

# BEFORE THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF MISSOURI

In the Matter of a Proposed Rulemaking )  
Regarding Revision of the Commission's )  
Chapter 22 Electric Utility Resource )  
Planning Rules )

File No. EX-2010-0254

## DISSENT OF COMMISSIONER JEFF DAVIS TO THE PROPOSED RULEMAKING REVISING THE COMMISSION'S CHAPTER 22 ELECTRIC UTILITY RESOURCE PLANNING RULES

I respectfully dissent from my colleagues' order to promulgate these rules as they are currently written.

Anyone who has ever been involved in the integrated resource planning (IRP) process knows these rules have desperately needed revision for years. It's taken a long time to get where we are. These rules are an improvement in some respects, but something important is missing: accountability for the Public Service Commission and the PSC Staff for any outcome in these IRP proceedings. It may seem like an antiquated note, but I think we need to take responsibility for the decisions we make – or in this case – fail to make.

Both the Missouri Energy Development Association (MEDA) and the Missouri Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) offered language whereby the Commission would at least "acknowledge" the utility's resource plan. "Acknowledgement" of the plan would enhance the process because it would force the parties and the staff to focus on outcomes as well as the process by which those outcomes were determined. After all, outcomes should be the purpose of the IRP process. More importantly, electric utilities could use the acknowledgement process to establish the prudence of making--or not making--certain large capital expenditures that are going to amount to billions of dollars over the next decade (e.g.

– whether to shut down and decommission one or more coal plants or to continue retrofitting all of them) before they get to a rate case and have to argue over imprudence or lack thereof.

Whether and how we address IRP decisions will definitely impact customer rates for years to come. Failing to act on the substance of IRPs constitutes a decision in and of itself. The Commission's failure sends a message of uncertainty to the utilities we regulate, their investors and Wall Street saying either "we want to be free to disavow your plan and disallow the expenses later" or "we are afraid to be criticized for acknowledging a plan that later failed."

Ultimately, our failure to address the substance of utility resource plans increases financing costs for capital investment projects as well as litigation costs in future rate cases because parties will litigate the issue in future cases and knowing the Commission may disallow expenses, lenders and investors will want higher returns. That uncertainty will assuredly cause Missouri investor-owned electric utilities to place the least possible amount of investment capital at risk short-term. This is important because the cheapest plan today will not likely be the cheapest plan over the next one to five years, and even less likely over the long-term (from 30 to 50 years). Thus, the ratepayers could end up paying higher rates long-term so the utility can consistently save a few dollars on the front end, or because the utility opted for cheaper, less reliable technology.

The importance of this issue is best illustrated by the decisions the Commission faces regarding our aging fleet of coal plants. In September, Wood Mackenzie's North American power research group issued a startling report that almost 60 gigawatts of coal-fired electric plants could be retired over the next decade. Independent verification of that estimate comes from Ellen Lapson, Managing Director of Corporate Ratings for Fitch Rating Agency. On

September 30, 2010, at the Financial Research Institute, Director Lapson said that Wood Mackenzie's number was a reasonable number. At least two Commissioners were present at that meeting.

The findings of the Wood Mackenzie report ought to send a shiver down the spine of everyone here at the PSC as well as anyone employed by a Missouri utility. More than 80% of the electricity consumed in this state is fueled by coal. Collectively, Missouri utilities probably own around 10,000 megawatts of coal-fired generation, if not more. Ameren Missouri is the largest Missouri utility and owns several thousand megawatts of coal-fired generation all by itself, but everyone including the utilities who've camouflaged themselves as being leaders in the green revolution have similar risks. So, when the Wall Street analysts say "Coal is in the crosshairs" they mean pretty much every Missouri utility, but especially Ameren because they own the most coal plants, and that ultimately every utility customer in the state is in the crosshairs. Each and every one of our investor-owned electric utilities is going to make significant investment decisions regarding the retirement or retrofitting of a large fleet of coal plants averaging more than 40 years or older as well as the addition of new resources to replace these retiring coal plants, meet growing demand and comply with government mandates for utilities to buy certain amounts of "renewable" electricity.

Presidents and governors don't punt and this Commission shouldn't punt either. Hundreds of millions, if not billions, of dollars are at stake when our electric utilities make these decisions and customer rates are hanging in the balance. We owe it to the ratepayers and to the utilities we regulate to be decisive and thereby meet this Commission's statutory obligation to assure safe and adequate service for consumers at a just and reasonable rate. It's silly and unconscionable to spend a couple of years working on more than 60 pages of

rules that force the utility to think of every scenario, to document how every calculation is made, to check to see if the work was performed correctly and then do nothing with such documents except hold them, waiting to whip them out on some unsuspecting utility executive for not following a plan we don't intend to make them follow until the day they deviate from it.

In conclusion, a Commission majority that has shown a willingness to micro-manage electric utilities by requiring them to undertake low-income assistance programs and make our utilities buy Missouri wind-generated electricity ought not have a problem "acknowledging" whether an electric utility's preferred resource plan seems like a good or a bad one.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jeffrey N. Davis". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jeffrey" and last name "Davis" being more prominent than the middle initial "N.".

Jeff Davis, Commissioner

Dated at Jefferson City, Missouri  
On this 25<sup>th</sup> day of October, 2010.