoxide (lethal in confined spaces)
- 580 pounds of mercury (a potent neurotoxin, one gram can contaminate a lake)

At this time, the highly respected Legislative Commission on Global Warming is meeting to study how climate change—a threat that scientific studies are rapidly demonstrating as real—may impact North Carolina. The Commission is charged with recommending solutions to reduce global warming, and commonly these include mandatory limits on emissions by all power users and the establishment of a carbon regulated market in which reduction of emissions will be rewarded and failure to reduce will be punished by monetary penalties.

In a carbon-regulated market system, whether at the state or national level, the cost of power plants to utility companies and ratepayers will significantly increase. Given the great likelihood of future carbon regulations, it is unrealistic for Duke Energy not to factor in the cost implications of regulating carbon (often called “carbon risk”). Utility company executives are well aware of the need to control global warming pollution, and Duke is attempting to build this plant before carbon regulations are instituted. **They hope to slip one by North Carolinians by grandfathering this plant in – just as they did with the Clean Air Act in the 1990's.**

Why are public officials allowing our electric utilities to build more power plants, while making superficial commitments to energy efficiency and opposing renewable energy? Our state leaders need to do their duty to us, the electric ratepayers, by choosing energy solutions that provide economic benefit throughout the state, not just jobs in a few counties and profits for a handful of utility executives and shareholders.

Steps we the people can take:

1. Sign the “Petition for Meeting North Carolina’s New Electricity Demand Through Energy Efficiency and Renewable Power Generation” at the Peace Booth.
2. Contact the North Carolina Utilities Commission directly and tell them that Duke Power should not be allowed to build their new power plants until they prove in their Integrated Resource Plan that they cannot meet energy demands through efficiency and clean energy. **Email the Chair of the Commission, Jo Ann Sanford, at sanford@ncuc.net or call the Commission Complaint line at 866-380-9816.**

The mandate of the North Carolina Utilities Commission is to promote energy conservation, least cost energy planning, and fairly regulate power companies in the interest of the public good.

3. Take the pledge! Sign Climate Connection’s “I will reduce my energy use” card at the Peace Booth, saying **“I will reduce my energy use by 10% in one year!”** Climate Connection of the North Carolina Council of Churches and Interfaith Power & Light will use these cards with the Utilities Commission and General Assembly to demonstrate that ordinary people are committed to a personal strategy of energy conservation.

Thank you for your help in protecting public health, safety and economic well being!
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