

67 LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Testimony on HB 1452- CLEAN SUSTAINABLE ENERGY AUTHORITY

Submitted by Sonja Kaye

I ask you to ponder the following questions as they relate to changing technology. Would it have made sense for steam tractor manufactures to continue their research and development when customers much preferred the lighter, more efficient, and less expensive combustion engine tractors? How much money do you sink into your old model tractor before you realize it makes more sense to switch to an entirely different model? Just as it no longer makes sense to continue research and development on steam tractors, it no longer makes sense to invest in fossil fuel efficiencies to pretend that they are clean and sustainable. I strongly urge you to reject this bill.

Investing in clean, sustainable energy is an important goal for ND. Unfortunately, this bill is a complete farce for those genuinely interested in achieving this goal. This bill includes a twisted and perverse definition of the word “sustainable,” and is a threat to our future and our pocketbooks, especially the pocketbooks of Minnkota Power customers. This bill promotes discriminatory and least value energy in the marketplace and seeks to ensure confidentiality, potentially hiding abuses from the trust of ND citizens.

“Sustainable” is an adjective, a descriptive word meaning “able to be maintained at a certain rate or level.”¹ It is not a “technology.” If we are talking about the sustainable use of natural resources, we are talking about the continued use of a natural resource which can go on indefinitely without an adverse effect on future generations. Sustainability is not guaranteed by adding technology.

One of the purposes of the bill is to diversify and grow the state’s economy, however this bill will never achieve these goals. It is not possible to diversify by staying within the same box. This bill is clearly intended to keep the fossil fuel industry alive regardless of true sustainability. Furthermore, there is not a chance in hell that this proposed “authority” would be capable of objectively deciphering true affordability and reliability characteristics of projects supporting fossil fuels when it is in their financial interest to keep these industries alive. To put this mix of voting members aka the “clean sustainable authority” in charge of making recommendations to the legislative assembly on matters of environmental, social and governance policy is not only deeply unethical but wildly ludicrous.

If proponents of this bill genuinely want to promote sustainability, they need to ask the right questions. While, it is certainly amazing what technology can do for us these days, like removing carbon from lignite coal, the question is not “**can we do it?**” The question is, “**is it worthwhile, and the most cost effective, best option out there?**” HB 1452 seeks to answer the first question and does not even invite the other questions to the table.

The appointed seven voting members that are invited to the table (voting members) are as follows,

- A. *One member appointed by the legislative management to serve as chairman*
- B. *Two members appointed by the lignite research council*

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https://www.google.com/search?q=sustainable+def&rlz=1C1CHBF_enUS899US899&oq=sustainable+def&aqs=chrome..69i57j0i433j0l2j0i395l6.6117j1j15&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8

- C. *Two members appointed by the oil and gas research council*
- D. *One member appointed by the renewable energy council and*
- E. *One member appointed by the western Dakota energy association*

Very explicitly, you have five members appointed by the lignite oil and gas industry. (WDEA promotes oil gas and coal) (Letters B,C, and E) The remaining two spots could very easily be filled by lignite, oil and gas representatives, as well. This is a blatant omission of representation from the renewable energy sector. **Furthermore**, the representative from the Renewable Energy Council belongs to an organization that has no representation from the renewable energy industries either. Furthermore, this bill gives too much power to the Industrial commission and, it appears, there is no one appointed to this “authority” that understands interconnected grid systems.

If you really want objective voting for this council, you do not appoint anybody from these industries as voting members. Objectivity comes from experts outside these industries.

While fossil fuels have played an important role in ND history, the cold hard truth is that fossil fuels will never be clean and sustainable without posing significant financial and ecological risks to ND citizens. Simple laws of physics and economics cannot be broken.

I am a customer of Cass County Electric Cooperative which is supplied by Minnkota Power Cooperative.

The mission of Minnkota is to keep our electricity the best energy value in the region.

I am appalled to find my energy supplier supporting projects that lowers the energy value in our region. It is a complete violation of their mission and flies in the face of 50 years of progress in the electricity energy business.

Supporters of this bill will have you think we can just create value out of thin air for industries that are no longer viable, such as lignite coal, but economics and the reality of the changing electricity industry does not support this idea. Subsidizing the fossil fuel industry by continuing to pour money into technology that is doomed to fail from the outset is horrible waste of my taxpayer money.

We have other better viable options that would contribute to a vibrant and stable economy. This bill would not let those options even see the light of day.

