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GRANT COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

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SEP 16 2005

SOUTH DAKOTA PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

September 15, 2005

Public Utilities Commission
Capitol Building, 1st Floor
500 East Capitol Avenue
Pierre, South Dakota 57501-5070

Dear Sirs:

On the evening of Tuesday, September 13, I attended your Public Hearing in Milbank. Having to leave the meeting early, I was unable to testify in favor of construction of the Big Stone II Power Plant.

There are a variety of reasons. Most notable are the facts that significant amounts of business and industry are being added to Milbank and Grant County, and, as shown by one of the graphics at the meeting, the region will fall short of it's power needs during the next decade.

An abundant reserve of available electric power is one of the most important attractions in the successful relocation of new business. Our quest here in the Whetstone Valley is to continue to grow and prosper, and without adequate supplies of business and residential utilities, such will be impossible.

As a long-time resident of this area, I was impressed by the results of the thorough studies undertaken by those responsible for recommending a plant site and their positive results, as well as the careful attention that was given to any possible future environmental issues.

All in all, I see this as a greatly needed project and one that will serve the State and it's residents well for many years into the future. It could well be seen as an integral part of the Governor's 2010 Initiative.

Sincerely,
George L. Smith
George L. Smith
Executive Director

cc: Kevin Kouba, Regional Manager
Otter Tail Power Company

George Smith, Executive Director
707 S. 5th St.
Milbank, SD 57252