



**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
Washington, DC 20515

September 21, 2012

COMMITTEE ON  
TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE  
VICE-CHAIR, SUBCOMMITTEE ON AVIATION  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON COAST GUARD AND  
MARITIME TRANSPORTATION  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON  
WATER RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT  
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COUNTERTERRORISM AND INTELLIGENCE  
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TRANSPORTATION SECURITY  
COMMITTEE ON  
SCIENCE, SPACE, AND TECHNOLOGY  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON  
TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

Beverly Jones Heydinger  
Chair  
Minnesota Public Utilities Commission  
121 7th Place E., Suite 350  
Saint Paul, MN 55101-2147

Dear Chairwoman Heydinger,

I am writing to urge the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (MNPUC) not to shutter three power plants in Northern Minnesota: Laskin Units 1 & 2 at Laskin Energy Center and Taconite Harbor Unit 3 at Taconite Harbor Energy Center. The energy centers which house these plants employ over eighty workers and contribute to a critical, reliable energy infrastructure for the taconite mining industry in Northern Minnesota.

Further, the closure of these plants will have a devastating impact on families, local governments and homeowners in the cities of Hoyt Lakes, Aurora and Schroeder. These effects will also ripple out into the surrounding communities of the Iron Range and Duluth in terms of electricity reliability and cost. While environmental groups may consider these people necessary collateral damage for their idea of the greater good, Iron Range families are facing the prospect of fewer opportunities and a reduced quality of life.

I was pleased to hear of MNPUC's prudent decision to postpone shuttering these plants, despite pressure from out-of-state environmental groups and a state agency. Because the decision about the future of these plants depends on many uncertain factors, including future EPA regulations, future Congressional action, future court rulings, and future energy costs, it is imperative that the PUC act with a higher degree of certainty than the Minnesota Department of Commerce report affords.

The recent pressure to close these three plants is concerning. We've seen time and again the results of government attempts to predict the future of energy markets, or even its own future actions. Years ago, if the MN Department of Commerce had been writing a similarly proscriptive report, they would have been warning Minnesota Power against relying on natural gas due to severe shortages and price spikes. Now, due to advances in technology, the Department is effectively urging Minnesota Power to rely primarily on natural gas, failing to account for the risk of future EPA regulations reducing domestic supply.

For these reasons, I urge you to carefully consider all relevant factors, including the jobs that would be lost in these regions, before making any decisions on the future operations of these plants.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Chip Cravaack", with a stylized flourish extending from the end.

Chip Cravaack  
Member of Congress