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President's Report



William R. Dodds
President/CEO

We need an all-of-the-above energy strategy

Electric cooperatives are disappointed—but not surprised—that in September the Administration officially abandoned an all-of-the-above energy strategy for a new, all-but-one approach that effectively removes coal from the nation's fuel mix in the future.

The policy, proposed by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), sets stringent limits on carbon dioxide emissions from future coal or natural gas plants. Trouble is, the new standards are impossible to meet with existing technology.

For several years cooperatives have tested carbon capture and storage (CCS) as a way to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Unfortunately, the technology doesn't make financial sense. It has never been used at a commercial scale at a power plant over a prolonged period to demonstrate its viability or cost. In a 2012 Congressional Budget Office report, engineers estimate it would increase the cost of producing electricity from coal-based plants by 75 percent.

The Administration's switch to an all-but-one energy approach would limit Americans' access to a plentiful and affordable resource. I don't think we should gamble with the economic well-being of future generations and our nation's economy.

Already worried about making ends meet, many of Spoon River Electric

Cooperative's members cannot afford the significant increases in electric bills that this policy would trigger.

Historically, the price of coal remains affordable and relatively stable. The U.S. Energy Information Agency reports the United States has 236 years remaining of recoverable coal reserves. Coal generates 37 percent of the nation's electricity—our biggest energy source by far.

Seems the Administration lets history repeat itself. We saw this all-but-one game in 1978 when Congress passed the ill-conceived Power Plant and Industrial Fuel Use Act. Never heard of it? Few have, but for several years the government banned natural gas for power generation. Yes, natural gas—the fuel source being sold to the nation today as a cleaner fuel option. With gas off the table, electric co-ops were forced to choose between building coal or nuclear plants.

Back then, co-ops were in the midst of a major power plant building cycle. With few options, they invested heavily in coal-based generating plants in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Thankfully Congress repealed its mistake, but not for nine years.

Let's not repeat past mistakes. Stand with us as we fight to keep electric bills affordable. Raise your voice through the Cooperative Action Network at www.action.coop. Tell the EPA we need an all-of-the-above energy strategy.



Energy Efficiency *Tip of the Month*

Electric bills rise in the winter for lots of reasons—holiday parties, house guests, and shorter days and longer nights. Take little measures to help control costs like turning down the thermostat, washing clothes in cold water, swapping out lightbulbs for high-efficiency versions, and using microwaves or toaster ovens to cook. Find more ways to save at TogetherWeSave.com.

Source: TogetherWeSave.com

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Spoon River Electric Cooperative – By the Numbers

Miles of line energized: 1,249 • Number of members served: 4,944
Number of power poles in territory: 29,255

In memory of Ed Harper



Retired Spoon River Electric Cooperative Journeyman Lineman Ed Harper passed away on Oct. 17, 2013. He retired recently after 24 years of service to the Cooperative. Ed was a beloved friend and colleague who will be greatly missed.





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