

Melnykovych, Andrew (PSC)

From: Melnykovych, Andrew (PSC)
Sent: Monday, August 20, 2012 12:52 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Your comments in Case 2012-00063: Big Rivers Environmental Compliance Plan

Dear Mr. Taylor:

Thank you for your comments regarding the environmental compliance plan and environmental surcharge proposed by Big Rivers Electric Corp. Your comments will be placed into the case file for the Commission's review as it considers this matter. For your reference, the case number in this matter is 2012-00063. Please cite it in any future correspondence regarding this case so that your comments may be readily directed to the case file.

Thank you again for your interest.

Andrew Melnykovych
Director of Communications
Kentucky Public Service Commission
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Frankfort, KY 40601
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By Kentucky Public Service Commission at 12:55 pm, Aug 20, 2012

-----Original Message-----

From: PSC - Public Information Officer
Sent: Tuesday, August 14, 2012 5:59 PM
To: Melnykovych, Andrew (PSC)
Subject: FW: Hearing on Big Rivers Environmental Compliance Plan

From: Ben Taylor[S [REDACTED]]
Sent: Tuesday, August 14, 2012 5:59:06 PM
To: PSC - Public Information Officer
Subject: Hearing on Big Rivers Environmental Compliance Plan Auto forwarded by a Rule

KY Public Service Commission

Dear Sirs,

I am a customer of Kenergy in Daviess County. I would have liked to have attended today's hearing in Henderson, but was unable to do so. Please consider this e-mail as 'written comments' in regard to this case.

I live on a farm near Maceo (where I grew up) that has been in my family since 1832, having retired from a career as a research scientist in 2000. I consider myself an environmentalist. I support the effort of the EPA to clean up air and water pollution resulting from the heavy reliance on coal for electrical power generation in our region.

When I read about Big Rivers' plans for complying with recently adopted EPA regulations for coal-fired power plants I was disappointed that they essentially plan to continue to rely almost exclusively on burning coal. They do propose to convert one small coal plant (Reid) to natural gas. If I understand correctly, this plant has been off-line, so rather than reducing coal usage, conversion to natural gas will, in effect, be burning a small amount of natural gas in addition

the the large amount of coal used in the rest of its fleet of plants. Moreover, the plan does not include any effort to reduce reliance on fossil fuels.

In recent years, there has been a dramatic shift from coal to natural gas as a source of electricity in the US. This shift has happened for two reasons: 1) a sharp sustained decline in the price of natural gas, and 2) natural gas is cleaner burning than coal. Sadly, Kentucky seems to be determined to continue to rely on coal as long as possible.

The world presently faces the threat of runaway global warming due the vast amounts of greenhouse gases released into the atmosphere, primarily as the result of burning fossil fuels, and to a lesser extent other human activities such as the destruction of forests.

Despite the accumulating scientific evidence linking fossil fuel burning to warmer global surface temperatures, and the alarming consequences of warming on record heat waves, droughts, wildfires, desertification, torrential rainfall, flooding, violent storms, melting ice sheets, rising seas, acidification of the ocean, and declining populations of vulnerable animals and plants, most of the world (and the US in particular) have been slow to accept the reality and seriousness of the climate threat and to take even modest prudent measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Instead, the American public have been led to doubt the scientific consensus by a cynical public relations and lobbying campaign funded by the fossil fuel industry.

Although the effects of global warming are all too easy to see, this is nothing compared to what future generations will face. A sobering example is the billion people in Asia who depend on annual snowmelt from the Himalayas to maintain river flow during the dry season for irrigation, domestic water supply, industrial uses, and replenishment of aquifers. If some of the precipitation from monsoons falling on the mountains is no longer stored in the form of ice and snow, and then released slowly, a billion (mostly poor) people will be forced to migrate or die. (A similar scenario will play out in the arid American Southwest and elsewhere.) Wealthy countries, such as ours, that burned vast amounts of fossil fuels to support our 'lifestyle' will be blamed, and with considerable justification.

There is abundant natural gas available at attractive prices. When burned, coal generates roughly twice the amount of CO₂ as natural gas on an equivalent BTU basis. (Coal burning also produces nitrogen oxides that are potent greenhouse gases.) Moreover, modern natural gas turbines are highly efficient. Like a jet engine, they compress the gas and air before it is ignited; the explosive force of this combustion spins a rotor connected to a generator. Heat from the exhaust gases creates steam to drive a second generator, creating additional power. In coal plants, most of the energy is wasted.

Unlike coal plants, natural gas plants can be ramped up quickly to meet fluctuating demand, making it ideal for complementing variable renewable sources like wind and solar which are expected to be increasingly important in the future.

I believe the PSC has a responsibility to assure that utilities protect public safety while fulfilling their mission of providing reliable and affordable energy to the public. Burning vast amounts of coal and dumping the resulting greenhouse gases into the atmosphere is a reckless practice that will assure increasing amounts of human misery and premature death in the coming decades and centuries. At 71, I won't live to see the worst of it. My children, and my grandchildren, especially, may.

Since the end of the last ice age about 12,000 years ago, humans have populated most of the globe, established civilizations, developed complex industrial societies, and even begun exploring space. Why destroy the favorable climate that supported this amazing story - on the only planet humans will ever call home?

"A good planet is hard to find."

Sincerely,

Benjamin A. Taylor
419 Yelvington-Grandview Road
Maceo, KY 42355