Another point of concern that I have is the pandering to people’s fears of the loss of reliability on the grid. Let us not use electric grid reliability as an excuse for bad projects. The ultimate and federally

recognized grid authority(s) on reliability is MISO (and SPP.) I have yet to see a recommendation from them that we spend more money on fossil fuel technology to maintain reliability of the electric grid.

MISO REGION RELIABILITY IMPERATIVE – Dec. 2020 Draft 4

Public @

<https://cdn.misoenergy.org/MISO%20Response%20to%20the%20Reliability%20Imperative504018.pdf>

1. **Market Redefinition:** The initiatives in this category aim to ensure that resources with the types of capabilities and attributes the system needs will be available in all 8,760 hours of the year. This is important because as noted above, the region is increasingly facing reliability risks outside of the summer peak-load months that historically posed the greatest challenges. Specific efforts in this area include providing a longer-term and deeper assessment of system needs across all hours of the year, including required capabilities such as flexibility; shifting to verifying sufficient generation adequacy across all hours of the year; improving how resources are accredited; ensuring that prices accurately reflect market conditions, especially during emergencies; and development of market products that provide the right incentives for resources to maintain system reliability.

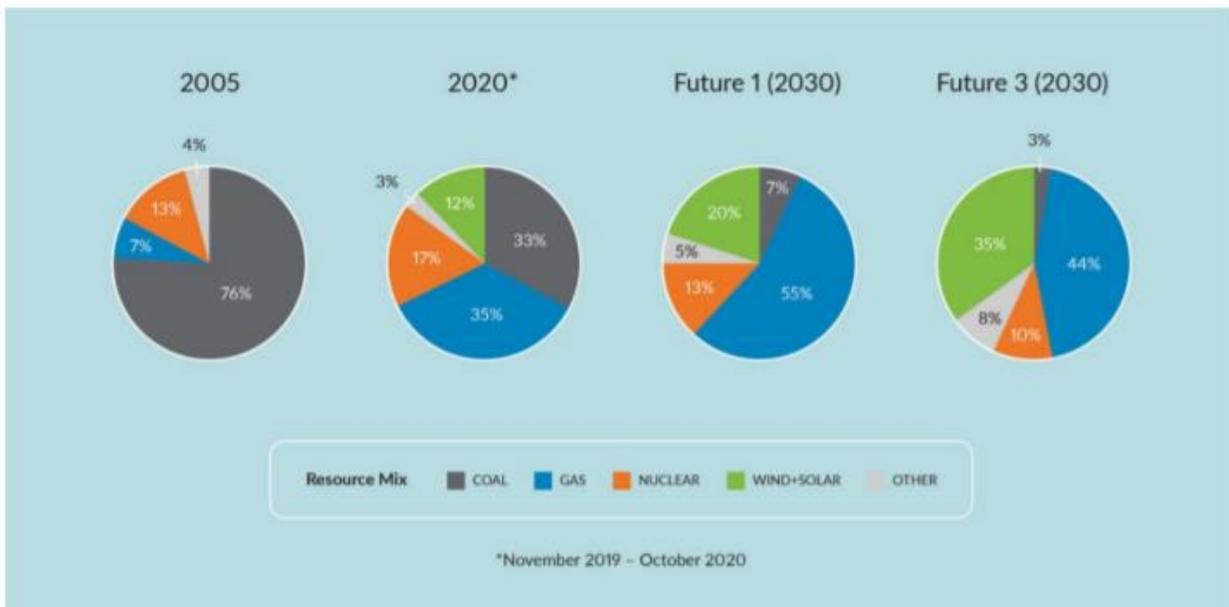
2. **Long Range Transmission Planning:** This effort is designed to identify what transmission the region will need going forward as the electric industry continues to evolve. For example, building additional transmission is especially crucial to support the continued growth of large-scale wind and solar, since those resources are often located far from load centers. A robust transmission plan can also reduce the cost of electricity for consumers by signaling better locations for resource siting that deliver fuel cost savings, decarbonization, and flexibility.

3. **Operations of the Future:** This effort is designed to ensure that MISO will have the kinds of skills, processes, and technologies it will need to effectively manage both wholesale and retail connected resources. For example, this initiative will leverage artificial intelligence, machine learning and advanced analytics among other tools to help future MISO control-room operators effectively forecast, visualize, and manage grid uncertainty. It will also help MISO to better manage maintenance and “pre-position” the grid ahead of system changes such as weather.

