

Published January 12, 2011

Dear Editor of the State Journal-Register:

The editorial (*Clout Carries the Day vs. Tenaska*, Jan. 7) refuses to recognize that there are honest public policy reasons to oppose the Tenaska power plant proposal and that an unprecedented array of constituencies is fighting against it.

The Chamber of Commerce and Sierra Club are rarely on the same side of a public policy issue, but they have found common cause in opposing the Tenaska plant. The Illinois Manufacturers' Association, Illinois Retail Merchants Association, Illinois Farm Bureau, and a host of other business organizations have argued that the above-market rates mandated by Tenaska--at five times current market prices--would hurt Illinois' economy, jobs prospects, and consumers.

These groups and many others are opposed to subsidizing this project because they agree with the Illinois Commerce Commission's conclusion that this "project features high costs to ratepayers with uncertain future benefits, and uncertainties that potentially add to already significant costs." Competitive electric suppliers, who provide more than half of the electricity consumed in the state and serve over 74 percent of the non-residential load, are against the Tenaska plant because they will be forced to enter into a 30-year, above-market contract as a condition of doing business in Illinois. This is an unprecedented requirement for a competitive retail electric market and threatens to reverse the success that Illinois has enjoyed for more than a decade. Environmental groups oppose Tenaska because it would be no cleaner than a natural gas plant and much more expensive than wind and other true renewable sources.

The reason the Tenaska plant has encountered a diverse set of opponents is because the project will have a diverse set of negative consequences for our state. It's just terrible public policy. That's why projects just like it have already been rejected, abandoned, or shelved in 11 states. It's about not about 'hysteria.' It's about facts and truth.

Kevin Wright  
President, Illinois Competitive Energy Association