

State Senator Robert Mayer

The Mayer Memo

Senator Robert Mayer - Serving Butler, Dunklin, New Madrid, Pemiscot, Ripley, Stoddard & Wayne Counties



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Proposed Power Plant Bill Would Hurt Southeast Missouri

The potential negative financial impact a proposed energy bill would have on southeast Missouri is at the center of a controversial piece of legislation that is currently being heavily debated on the Senate floor.

As I shared with you in a previous column, the General Assembly is considering proposed bills from each chamber that would allow eligible power plants to charge consumers for the construction phase of certain types of clean energy power plants. Both [Senate Bill 228](#) and [House Bill 554](#) would repeal a 1976 law that currently prohibits this. AmerenUE — the state's largest electric utility — is seeking the law's repeal in an effort to build a second nuclear plant at its Callaway location.

I fully understand, have researched, and support the needed expansion of renewable energy resources in Missouri — and I do not oppose nuclear power — but I do have huge concerns with this bill in its current form because of the devastating financial impact it would have across southeast Missouri to our residential consumers, our agricultural base, and to Noranda Aluminum in New Madrid County — our area's largest employer and the largest customer of the St. Louis-based utility.

If the bill were to pass as it now reads, many of our farm operations and companies like Noranda would be required to pay much more for electricity while a nuclear plant is built. Noranda could pay as much as \$200 million and risks losing 900 high-paying jobs. New Madrid County schools, which receive about \$2.5 million in property taxes from the smelting company, would also be negatively impacted by this proposed legislation.

At this writing, the Senate had spent more than 10 hours into the early hours of April 8 debating this bill on the Senate floor. I offered several amendments — and have others waiting when the bill's debate resumes — that serve to protect our family-supporting jobs. The Senate's leadership is currently meeting with both proponents and opponents of the bill in order to reach a possible compromise — a compromise that must be reached in order for this bill to advance any further.

As always, 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 1-877-291-5584.

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