

WEST VIRGINIA CITIZENS FOR RESPONSIBLE ENERGY POLICY

201 East John Street • Martinsburg, West Virginia 25401

May 12, 2009

Mr. Steven Chu, Secretary of Energy
United States Department of Energy
1000 Independent Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20585

Dear Mr. Chu:

We are writing as concerned citizens from West Virginia. We support President Obama's agenda for Clean Energy and for capping carbon emissions. We are very familiar with coal and all of the pollution associated with mountaintop removal coal mining, which includes fouled water, air pollution, large and poorly constructed sludge ponds and the devastating environmental effects to our land.

Now to add to the misery, extra high voltage transmission lines are proposed to be strung over more than 9000 acres of our mountains to increase the profits of Allegheny Energy and American Electric Power. Part of the push for these transmission lines originated through PJM Interconnection, the eastern regional transmission organization. PJM contended that the East Coast faced power shortages and advocated for lucrative, risk free FERC incentive rates to build these transmission lines.

The original plan for building these lines was Project Mountaineer, which was designed to move coal-fired energy from the coal states such as West Virginia to the power hungry Mid Atlantic region where Allegheny Energy and AEP could sell their coal-fired power at higher prices. The TrAILCo line (Trans-Allegheny Interstate Line) reached final approval in West Virginia in August of 2008 and is slated for construction immediately, even though the demand and need for electricity has dramatically dropped in the last two years. The load forecasts predicted by PJM for the next five years continue to be depressed with no upswing in sight. Despite PJM's prediction, TrAIL will be constructed and will deliver coal-generated electricity to the Mid Atlantic region. TrAIL is in direct contradiction to the plan for clean, renewable energy that President Obama has recommended. The "clean coal technology" that the coal industry advertises does not exist, and the industry has never invested in the technology on its own.

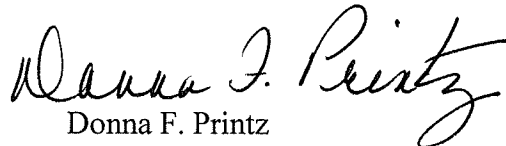
The Potomac-Appalachian Transmission Highline (PATH) is scheduled to be built right after the TrAIL line. The certificates of need applications with state utility commissions for this line are expected to be filed in VA, MD, and WV in the second quarter of this year. Both PATH and TrAIL projects are the results of energy policy decisions made during the Bush Administration and have a lot in common with many other bad policies that were pushed for the last eight years.

We think it is apparent that we need NEW energy policy that is equal to the current Administration's plans for clean and renewable energies to power our country. We suggest that a moratorium be enacted on all transmission projects until our energy policy can be studied by a balanced multidisciplinary commission with professionals who are not driven by a profit motive. There has not been significant energy policy change in the US for decades and it is time we restructure a plan consistent with the technology and clean renewable energy of the future, not dirty coal. We certainly understand the need to continue to use coal now, but why set up a grid system that starts at coal generation plants?

Under President Obama's energy plan, the planned transmission lines will end up being an abandoned investment because renewable energy sources will not, and cannot be integrated into the system. Please consider studying the alternatives and do not allow these transmission lines to continue to be built until it is known for sure that this is the right answer for our country.

For the sake of West Virginia, operating within a regulatory process totally influenced by King Coal with little or no regard for the environment or the people of our state, we implore you to understand the consequences for West Virginia and her citizens. Thank you for your consideration in this urgent matter.

Sincerely,



Donna F. Printz

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