



Fray develops over cooling towers

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Job losses, higher energy costs and the closure of power plants and factories in New York state would result if draft rules are implemented requiring modern cooling systems in power plants, according to a group of business and labor groups.

The proposed new policy, announced March 10 by the state Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), would require power plants and other industrial operations using more than 20 million gallons of water daily to replace so-called once-through cooling systems with closed loop cooling systems that use a fraction of the water.

“We believe the net effect of this measure will be increased electricity prices and rising unemployment in New York state,” the consortium said in a May 8 letter sent to DEC Commissioner Pete Grannis. **“All New Yorkers will ultimately be negatively impacted by the adoption of this measure.”**

“Implementing the mandated changes will cost \$8.5 billion, according to your department’s estimates,” the letter read. **“While other experts believe the costs will be significantly higher, this extraordinary cost leads to our conclusion that enactment of this policy will drive businesses out of New York, cost jobs across the state, and raise rates for commercial and residential electric customers throughout New York. In this time of economic uncertainty, the anticipated economic impacts of this policy are unacceptable.”**

The letter has a dozen signatories including Kenneth Adams, president and CEO of the Business Council of New York State; Arthur “Jerry” Kremer, chairman of the New York Affordable, Reliable, Electricity Alliance, (AREA); Al Samuels, president and CEO of the Rockland Business Association; Marsha Gordon, President and CEO of the The Business Council of Westchester and Michael Oates, President and CEO Hudson Valley Economic Development Corporation, which primarily is funded by Central Hudson and Gas corporation.

The DEC is citing federal standards as requiring Best Technology Available, which they conclude means using cooling towers that recycle the water supply that cools the facility and can reduce fish kills by 90 percent or more, according to the DEC.

The current pass through systems creates entrainment and impingement of marine life, destroying huge numbers of fish, eggs and larvae. Hudson River fish stocks were generally at healthy levels until recent years, fish stocks have plummeted to historically low levels. DEC officials say such signature species as Hudson River shad and sturgeon are threatened.

The rule would be particularly significant on the lower Hudson River,. Newburgh hosts the 1200 megawatt Roseton plant using 926 million gallons of river water daily at full power and its companion plant the 490

megawatt Danskammer plant that uses 457 million gallons daily. In Haverstraw the 1200 megawatt Bowline power plant uses more than 900 million gallons daily.

But technology can economically end the need for such water withdrawals. The DEC points to the 1080 megawatt Athens Generating plant, which removes about 200,000 gallons daily, using a closed system.

Indian Point nuclear power plant, owned by Entergy, with a capacity for 1900 megawatts uses more than 2 billion gallons of river water daily. The DEC had already ordered that Entergy equip Indian Point with the fluted cooling towers seen at many nuclear plants even before the new general draft rule was announced March 10. Entergy is contesting that rule.

DEC spokeswoman Maureen Wren, said the department is still accepting public comment on the draft rules. She said when the comment period closes June 8, the DEC will offer written responses to all concerns before any final rules are issued.

“Once the policy is finalized, as SPDES (operating) permits come up for renewal, modification, or new facilities are proposed, the policy will be used to determine the appropriate technology for the facility to help ensure reductions in fish mortality,” Wren said.