

WE WANT TO BE VERY CLEAR THAT BLOCK RICL IS NOT AGAINST CLEAN ENERGY, BUT RATHER, OPPOSES LONG DISTANCE TRANSMISSION THAT THREATENS VALUABLE AND NON-REPLACEABLE RURAL RESOURCES LIKE FARMLAND AND TIMBER. Bear in mind that the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission mandates that a transmission line must carry electricity no matter what source it comes from, including coal and nuclear. Therefore, a transmission line cannot be “clean” by definition.

ILLINOIS HAS WHAT KIND OF TRANSMISSION GRID NOW?

According to a 2011 publication by the Great Lakes Wind Collaborative, “Illinois has strong resources and a well-developed electric transmission grid. . . Wind farms can tie into this existing infrastructure.” Rock Island Clean Line has decided not to by planning to build a DC line when the IL grid is AC.

In that same publication, the National Renewable Energy Laboratory and AWS Truepower is quoted: “Huge electric transmission highways cut through many of Illinois’ proposed or already-sited wind farms, mainly throughout central and northern Illinois, allowing wind farms to deliver power from project sites to the large electric load in the Chicago area and east throughout the PJM interconnect.” **Illinois based wind farms** can already supply RICL’s targeted market through existing lines.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND TRANSMISSION LINES-THE LINK

The Columbia Law School Center for Climate Change Law, with its August, 2012 Public Utility Commissions and Energy Efficiency handbook notes “First and foremost, energy efficiency offers the cheapest way to help meet future demand for electricity.” And “Energy efficiency also allows utilities and states to avoid building as much new transmission and generation, thereby not only saving money but also improving environmental quality. Transmission and generation have huge environmental footprints, both in terms of the land and resources required for construction. . .” (emphasis my own)

The Electric Power Research Institute, in 2009, estimated that with only existing energy efficiency programs and best practices, there is the ability to “realistically” reduce the growth rate of consumption of electricity by 22% per year, from 2008-2030. But with a more aggressive approach, the growth rate could be reduced by 36% per year. The U.S. wastes 57% of the electricity that is generated, which is twice the rate of other developed countries besides Canada and Australia.

Case in point: In the near future, electricity consumption in the big Northeastern U.S. electric grid will decline because of Energy Efficiency measures which are roughly equal to annual electric use by 2 million average homes there. Because of this, the region can “defer 10 transmission upgrades that earlier studies showed were needed to ensure system reliability.” NOTE: these are upgrades, not even NEW transmission lines. The simple steps used by this area’s more serious energy efficiency policies included encouraging consumers to change incandescent light bulbs for more efficient lighting like LEDs or CFLs, upgrading heating/vent/AC systems and building insulation, purchasing Energy Star appliances and integrating more efficient industrial processes and motors.

AND ILLINOIS?

Illinois has passed legislation in which we as taxpayers fund a \$3.2 Billion Smart Grid in which the meters at the consumption site (house/business) can “talk back” to the utilities as one way to increase energy efficiency by reducing demand at peak electricity usage times. Illinois citizens singly and in towns and businesses already are allowed to set up their own local generation, like solar and wind, and sell excess power to the grid. This distributed generation of electricity has a minimal environmental impact. It is also less susceptible to damage caused by the increased severity of storms with winds related to climate

change. It is less of a target for terrorist attacks. Distributed generation also means more permanent local jobs.

WE, WITH BLOCK RICL, WANT TO ENCOURAGE ILLINOIS TO TAKE STEPS LIKE THOSE TAKEN IN THE NORTHEAST WHICH MAKE THE ENVIRONMENTALLY INTRUSIVE STEP OF BUILDING MORE AND MORE TRANSMISSION LINES UNNECESSARY BECAUSE ENERGY EFFICIENCY IS THE FIRST STEP AND LOCAL DISTRIBUTED GENERATION THE NEXT PREFERENCE.