

3



[Print] [Close]

12.10.2009 10:02 am

Ameren faces PR opposition in attempt to hike electric rates

By: Tony Messenger

St. Louis Post-Dispatch

JEFFERSON CITY — Missouri's biggest companies have a message for Ameren:

We're back.

The Fair Electricity Rate Action Fund, a cobbling of big utility users that include Monsanto, Doe Run, Noranda, and other, pro-consumer groups (such as AARP and Missouri Industrial Energy Consumers), announced today a public relations blitz opposing Ameren's 18 percent rate hike increase.

The decision on the increase is ultimately in the hands of the Public Service Commission, but as it did in its battle last year against Ameren's plans for a nuclear plant, FERAF plans to take its fight directly to citizens, which likely means another round of competing television ads in the St. Louis market over the future of utility costs.

Because the group is positioning itself as educating citizens on an issue, as compared to opposing specific legislation, it will not have to follow Missouri Ethics Commission laws regarding transparency on its funding sources that apply to lobbying.

But the timing of its announcement shortly before the legislative session — and the fact that consultants connected to FERAF have already been calling lawmakers for support on their issue — likely indicates that Ameren and its opponents will also be warring over utility issues come January as well.

"As FERAF members, we respect the PSC and its process and want to make sure as many Missourians as possible know about Ameren's requested 18 percent rate hike," said Bob Quinn, executive director of the Missouri Association for Social Welfare, a FERAF member.

On top of its planned rate hike, Ameren recently applied for what it is calling a short-term emergency rate hike before the PSC, arguing that it is not making the full earnings allowed by the PSC.

Article printed from Political Fix: <http://www.stltoday.com/blogzone/political-fix>

URL to article: <http://www.stltoday.com/blogzone/political-fix/political-fix/2009/12/ameren-faces-pr-opposition-in-attempt-to-hike-electric-rates/>

If you enjoy reading about interesting news, you might like the 3 O'Clock Stir from STLtoday.com. Sign up and you'll receive an email with unique stories of the day, every Monday-Friday, at no charge.

Sign up at <http://www.stltoday.com/newsletters/>

FILED
February 16, 2010
Data Center
Missouri Public
Service Commission

Witness
Date 2-16-10 Case No. ER-2010-0036
Reporter KBF