

Poughkeepsie Journal

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SUNDAY, APRIL 11, 2010

FOUNDED IN 1785, NEW YORK STATE'S OLDEST NEWSPAPER

50 CENTS

Hudson is healthy; plant policy is costly

In response to your March 25 editorial, "River protection must be a priority," a few points bear mentioning.

Calling the current technology used by plants along the Hudson River "devastating" ignores the fact that the Hudson is healthy and has steadily improved over the past several decades that these plants have operated. Every plant that draws from public waters for cooling must meet the strict state Department of Environmental Conservation guidelines which protect fish.

The DEC's call for "closed cycle cooling" will have a devastating impact on electric system reliability, availability of electric generating capacity, cost of electricity and loss of tax revenue to areas now with plants that will close. The DEC estimates implementing the proposal will cost \$8.5 billion – a big hit to electricity consumers.

Impingement and thermal effects have already been substantially mitigated at most of these plants and environmental leaders have continued to attest to the environmental comeback enjoyed by the Hudson. Thus, the only environmental benefit to be gained by this draft policy will be reduction of entrainment effects, that is, killing of fish eggs, more than 90 percent of which die naturally in the environment.

Even if we accept the DEC's analysis, the cost of modifying plants such as Indian Point, Bowline and Roseton will make them economically uncompetitive, possibly resulting in shutdown. This will eliminate hundreds of good-paying jobs and impair the grid's reliability.

Do the benefits of this draft policy exceed the costs? Clearly, they do not.

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