

EW-2004-0596

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From: Vince Magers [mailto:vincemagers@yahoo.com]

Sent: Monday, August 16, 2004 10:40 PM

To: pscinfo@psc.mo.gov

Subject: Attn: Commissioner Steve Gaw

Mr. Gaw,

I am writing pertaining to the Public Service Commission's current discussions and process regarding the coal-fired power plant proposed by Great Plains Power.

I live about 30 miles south of the proposed site in Platte County. For my family, this is very much a health and quality of life concern. My wife and son were both diagnosed with asthma before we moved to this area about five years ago. Since then the frequency and severity of their asthma problems have worsened. As you probably are aware Platte and Clay County are now classified as having the worst ground-level ozone pollution in metro Kansas City. Such pollution is a major factor in the rapidly rising rates of asthma and other respiratory problems in this area. My son and wife never leave the house without their inhalers, and there are numerous days in the summer when they can only go outside for short periods. Beyond the quality of their lives, it has a direct bearing on our family budget - with inhalers, other prescriptions, doctor's visits, etc.

I realize that public health concerns are beyond the traditional purview of the PSC, but the experience of my family and thousands of others around the city illustrate the key point I hope you will consider in your deliberations about GPE's proposal. That is that the company's continued characterization of energy from its coal-fired power plants as "cheap" simply doesn't hold up under scrutiny. Let's for the moment set aside any consideration of coal versus wind energy or a real and meaningful investment in advancing energy efficiency. GPE's characterization of coal as "cheap" flies in the face of the growing body of science that shows it to be this country's biggest threat to public health when it comes to generating electricity. Their "cheap" coal provides great returns for their shareholders, but costs the families of Kansas City in medications, visits to the doctors office and emergency rooms, higher medical premiums, lost days at work and school, taxes for public health care, etc. Most recently, leading experts in cardiovascular health have linked coal-fired plants and their emissions of soot, or fine particulate matter, to increases in heart disease.

Factor in these to the true cost of using coal to generate electricity and it's no longer "cheap" for ratepayers here. These are

the true financial costs of coal.

I believe what we know today about the public health threats posed by coal-fired plants calls for a new approach by the PSC in assessing what's best for ratepayers. What I am asking the PSC to consider is that there is a huge cost for such plants that is hidden if GPE is allowed to look at costs using the traditional approach.

Now back to the alternatives. I also ask you to look closely at what GPE is claiming in terms of growth in energy demand. They claim 2-3 percent annually, which is inflated well above what federal and our own state agencies project.

GPE has proposed investments in wind energy and efficiency, but frankly they appear little more than lip service. Shifts to these approaches are probably truly the "cheapest" for ratepayers here, but they will require GPE to move away from its traditional reliance on coal.

In closing, I'd like to share a saying I use often – the future arrives in different places at different times. Clearly, when you look around the field of utilities progressive companies are increasingly shifting away from coal and to other forms of energy that pose less of a threat to public health. They are leading the way to the future. GPE has shuffled every so slightly in that direction, but only after a public outcry about their proposals. I believe the PSC can serve as a leader in helping our state shape a future where we don't have to trade our health so we can light our homes and businesses.

Thanks for your time and consideration of my views.

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