

Tuesday, July 26, 2011

UTAH PUBLIC  
SERVICE COMMISSION  
Utah Public Service Commission  
Heber M. Wells Building  
160 East 300 South  
Salt Lake City, UT 84114

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RE: Rocky Mountain Power Rate Case  
Docket no. 10-035-124

Dear Public Service Commissioners:

I am a resident of Salt Lake City and a Rocky Mountain Power customer. I am submitting my testimony in writing because I will not be able to testify in person at the rate case hearing this week. I have worked hard to be an educated and conscientious consumer of electricity.

I have serious concerns about Rocky Mountain Power's \$3 billion request to increase rates for the purpose of investing in its aging coal-fired plants. I believe it is misguided to request precious ratepayer resources for investing in these aging, *high-risk*, and ultimately *high-cost* coal-fired facilities. The pollution controls for coal plants already cost a lot, and more updates will certainly be required in the future. Moreover, it seems it is not a matter of *if* some form of carbon regulations will be implemented, but *when*. Currently, known technologies for controlling carbon dioxide emissions would triple the costs of running a coal plant, as the utility has stated itself. Such burdensome retrofits are highly likely to render Rocky Mountain Power's coal fleet uncompetitive with the operating costs for alternative sources, including emerging renewable alternatives and efficiency options.

Furthermore, I believe the *health risks* of continuing to get power from coal are not reasonably factored into cost-benefit equations. A study commissioned by the State of Utah found that burning coal for power contributes to hundreds of illnesses, hospital visits, and even deaths each year. I think these public health risks must be taken into account before we continue investing in coal any further.

Ultimately, I believe some rates for consumers will inevitably have to increase to prepare for future electricity demands, to meet pollution regulations, and to adapt to future environmental conditions. Yet as a ratepayer, I would feel much better about rate increases geared primarily towards helping residential users, businesses and industries use energy more efficiently. A 2009 report by McKinsey and Company indicates that large-scale efficiency programs could save over a trillion dollars nationally, from twice the amount of the investment, and that such investments could offset as much as 23 percent of projected power demands. I think a vigorous investment in energy efficiency measures for our neighborhoods and communities would be a much wiser, and forward-thinking use of ratepayer money.

I also think Rocky Mountain Power should plan to do more to incorporate renewable alternatives like wind, geothermal, and solar alternatives into its existing grid, in ways that don't damage or jeopardize nearby communities or landscapes. Finally, I think Rocky Mountain Power should look into doing more to work with local governments to help consumers live well by using energy efficiently.

Thank you for considering my testimony.

Sincerely,

Ross Chambless