4. **Market System Enhancements:** This category of work is designed to transform MISO’s

historical system—which was built in the early 2000’s—into a more flexible and secure system that will meet the needs for years to come. Current systems and technology are not capable of accommodating the increasing demands for new, reliability-driven market enhancements and fully leveraging the opportunities of new resource types such as storage and residential generation options (like rooftop solar) to meet future challenges. This initiative will employ flexible architecture and analysis to support the evolving resource mix and future-state processes for operating MISO markets.

MISO Generation Mix (% of MWh)

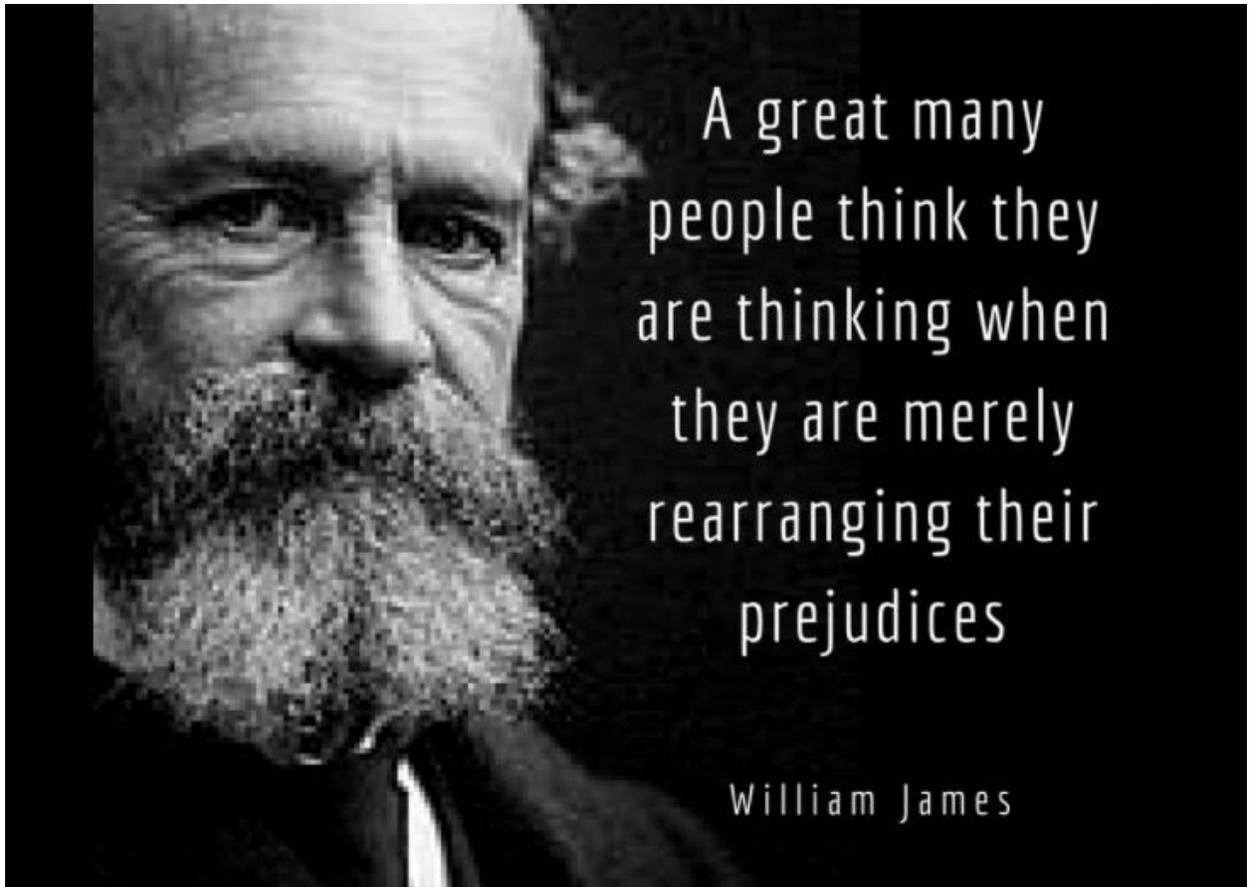


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The stars of the new clean and sustainable energy future are wind and solar and energy storage, with the possible honorable mention to natural gas due to its ramping flexibility.

Just as it makes no sense to dump money into steam tractors research and development, it makes no sense to dump money into fossil fuel efficiencies, pretending it makes them clean and sustainable. I again urge you to reject this bill.

² <https://cdn.misoenergy.org/MISO%20Response%20to%20the%20Reliability%20Imperative504018.pdf>



A great many
people think they
are thinking when
they are merely
rearranging their
prejudices

William James