



Failed Energy Bill Brings Attention to State's Energy Discussion

JEFFERSON CITY — In an unexpected move, AmerenUE executives announced April 23 that the public utility is giving up its plans to pursue the construction of a second nuclear power plant in Missouri. The company's decision took out of play a vigorously debated and controversial bill ([Senate Bill 228](#)) in the General Assembly — and a similar House bill — that would have allowed eligible utilities to pass on the costs of constructing a new clean energy power plant to consumers.

The Senate's version of the bill — commonly referred to as the CWIP or construction-work-in-progress bill — lost steam in the days before the St. Louis-based utility's announcement on the proposal when it appeared there would be no compromises or consensus. It was undoubtedly the most controversial piece of legislation debated during this legislative session and led to an inundation of calls to my office and to the office of many other St. Louis-area lawmakers from constituents concerned about potential rate increases. It also created an onslaught of media advertisements, both in favor and in opposition to the bill.

Even though this highly contested legislation is off the table for now, it has sparked more energy discussion and will not end our state's pursuit of alternatives to meet the emerging need for more energy production or to expand our renewable energy sources — and nuclear power will remain one of those options.

Missouri is ranked 7th in the nation for the use of coal to produce energy and currently enjoys some of the lowest electric rates in the nation. But the capacity for building more coal plants is virtually exhausted and new federal regulations threatening to penalize coal producers for carbon emissions has put our state in a challenging situation. We need to develop our own energy sources now or face buying power at higher costs from other states in the near future. Wind and solar energy would help, but could not meet all of our state's energy needs.

Our state's energy discussion will remain a high priority despite the outcome of this proposed bill as our state's lawmakers and energy producers work to move our state to cleaner forms of energy to address our future energy needs. As this discussion continues, I feel confident we will develop the *best* plan available for meeting those energy needs while protecting Missouri consumers.

If you have comments or questions about this week's column or any other matter involving state government, please do not hesitate to contact me. You can reach my office by phone at (866) 271-2844.

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