

DATE JUN 29 2006

To: South Dakota Public Utilities Commissioner
From: Tonya Haigh, resident of Bruce, SD and member of East Dakota Electric Cooperative
RE: Public Comments on Big Stone II Power Plant

Thank you for the opportunity to submit these comments via email. I'm glad there is a public debate occurring over the need for new coal plants in South Dakota, and hope that I can contribute the perspective of a South Dakota resident, landowner, and rural electric coop member.

As a parent of two young daughters, I take a strong interest in what the world might be like in another 30 to 50 years. Here I quote from a document of the WRS Resources Corporation (a New York based power company), 'In 2005, the scientific academies of 11 nations, including the U.S., stated that, "The scientific understanding of climate change is now sufficiently clear to justify nations taking prompt action. It is vital that all nations identify cost-effective steps that they can take now, to contribute to substantial and long-term reductions in net global greenhouse gas emissions."'

I'd like us to take this statement seriously, and make the critical, thought difficult, decisions that will lead to a promising future for all of our children.

Coal-burning plants are the largest U.S. source of carbon dioxide pollution, ranking ahead of automobile use by almost a billion tons per year, and contributing significantly to global atmospheric warming. And we all know that the U.S. is by far the largest global contributor to global warming. So by seriously addressing U.S. power sources, we, the users of electricity, can radically reduce emissions that contribute to global warming.

An obvious answer is to increase the use of renewable energy sources to meet the needs of electricity consumers. But even promoters of renewable energy technologies know that the most effective source of energy is actually the conservation of energy, through simple conservation techniques that can be employed by residential customers as well as large industrial customers. Our electric cooperatives currently put almost no emphasis on this very easy, extremely effective, source of power.

After conservation, South Dakota's Public Utilities Commission must put a higher priority on developing renewable energy sources, such as wind, solar, and geothermal. I believe we must require all utilities to source a percentage (even 50%) of their new energy growth from renewable sources. California requires its largest utilities to get 20% of their electricity from renewable sources by 2017, and New York has pledged a similar goal.

South Dakota's excuse for not developing more wind power has always seemed to be the lack of demand for electricity in our state. Now my electric cooperative tells me we need more, much more, electric capability. This seems like a great opportunity to invest in the right thing. Not just wind (which does blow most of the time, but not all, I know), but solar electric (where huge technology advances are being made), renewable biomass, and

geothermal.

We seem to be at a critical point, and we may not have the chance to make these decisions again. Please consider the future, and invest in the future – renewable energy sources instead of coal and other fossil fuels.

Thank you again for this opportunity,

Tonya Haigh
20453 460th Ave.
Bruce, SD 56220
605-627-5862

P.S. Wind power, as I'm sure you are aware, creates new jobs, income for farmers and ranchers, capital investment in rural areas, clean air, and economic growth. The Union of Concerned Scientists took a closer look at a 107 megawatt wind development in Lincoln County, MN and found big benefits to their economy:

- 31 new jobs and \$909,000/ year spent on operation and maintenance.
- Land owner revenues of over \$500,000 per year.
- Only \$7,000 in total lost revenue from taking 70 acres out of production (½ acre/turbine including roads).
- \$611,000 tax revenues in 2000 or 13 percent of total County taxes.
- About \$352,000 in 2002 taxes due to changes in property tax laws.