

State Senator Robert Mayer The Mayer Memo

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



[Website](#) | [Contact Me](#) | [Biography](#) | [Newsroom](#)

Committee Hears Testimony on State's Energy Future

The General Assembly's [Joint Committee on Missouri's Energy Future](#), on which I serve, has been holding hearings in preparation for a report to the General Assembly.

During a meeting on Oct. 26, the committee heard a number of recommendations from the state's energy industry. They included legislative support of the long-term utility planning process and investments in needed infrastructure; taking steps to improve credit ratings of Missouri's regulated utilities compared to other U.S. utilities; engaging the Congressional delegation in Washington, D.C., on carbon cap-and-trade legislation to protect Missourians; and seeking resolution of problems with infrastructure citing, lack of transmission, regional transmission investment allocations, and skilled labor shortages.

The committee also heard testimony from Peabody Coal, the world's largest coal producer, which is headquartered in St. Louis, and the Missouri Energy Development Association, about the challenges our state is facing in developing cleaner forms of energy technology while keeping electricity reliable and affordable for all Missourians.

Many of those testifying before the committee highlighted the potential negative impact of the proposed federal cap-and-trade legislation, which would cap carbon dioxide emissions from coal and create a system for buying and trading emission allowances. If passed, the proposed legislation is expected to result in significantly higher electricity bills in Missouri. More than 80 percent of our state's energy comes from coal-fired power plants.

In addition to discussing the proposed cap-and-trade legislation, those testifying highlighted a number of other challenges facing Missouri as it addresses its future energy needs, including:

- The increasing cost of power production, including infrastructure maintenance and replacement, continuing upgrades to emissions control equipment, "smart grid" infrastructure (delivering electricity from suppliers to consumers using digital technology), and higher fuel costs;
- The growth demand for power, retirement of old plants, and the projected costs of new plants and new transmission lines; and
- The shortage of skilled labor in the energy field as a significant percentage of more employees are approaching retirement.

Missouri enjoys some of the lowest electric rates in the nation, and like many other Midwestern states, would be negatively impacted by this proposed climate legislation. I think most Americans would agree we would like to reduce carbon emissions, but to achieve this in our state, we are going to need to a diversified energy plan that works for Missouri — without subsidizing more favorable energy costs for the east and west coasts — and one that ensures

energy reliability and minimizes increases in future electric rates for our citizens.

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.

###

	Capitol Office	Website:	Phone Number:
	State Capitol Building	http://www.senate.mo.gov/mayer	877.291-5584
	Room 422		Fax:
	Jefferson City, MO 65101		573.526.1384