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Wakefield, RI
February 12, 2017

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PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

Ms. Margaret Curran
Chairperson,
Rhode Island Public Utilities Commission
89 Jefferson Boulevard
Warwick, RI 02888

Dear Ms. Curran:

I am a longtime resident of Rhode Island and am deeply concerned that the construction of a new 1GW natural gas and oil power plant in Burrillville is not the best solution to meet future Rhode Island energy needs. This approach would commit Rhode Islanders to send \$3B out of state every year to pay for the natural gas supply. The proposed location of the plant is one of the most environmentally sensitive areas in the state. In addition, the rapid expansion of renewable electrical power technologies and the stability of our population size will result in declining demand for fossil fuel-based power. As a minimum, any such investments should be deferred for at least a decade until the potential of renewable power sources is more fully understood.

Several renewable power electrical generation options should be considered.

- Deepwater Wind has just signed a contract to provide to provide 90MW of offshore wind power to long island:
<http://www.providencejournal.com/news/20170125/second-wind-farm-off-rhode-island-coast-closer-to-reality>. The delivered price is expected to be "competitive with ... 16 cents a kilowatt hour." According to Deepwater Wind, potential offshore wind power capacity may approach 5GW. This should be a priority energy source for RI.
- Palm Beach County, Florida has recently completed its second full scale solid waste renewable energy facility: <http://www.swa.org/375/Palm-Beach-Renewable-Energy-Facility-2>. This facility processes 20% more solid waste each day than the Rhode Island Resource Recovery Corporation (RIRRC), reduces landfill waste volume by 85%-90%, burns cleaner than natural gas, and generates 95MW of power at capacity. Income from the sale of electricity at this facility has reduced waste disposal costs (tipping fees) to \$25/ton. By contrast RIRRC charges its largest customers \$60/ton.

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- Finally, I would encourage expansion and reinvigoration of the Distributed Generation Contract Program to include small distributed energy storage and intelligent supply management. This approach can be used to attract investment capital and rapidly mature standardized small-scale (affordable investment) systems that deliver power when it is most needed.

Building a new fossil fuel power plant in Burrillville, Rhode Island would mean a 40 year commitment to a non-renewable power source. It would commit Rhode Islanders to send at least \$3B per year out of state to buy natural gas. This plant would have a considerable impact on an environmentally sensitive area, a jewel of RI, and would contribute to climate change throughout its operating life. Finally, availability of excess power from fossil fuels would dissuade investment in renewable power technologies that could provide sustainable growth for RI.

Please reconsider whether the Burrillville power plant makes sense for RI, and instead look to emerging renewable power sources to meet future RI power needs. If you have questions regarding this letter, please contact me at rlcoupland@msn.com or (cell) 401-595-1175.

Sincerely,



Richard Coupland